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**The School in the Global Village
Responding with New Strategies**

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THE SCHOOL IN A GLOBAL VILLAGE: RESPONDING WITH NEW STRATEGIES

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Introduction

Institutions of higher learning fulfill important functions and are, in a sense, symbols of **universalism**. The future of mankind may depend on the orientation and effectiveness of their work. Kertesz (1971) thus underscored the significance of schools a quarter of a century ago. This truth still holds today. As a moving spirit in the affairs of humankind, schools play a crucial role in evolving a culture that we envision.

Freedom and responsibility to know and to choose the future we want can only come from our imaginings and anticipations of the future combined with our understanding of means and ends. This statement of Toffler (1974) inspires us to state with optimism that cognizant of our responsibilities we will enter the 21st century with dreams and hopes, with a **vision of a peaceful global village where every human being can live with respect and dignity**. This is our challenge in the coming millennium.

Looking back a few decades ago, many of the school settings were just small local communities serving clientele coming from the same locales. Today, many of the school settings metamorphosized into bigger communities serving clientele coming from different localities, regions and countries. School services and programs have also evolved to serve varying needs and interests, ages (preschool to tertiary) and status (normal and special education students, in-school and out-of-school). Innovative strategies use information technology and multi-media. Notable changes were also observed in the school atmosphere. Faculty and students clamored for more active participation in decision making, curriculum development, and in managing some of the affairs of the school community. Shared information, shared responsibility and greater public accountability were demanded.

Man's way of life in many countries have changed. Information technology and the information highway give him ready access to a

vast body of knowledge at the push of a button. Advances in communication and transportation increase his mobility. Applications of science and technology at home and work afford him more time for leisure, sports and recreation, and to choose from a wide array of goods. McCormick (1995) cited changes in the attitude of the Western middle class and the rise of green consumerism: people are driving more fuel-efficient cars, recycling, conserving energy at home, reducing the size of their families, and supporting environmental groups and their aims. There is also a growing use by corporations of environmental impact assessments. Similarly, Inglehart (1977) observed a shift of values of people from an emphasis on materials values and physical security towards a greater concern for the quality of life.

Globalization of the economies of nations has allowed the free flow of goods, capital, services, technologies, and people. All countries (HDCs, MDCs, LDCs) felt the need to establish new partnerships and strengthen existing ones. Multilateral and bilateral agreements on trade, investments, and economic and technical cooperation are established (EU, NAFTA, GATT, APEC).

It is, therefore, the purpose of this paper to review the task of the present school within a new culture which is evolving in our global village. This may be done in two ways: (1) the first task is to identify the set of responsibilities expected from the global citizen; and (2) the second task is to propose specific strategic actions which the school may undertake to create an appropriate school climate which will encourage students (the global citizens) to accept and live by these responsibilities.

Framework of Responsibilities

The global citizen, whether he lives in affluence or in squalor, takes **personal** and **social responsibility** for his life. As a physical, social, cultural, economic and political being, he analyzes situations, makes decisions, and either enjoy or suffer the aftermath of his decisions. The "poor" may have few and simple decisions to make, most frequently pertaining to his daily survival. The "more affluent",

having enjoyed the fruits of materialism, may have many and more complex decisions to make. He may be more concerned with issues on ecology, human rights, democracy, or simply folds his arms. Whatever decisions he make, the citizen takes responsibility for these and their effects on other people's lives. The **inter-relatedness** and **interdependence** of people's lives are current realities. For these reasons, I have proposed a framework of responsibilities which the school should propound more seriously for the third century. The school needs to **provide relevant** learning and living experiences for the students to manifest these responsibilities at the levels of **appreciation, belief, and integration**.

1. **Social responsibility**. As a way of life, social responsibility focuses on both individual and collective efforts to serve the "well-being of mankind." This is a shift from a self-centered, self-serving individual to an **other-oriented, socially concerned citizen**. Manifesting this responsibility elevates man to a higher status of human dignity and meaningful life.

2. **Ecological responsibility**. The recent summit and other similar local, national and international conferences brought to fore the seriousness of both our environmental and ecological problems. People of various races have come to reason together on the implications of concepts such as limits of growth, carrying capacity of earth, balance of nature and man, development and ecology. The use of mother earth's resources is viewed now by many as confined to contemporary use. **Stewardship** obligates man to leave the earth's resources for use by the next generation. In other words, **sustainability** is a **foundational value of development**. Ecological responsibility is thus manifested in the universal values of **protection, conservation, stewardship, and posterity**. Dobson(1990) believes that care for the environment presupposes radical changes in human values, patterns of production and consumption, and relations with the environment .

