

HOW ARE WE EDUCATING OUR STUDENTS AT OUR BUSINESS SCHOOLS? AN INSIGHTFUL APPROACH IN ORDER TO UNVEIL THE INVISIBLE OBSTACLES OF HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA, AT UNIVERSITIES ATTACHED TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

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INTRODUCTION

The following speech aims to answer the question about Human and Christian education of our future business students within the social context of Jesuit Universities in Latin America, particularly in Colombia. It is about appraising the way in which we are educating our future businessmen, in whose sense of justice, creativity and leadership relies the answers to a so needy society.

I will base my analysis on the concept of Curricular Project understood this as a Project of Education. Such project must be, in essence, the solution an institution gives to the needs arose from a particular social context.

In this sense, it is necessary, in first place, to take Latin America context as a reference to contrast it against, in second place, Jesuit's Mission in its Universities. Thus, my goal is to unveil the unseen barriers that limit the Human and Christian education of our students. I talk about invisible obstacle from a sociological perspective, in other words, understood as hidden and unconscious forces only to be discovered through critical analysis that allows identifying a cause-effect relationship.

At the same time, this research process has given me the opportunity to understand the importance of Ignatian Pedagogy in the education of conscious and leader students. In addition, I would like to highlight how concern the ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES ENTRUSTED TO THE JESUITS IN LATIN AMERICA (AUSJAL) has been and the actions taken in order to improve Human and Christian education. These actions are true alternatives that I would like to present to you, and that I passionately yearn to share eventually with other work teams from the AUSJAL.

1. INTERPRETING LATIN AMERICA SOCIAL CONTEXT

Yes, indeed, I am from Colombia; a beautiful country bordered by to oceans and with such a vast quantity of plentiful rivers, streams, brooks and rain that we are ranked as the 4th country water-rich worldwide.

Our Latin American countries are the 8th wonder of the world. The location of few of them over The Tropical Zone does not allow seasons. Nonetheless, mountains height generates a diversity of temperatures, which many describe as the everlasting spring, along with exuberant vegetation and an unbeatable richness in natural resources.

In this sense, if our country is rich, why is there poverty in our society? An American academic professor, invited by Colombian government in Mid-20th century said: “there are not 3rd world countries, there are countries improperly managed.”

Great contrasts are observed in Latin America: the extension, soil fertility, mines richness, gold, emeralds, coal, copper, marble, petroleum; however, the majestic jungle of Amazonia, shared by five nations, and so called the world lungs, has already began a fast process of deterioration caused by wood exploitation from clandestine enterprises as well as, and why not say it here, illegal growth of crops with drug trafficking purposes. In such extension of thick vegetation, the law of the jungle tends to prevail.

And...where are the people? By history, we are the descendants of an economy based on agriculture, which by Mid-20th century 70% of the population was rural and 30% urban. Up to date, these percentages are already inverted within an accelerated process of urbanization. The look for better opportunities in the cities motivates our peasants, but right-left political violence in some countries, among them Colombia, has influenced causing population displacements.

This is the core of the so called poverty belts which surround the big cities, impoverished group of houses also known as *favelas* in Brazil, *hovels* in Colombia and *shacks* in Venezuela. The unbalanced income distribution is evident and supported by the two-digit figures unemployment in the majority of the countries. Regarding the above, the president of the National Association of Industries (Asociacion Nacional de Industrias), ANDI, commented years before, on an interview about Colombian state and economy: “economy runs good, he said, but the country does not”. By this he meant that economy indicators are not suitable to the overall population since nobody knows about the poor.

There is a sort of institutionalized injustice not only economically but also at politically and legally speaking which allows the situation to persist. Poverty and unemployment are conjunctures where drug trafficking has become a way out to get easy money with side-consequences such as corruption, violence and environment damage.

This is just a general overview of the social framework of Latin America situation; however, we cannot leave behind the fact that a professional is educated in order to provide answers to the needs of a society.

2. WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH OUR STUDENT’S EDUCATION? INVISIBLE OBSTACLES: THE GAP BETWEEN THE MUST BE OF EDUCATIONAL MISSION AND THE REALITY PERCEIVED AT INTERNSHIPS.

