

## **Olga Sipatova: Is there any life after the university?**

Love what you do and do what you love. You can hear everywhere that only in this case you can be a success.

As for me I have a certain problem. I made a mistake in choosing my own profession. I can clearly imagine my future, I have lots of plans and unrealized dreams, but unfortunately they are not concerned with the specialty that is written in my diploma.

Why do people study? Just to make money with brain work but not with manual labor during their life. It's a very clear and noble aim. Me too, pursuing this goal I've entered institute of higher education.

But the point is that everything's changing. The concept of intellect and erudition is different. A character of intellect is not just the presence of diploma of high education. Now while searching for a job high education and experience are still wanted but more often they require "ability to be trained fast", "aspiration to make a career" and "certain cast of mind". What is that cast of mind you can understand hardly. The main thing is to satisfy an employer and to convince him that you have all those above-listed characteristics. Your diploma will be copied along the way in couple of months just to maintain bureaucratic rules. During the interview of a job placement nobody looks at your diploma. No one needs your education.

Of course I don't want to overestimate grossly. There is some dying value in high education. Some useful stuff remains in minds of students who are playing with their mobile phones during lectures and paying several tens of hryvnias for their exams. Studying in universities is useful. But who was a person with a high education before? He was a representative of so-called intelligentsia with high standard of diverse knowledge. Besides of questions in his specialty he could know about history, grasp in philosophy, politics, economics and other social sciences. He was a comprehensively intelligent man. He knew that if he had a diploma of high education he had been provided with a cushy job in some research institute or statistic department in some institution with a salary N roubles n copecks. A little bit boring but stable.

Now what? A person with a diploma is anybody. Education is not important, important things are ambitions and purposefulness. The values are different. The world turned upside-down. Yesterday's saleswoman of stationery today can be an owner of trading network of stores throughout the country, to drive around her own jeep and give orders by the mobile phone. And yesterday's enviable marriageable girl - post-graduate clear head in glasses - can sit in a small shop and sale candies. Why? Because she is not ambitious and now nobody needs her knowledge in molecular physics.

Well, I'm exaggerating a little bit...

The matter concerns something else. High education is like ordinary courses. Education in general is going to hell. People forgot how to write correctly, they don't know how to add in mind, and I'm not talking about simple fractions and literary characters. Where did we come to? We're turning back to illiterate peasantry. No sooner had they completed the third grade than they had to go to plow and sow. Now we sit with the same store of knowledge at our computers which correct our grammar mistakes, we count with the help of calculators, and we learn from Internet who is Anna Karenina. Besides of that it is almost considered shameful to show yourself educated and widely-read. Now it is popular to confess that you were a pupil with only the lowest mark "two" in your record and you were flunked from the university. Moreover it is told with some pride. It is sad.

But what's going on with the students who quit their universities? Why after graduation many people work in totally different sphere? Was I thinking before entering my university what would I do during my whole life? Did I see the main point of my future speciality? No, I didn't. I liked that my future profession is euphonious and prestigious. And I didn't think if I could devote myself to

programming during my whole life...

While studying at school I thought that innovation as twelve-year studying is nothing but an attempt of officials to be in full swing for show. Very many things are made exactly like this. At least it seems like that. And it concerns not only the system of high education. Executive administration is so far from real problems at schools and universities! The old system of high education which was produced for years is being destroyed, but the innovations are so chaotic that they can not make a single whole. As the saying goes it's easier to break than to build. But it's impossible to return the old; so may be if we've already started to change do we have to carry the business to its conclusion? And may be we have something to learn from the conservative Englishmen? Surely not for nothing British education is considered one of the best in the world. And in many respects not thanks to keeping up to date but exactly vice versa – due to keeping centuries-old traditions.

It's easy to make alterations to rules and laws, since the officials have rich imagination. But before starting to invent new laws it's necessary to secure the execution of the previous one, isn't it? And execution should be obligatory for everyone. Or it's not clear for whom are those laws written?

Let me turn back to the subject of a twelve-year studying at school. With time I looked at this problem differently. It's a positive innovation. Graduating from school not much of 17 years-old pupils can clearly formulate their aim of life and what do they want to do in future. At this age they would like to go party and they can hardly imagine that one day they would have to work all year round with a three-week vacation and if they are lucky with days off at national holidays. Young first-year students do not completely understand why are they studying in university and just enjoy their youth and student life. Most of them entered their universities thanks to their parents. Somebody was well-connected, somebody's father dreamt about his son-doctor and somebody just didn't have enough money for the desired speciality. So most of students study not right profession in not right university. And they do not occupy a fitting place in society.