3. **Political responsibility**. Every citizen has a sense of his own nationhood: love of country or patriotism, political identity, national ideals, and political ideologies. In a global village, a rational balance between nationalism and internationalism should be addressed. A new

concept of **patriotism** may be viewed as love and dedication to the universal ideals of freedom, truth, justice, tolerance and equality of opportunities, legitimate authority and power, respect for human dignity and peace. These political values are not competitive nor exclusive to one nation. They are traditional beliefs and convictions held by several generations of our forebears which have withstood two world wars.

4. **Economic responsibility.** Nations vary in economic resources, policies and strategies. But they have a common denominator: **economic gain to uplift the quality of life of their people.** Economic responsibility demands that economic and business investments be viewed as means toward this end. Economic activities should therefore be more **societally** and **ecologically oriented.** Their long range impact on the quality of life and culture of the people they serve and on the environment from which they extract raw materials are primary considerations. **Long term profitability** and **performance** are favored over short-term economic gains. The intrinsic and extrinsic values of economic production are negated by a destroyed people and environment.

5. **Information responsibility.** Information technology(IT) and information highway(IH) render access to both the individual and institutions a vast amount of knowledge at their disposal, most specially to children and youth. IT is just a tool and IH is just a road. We can use IT for communicating **more humanely** and **more responsibly.** We can use it judiciously guided by moral and ethical principles. How we use the tool and how we travel on the road spells the difference between building or destroying our borderless world.

6. **Professional responsibility.** The demands in the world of work constantly change. What new knowledge, skills, and productivity-oriented systems that one may have today may be obsolete tomorrow. As a professional he must constantly create and perceive and appreciate the **culture of other people** with whom he works, negotiates and serves. Learning the language of his friends and colleagues will definitely give him an edge over his competitors. He needs to be proficient in one or two **international languages.** He has to think smart, work harder, and be a good member of his team. The

tenets of **creativity, excellence, service, and integrity** are character traits expected from professionals. He has to learn certain thinking (strategic thinking, organizing) and interpersonal skills. He needs to continuously & creatively build and enrich his knowledge and skills into "meta-skills" to become one person, cross-functional professional.

7. **Cultural responsibility.** The diversity and richness of the culture of many nations pose a big challenge to the global citizen. He is encouraged to appreciate those that are universal among cultures and to respect the minor differences. Recognizing and respecting the cultural identities of people is basic to a life of dignity. Moreover, accepting the cultural differences of one culture may enrich one's own culture. The responsibility is to promote a culture that adheres to the rules of **rationality, law and respect**. **The individual is expected to communicate effectively across a wide range of cultural values.**

8. **Personal Ethical responsibility.** In the past, life was simple. Man's options in life was limited by the information he receives or has access to. Today, IT widens his horizon and democracy gives him a latitude of alternatives. It is not just black or white but a rainbow of colors. The wide spectrum of options available to him challenges the individual to balance his personal values and goals with institutional or corporate goals. Several decisions face him: How much personal and professional growth do I need? How much money should I make? How much time do I have to spend on work, with my friends and family? What system of values do I believe in? By what principles of ethical conduct do I have to live?

Obviously, the individual seeks for a new definition of the "quality of life" that he wants. He needs to formulate a new set of criteria for the standard of living that he wants to reach. Will his living well or badly be based on his income, physical units he has acquired or savings in the bank? Will these be his standards/symbols of success? Or will this depend more on the quality of his relations and interaction with people? What will constitute a satisfactory, meaningful life for him in this global village?

RESPONSE OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The school system is a center of various forces and influences particularly on the youth and children which constitute the stakeholders in the 21st century. The school may promote a school culture which demonstrates the above responsibilities as revised patterns of behavior. Allow me to cite some strategies and actions which the school may undertake:

1. The school may serve as Center for fora symposia of global issues, work standards, ethical valuations, etc. For consensus building. Academic forces may use the multi-media and Information Technology(IT) tools to disseminate results/consensus to multi-sectoral groups.

2. Cognitive skills gained in school and theories clarified in fora may be translated to actual outreach community development programs and non-formal education for human development which would benefit the masses, especially the marginalized poor in both urban areas and the countryside. These require community information studies, immersions, trainings and organization of community-level leaders who can work closely with trained specialists. Focus is not only on acquisition of knowledge, technology and skills but more on process approaches to ensure sustainability of the delivery systems in a shared responsibility concept.

