



Centar za građansko obrazovanje  
Centre for civic education

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## IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE, TITLES ARE WORHLESS

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) intensively works through numerous projects and other means of action on raising awareness about importance of fight against corruption in education. Its presence in this field should be a reason of serious concern of the authorities since the inadequate educational base limits the possibilities of development of Montenegrin society.

**One aspect of corruptive, illegal and flagrantly unethical behaviour, which emerged in last several years amongst students is writing of essays, final thesis and other academic papers by other persons on the behalf of the students.** Not only that this promotes a disrespectful approach towards knowledge within the academic community, but it is an offence punishable by up to 2 years of expulsion, as stipulated by the provisions of Rulebook on disciplinary procedure of University of Montenegro.

It is especially worrying that writing of these papers on the behalf of students by “specialized” individuals has become a lucrative business advertised on virtually every corner – from the walls of bookstores, apartment buildings, up to advertisements in the press, the yellow pages and on-line advertising portals, and that this is not subjected to an official inquiry regarding control of revenues, legality of this practice, etc.

Earning of grades based on plagiarism instead of knowledge decreases the entire level of education, corrupts the integrity of the education system, and undoubtedly questions the purpose of seminar papers as an extremely important form of checking of knowledge. Furthermore, students spend great amounts of money on these services, more “successful” authors earn solid compensations, and the practice is not controlled by anybody. It is devastating that students can buy up to 10% of the entire grade of a given subject for 20 – 30 EUR, and for bigger amounts they can even graduate or earn a master degree!

Although this practice is not criminalized by the Criminal code, it brings greater danger to the society than some of the crimes punishable by prison sentences. Therefore, university, police, prosecution office and other authorities have to step up in fighting against this problem. This represents a type of corruption notoriously advertised alongside lawful services and businesses, and it generates a significant amount of profit. It remains unclear why the tax services, inspection and other authorities who should control all forms of “gray economy” do not tackle this issue. On the other hand, University does not show the will to sanction the widespread practice of plagiarism and to contribute to the establishment of the principle where only knowledge grants the titles.

CCE expresses hope that authorities will start working of this issue, because knowledge that can be bought in this manner is worth nothing.

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