“For the whole twenty years a man is occupied with some business, for example, he lectures Roman law, and on the twenty first it suddenly turns out that Roman law is neither here nor there, that he doesn't understand it at all and doesn't like it, but in reality he is a subtle gardenman and he burns with the love to flowers. It probably happens because of imperfection of our social structure, under which pretty often people get to the right place only to the end of their life”. This is a quotation of Mikhail Bulgakov from the “White Guards”. The words which the writer told many years ago remains relevant even nowadays. In my opinion this is the most important problem of our society and of the system of high education particularly. Yes, we have to fight with corruption... Yes, we have to rise the salaries and scholarships... But first of all we have to do everything to give opportunity to a man to do what he wants but not for what he has enough money or what is fashionable right now. Fashion on specialities is a one more problem. As many people make their choices in future profession unconsciously. Very many professions today may be could seem interesting for someone, but they remain unnoticed only because of their disharmoniousment and unprestigiousness. Therefore it happens that there is a shortage of students at the physics department, but we have surplus of economists and lawyers. How can we give to university entrants the most complete information about all the specialities and especially about those which our country needs now? How can we explain that the perspective profession of a banker can not be quite right for you? And if it is so, you can not make a lot of money sitting at a bank just because it's a perspective job. You can be a success only there where do you surrender yourself. And not only because you are payed a lot but because you love to work. May be it's time to popularize forgotten professions and make social advertising on the subject: “Your country needs engineers! Become one of them!” May be we should open centers of help to university entrants, where they could be given all necessary information about concrete specialities and also about what is relevant now and which professions does our country need. And also to help students realize themselves in chosen spheres giving welfare and informational help.

I like multi-level system of high education in France. By the end of every level a student has the right to quit the university with a corresponding diploma. And he will be paid and will take up a post appropriate to the received diploma. The first level is a bachelor. It is completed with receiving of diploma of general university or scientific and technical university education. It can be compared with our school-leaving certificate. A student still doesn't have a concrete speciality. During couple of years he studies general not specialized subjects which he needs both to continue studying and if he would like to finish his education and to work as ordinary office worker. From the second level there is the division into directions, then – into specialities and the last level is for those who want to devote their life to science and to defend a thesis. All this has a certain sense. During his studying a student can quit university with an official record about received education or he can change his own profession according to comprehension of the main point. In this case during all life he will do what he has chosen consciously and according to what is written in his diploma. In our country certificate of degree has a desirable disposition. We have only it's presence or it's absence. "Economist is required", "We search for a specialist in IT sphere" – that's what we can read in advertisements while searching for a job. It turns out that with a diploma of a system programmer you can work as a sales manager.

The problem of job placement is absolutely actual in our country right now. And first of all it is connected with the deficit of one kind of specialists and the surplus of others at the same time. Where will those unhappy economists go? Every university graduate those in plenty. I think that enterprises and institutions should tightly cooperate with the Ministry of Education. A new speciality or a new university should be opened only in case when there is a demand for a certain profession in the labor-market. Now it can be realized hardly. It's almost impossible to take stock of all small privately owned enterprises and all vacancies overthere. Earlier, about twenty years ago, if a very big plant was being built, next door they built an according university with a whole number of all necessary specialities. Entering such a university a student could be sure from the first course that he would be in great demand and he could even know the place of his future job. Now a new company opening an office in one city searches for employees all over Ukraine in the hope to find something more or less appropriate in those diplomas. Sphere of action of this company in this case may greatly differ from the speciality of a young specialist. I think that this question should be solved by the cardinal way. Right up to closing superfluous specialities in universities. It's necessary to take stock of all possible vacancies in the labor-market taking to account foreign companies which open their offices in Ukraine. I think that it's not so impossible as it seems to be at first sight. And it's necessary to carry out a dimensioned social campaign to support forgotten "unprestigious" specialities. Only when every person is the right man in the right place doing his own job we will be able to talk not only about quality of high education but about improvement of situation in our country in general.

Talking about high education I can't help touching on the question of so-called "Bologna process". Now most of Ukrainian universities join the "Bologna process" counting on that that our education can achieve high European level and our diplomas can be quoted abroad. But copying the model of European high education unconsciously it's impossible to reach the same high level. We don't have to copy without thinking those things which are acceptable in other countries. There is no doubt that our country has its own particular qualities. And frankly speaking it's even totally different from the most of west-European countries. And it's important to take it to account. Of course cooperation with foreign universities is necessary. Internships and research practices in foreign universities could give an indispensable experience to the students for their future career. But my firm believes that we cannot plagiarize from other countries. It's necessary to carry out a huge work on studying all social, public and even political features of our country and on the basis of this analysis to build our own system of high education. And only in this case we will be able to say that to receive education in Ukraine is not only economically but prestigious as well.

There are lots of problems. And the problems are difficult. And they demand more than one decade to solve them. But if we start acting right now who knows may be in some time the diploma of Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute would be valued more than the diploma of Cambridge.