3. Student creativity and initiatives may develop and prosper in school climates where their tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and power are channeled along these endeavors:

3.1 conduct of crusades of environment conservation and protection, drives against substance abuse, gender sensitivity issue, reprohealth, etc.

3.2 re-creation of models in school and community which demonstrate quality habitat of man, animals and plants.

3.3 organization of volunteer groups in community health education, sports and physical development for out-of-school youths, human ecology concerns, literacy classes, and other thrusts of local,

national and international organizations. This will promote a healthy balance between self-interest and common welfare.

3.4 participation of faculty and students in local community assemblies as facilitators of democratic processes.

4. The school system may serve as clearing house for the harmonization of skills standards needed by industries and business. With these as inputs, the school may restructure and enrich its curriculum toward providing them with diverse and broadbased manpower. Specifically, a strong linkage between the school and industrial companies or business firms may be fostered by putting up viable school-based centers with functional exchange programs for more effective interfacing.

5. The school may become a miniature global village depicting different cultures and universal values. Examples are as follows:

5.1 establishment of school museums/cultural centers

5.2 designing buildings/rooms using the architectural values of different cultures.

5.3 setting up environmental centers

5.4 organizing international language centers

5.5 restructuring recreational, sports, and leisure programs as character-building experiences and not simply for physical fitness.

5.6 learning international sports & recreations.

6. Cooperation between schools of developed, developing and underdeveloped nations may be strengthened along institution building: staff development, curricular enrichment/standardization, faculty and student exchanges, research consortium, advisory and consultancy services. In institution building it is important to recognize the transition points as the process of institutional building moves from one stage to another. Equally important is to identify the basic thrusts of the school concerned in technical assistance, research and development projects, the total capabilities/capacities of the institutions concerned, the integration of the outcome of these collaborative efforts into the curricula. As a whole, this cooperative endeavor among schools of different nations must be coordinated in such a way that the end results are beneficial to all and not to the interest of a few.

7. The school should strengthen its support system and community that will enhance the development of these following interpersonal skills of a "global citizen": communication skills in the use or more than one international language, group dynamics, resolution of conflicts, strategic thinking decision-making and problem-solving skills, clarification of value, research and creative thinking skills. One's education today is incomplete without an education in international language and culture, and diverse skills in group relations and interactions.

8. Schools may conduct studies of native or indigenous culture to identify which culture traits and traditions are still relevant in this contemporary world. Examples of these would be culture traits and traditions which promote positive work values, attitudes, and work ethics.

9. The spectrum of professional/technical staff for instruction, research and extension activities of school may be widened by inviting national and international resource persons, consultants, practitioners, and even informal leaders in the communities. Organizational humility, sincerity in organizational learning, and interdependence will thus be encouraged.

10. Active participation and interaction in conferences are now conducted via video and international networking. This breakthrough in IT allows network member institutions even in the regional and international level to pool their material and human resources, share inputs and offer joint degree programs through distance education, e.g. internet-based education, e-mail, virtual and interactive multi-media courses, multi-venues.

11. Institutional changes in the constitution of the student population from different sectors of society, may be created so that all groups in society are fairly represented.

12. Lastly, the teacher pre-service education should not be left out, since the teacher remains at the heart of education. While it is true that efforts are geared towards greater professionalization of teachers by strengthening their academic preparation and developing a more

systematic scheme for their induction to teaching, it is urgent that conditions be created to encourage competent teachers to stay in their posts and make teaching a career.

It is in the same vein that teacher education institutions should develop valid instruments to identify qualified applicants for the teaching profession; formulate policies and structural changes to attract and motivate intellectually and psychologically qualified students, foster and sustain their enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment to the teaching profession.

This age of globalization calls for excellence and relevance in all areas of concern. The emerging culture needs to be understood together with the challenges it pose to everyone. Much unlearning of ineffective, unproductive systems of the past may be done; yet, this should be done without losing grip of the essence of the indigenous heritage. This new culture may be characterized by flexibility, creativity, interdependence, and integrity which become vital cogs of development. There is now this collective advocacy of building a better world, with everyone striving not only to be better but distinctly different from a competitive standpoint. These emerging patterns are tempered with enabling visions, universal values and our desire for unity despite diversities. We are moving in one direction and are willing to share because we care.

In summary, the schools are challenged to become dynamic global villages where the citizens (students and faculty) still believe in the dignity of the human person, cherish the indigenous culture, respect other cultures, and uses humane judgment and rational wisdom in living the responsibilities expected of him. In the school village, the global citizen is offered a vast range of opportunities to make his greatest service and contribution to humankind.

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