2.1 TRUST IN JESUIT UNIVERSITIES’S MISSION

Those who have, like me, the great honor of being involved with the process of turning youth students into businessmen are as well responsible for the

authenticity of its education. That is my case as the director of Business Administration degree at La Javeriana University in Bogota, Colombia. Being a Catholic University Entrusted to the Society of Jesus our mission entitles service of faith and commitment to social justice.

In the document of notification to this magnificent contest, it is trusted that the Mission of Jesuit universities is relevant to enable Human and Christian education of students since we look for a whole human education that leads them to responsible decision-making at a personal, religious, scientific, cultural and politic level. The above establishes, thus, an important difference against other universities, which have been pointed out regarding professional ethics, in recent economic and financial scandals.

2.2 TOWARDS THE UNDERSTANDING OF CURRICULM AS A PROJECT OF EDUCATION.

It is important to briefly outline the frame under which the concept of education aimed trough a university degree stands. These ideas arose from a series of experiences as B.A. director that I have intertwined with my concerns as a B.A. graduate student along with the job performed at some enterprises and my studies in Human Resources. Thanks to my affinity with teaching at university, I was able to perceive the gap of pedagogical education leading me to enroll a Masters Degree in Education along with a documentary research about Globally Responsible Ethical Leadership and possible application to the curriculum.

I recall my experiences because this is where I perceived at practical and conceptual level the great value of the pedagogy, and its relation to the concept of education. In other words, it refers to the intentionality of education at university. The concept of education has been object of study of personal and social psychology and cultural anthropology because, in the end, it is about understanding how our psychic system works and the influence that culture poses, so we get to learn and be the people we have become. However, when education is thought form a pedagogical perspective, values and criteria with which education interacts with society needs.

The background of educational action must be the intentionality of the teaching-learning process so the people under this education influences society. Due to this, the sense of a higher education degree is expressed through the teaching-learning purposes, which become clear through the concept of curriculum. When it is desired to create a degree or evaluate if we are on the right track or not, it is very important a discussion about achieving the teaching-learning purposes in students.

2.3 HYPOTHESIS: A POSSIBLE GAP BETWEEN THE MUST BE AND REALITY OF THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS.

Our society trusts our universities Mission, which reflects on the affection of parents who wish their children be taught with Human and Christian sense. But, with all due respect, I am working on a hypothesis where it is possible there is a gap between the Mission statement of higher education institutes and the current Pedagogical Practice at some universities entrusted to the

Society of Jesus, in Latin America. Reason why, I say, feeling as a detective, that there are enemies in the education of our businessman, but I add, those enemies are invisible. Only in the way in which we identify them and neutralize them, we will be able to take a reliable path in the so wanted education of socially responsible leaders.

2.4 OBSTACLES IN HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Human and Christian education becomes concrete through ethics, leadership, social responsibility and theological study, but, at university level, this education is understood as a separate teaching course. In other words, without any conceptual, methodological interrelation, this courses focused on mere instruction. The make no conscious that teaching-learning purposes must be the core in the foundation of a professional. This unarticulated behavior tends to influence the overall process of education. Indeed, each of the traditional areas in Business Administration such as marketing, finances, Human Management, production, among others, require an ethical thinking of leadership and social responsibility. Therefore, it cannot be only intellectual as it usually is neither an isolated proceed, yet as a whole towards the conception of ethic, responsible leadership and with a Christian sense towards justice.

2.5 LACK OF PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION AND ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION

Allow me, in consequence, retake the idea of what we are missing in terms of pedagogical education to design, implement and evaluate curricular programs because it is one of the main hidden enemies in human, professional and Christian education... Why? Because it causes unconsciousness and the impossibility to create groups of work focused on the constant achievement of education purposes. The above, I insist, is influencing negatively in human, professional and Christian education of students. Such curricular work teams must be the result of a rigorous selection, sensitize and training of teachers who meet the required characteristics on the curricular Project, among some, the need to share the spirit of the Mission and the Institutional Education Project.

3. OPTIONS TO HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FROM A PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.

3.1 EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES IN LATIN AMERICA CONTEXT

The selection of educational purposes points to the heart of the identity of a university entrusted to the Society of Jesus in the struggle of justice and service of faith. Latin American context challenged not only by its natural resources but also by unemployment, starving, housing, education, health, low incomes will require educational purposes which take into account how to investigate, innovate and give answer to these types of needs in the education of businessman, from basics.

Instruction in management is so important at a conceptual and social level that it overlaps with almost every other major. Thus, an administrator cannot feel exempt from encouraging investigations to improve agricultural productivity; they should find the way to innovate prefab houses, in healthiness and drinking water; they should open markets to defeat domestic ones, among others. These ideas are proof of the huge social field to which we can orientate the education of businessman that will arise from alliances made with other majors like engineering, architecture, medicine, among others, and, thus, balance the competences and orientate them to the design and implementation of social plans based on technology.

3.2 NEED OF CURRICULAR GROUP WORK

Therefore, at a university level, it is crucial for teachers involved with any major to be identified with the educational purposes and set a real group of work to evaluate results regularly and to innovate in terms of teaching strategies. The making of these curricular groups of work must become a guide of strict enforcement; otherwise, work of teachers tends to unravel and become an invisible obstacle.

3.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF A SOCIAL WORK SEMESTER IN HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Pedagogical practices like a Social Work Semester at Javeriana University in Bogota, Colombia, and in several of the Jesuit universities in Latin America, has become a genuine opportunity to educate human being as a whole. It must be pointed out that without downgrading cognitive, this education must touch feelings, attitudes and values that are key in the decision-making and in the proceed and habits of a professional. Experiences and real situations with vulnerable population allow students to use not only their acquired knowledge but also be compassion and supportive. This is the case of a Social Work Semester, which according to teacher's assessment, students themselves and beneficiaries, it has been contributing to sensitization and leadership of our businessman in training.

Indeed, some experiences of students can be classified as extraordinary.

4. AT AN INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL, HOW CAN I IMPROVE HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION? PROPOSALS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, FROM LATIN AMERICA

4.1. PROPOSAL OF THE IGNATIAN PEDAGOGY

The importance of Ignatian pedagogy comes from the spiritual exercises made by Saint Ignacio de Loyola and attempts to correct the tendency of our teachers to limit themselves to instruction and leave behind actual education. Why Ignatian pedagogy favors whole human education? Because its three methodological steps involved human being as a whole given the fact that **Seeing** tends to exercise cognitive, **Judging** takes the contributions of cognition but tries to make an influence on me as an individual capable of making judgments and assuming a personal commitment with the *Must Be*

Done. In other words, we are in the field of emotions and values, and how we Act in this case is the consequence of the commitment and coherence between the thinking, the feeling and the acting.

How do we get Ignatian Pedagogy to fill up the curriculum with Christian ethic values to achieve a commitment from faith and justice? This is a path that must be covered gradually, but it will need Institutional Policies of strong commitment by the community of university: teachers, students, employees and directors.

4.2 PROPOSAL BY THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES ENTRUSTED TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN LATIN AMERICA (AUESJLA)

The Association of Universities Entrusted to the Society of Jesus in Latin America has expressed concern towards the discussion of this issue related to Mission enforcement and identity of its universities in Latin America. In this sense, AUESJLA has called out meetings with delegates from different Jesuit universities. As a result, they have been able to concretize options in order to answer the inquiries regarding human and Christian education of our students through the adoption of UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (USR) policy.

In essence, USR as described in AUSJAL Letter No 25 in 2007 consists on a the Institutional Strengthening of universities AUSJAL to achieve consensus regarding Ignatian identity that must characterize us. This project requires each university to set management indicators allowing comparisons among the different institutions attached and exchange experiences in the search of a permanent improvement.

Essentially, it is about the process of self-assessment and forward-moving institutionalization assuming as point of departure that this education is not a feature of a particular area, but as function of the entire university. Some Latin American institutions such as Catholic in Cordoba, Argentina; Catholic Andres Bello in Caracas, Venezuela and Iberoamericana in Puebla, Mexico, among others, are leaders in organizational, curricular and program-like reforms in favor of the commitment with Jesuit, human and Christian identity. In other words, they are working on the commitments encouraging an education socially responsible.

CONCLUSION

It is necessary for each of the universities entrusted to the Society of Jesus retake a contrast strategy between the Mission of Ignatian institutions and the curriculum and real pedagogical practice. As a result, it would be possible to evaluate the difference between what is being done and what should be done. The above would increase our consciousness and commitment towards Human and Christian education of our students, and towards social justice in our country.

Thank you.

