GLOBALIZATION AND NEEDS FOR REFORM IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Fadil Mamuti

University of Tetova, Faculty of Physical Education

Email: fadil.mamuti@unite.edu.mk

Abstract

As the needs of people are changing, the education system also has change, and this change should be accepted by the people. Education is a process that needs transformation and changes. Education system mast be reformed and adapted to contemporary education in a globalized world. Globalization is an unstoppable and irreversible process of integrating education, culture and state societies. The diversity of the region of South-Eastern Europe reflects on the differences and specifics in the Higher Educational Systems. Adapting education system to new requirements and responsibilities is one of the main goals of education system. Modifying the role of teachers from traditional to modern education is a necessary but not an easy process. Higher Education in Macedonia has some similarities with the trends in the wider region, but also some specifics. Today, in Macedonia there are 20 Higher Educational Institutions, of which 6 are state universities and 14 private. Education in Macedonia is characterized by several characteristics such as ethnification of the higher education, insufficient investment in higher education by the state, the trends of depopulation by migration and so on. As a conclusion, contemporary and well-balanced education as well as preparation of fully aware model of citizenship 'global citizens', is also essential in building a democratic society and is crucial for shaping the world.

Keywords: Globalization, Higher Education, Reforms, RN Macedonia.

Introduction

As the needs of people are changing, the education system also has change, and this change should be accepted by the people. Education is a process that needs transformation and changes. Education system mast be reformed and adapted to contemporary education in a globalized world. Globalization is an unstoppable and irreversible process of integrating education, culture and state societies. It plays an important role in the formation of today's world. Globalization is not only something that will concern and threaten us in the future, but something that is taking place in the present and to which we must first open our eyes (Ulrich B.). Although there are many opinions that global education should not be preferred, there are also those who think differently, such as (Robin, 2005) that gives reasons why global education could actually be the solution, not the problem. Globalisation is one of the most complex and 'contested' concepts (Guillen, 2000). Korsgaard (1997) and others argue that globalisation reflects social relations that are also linked to the political, social, cultural and environmental spheres (Korsgaard, 1997).

According to (Zajda, 2015), globalisation as a phenomenon, is a multi-dimensional cultural construct, reflecting the necessary interdependence and connections of all core facets of culture: the economy, politics, ideology, languages, education, consumer

goods, travel, modes of communication, technology, and the people around the world. In 1999 the Bologna Declaration promoted the project of unification of standards in higher education of Europe. The Bologna Declaration or Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education was adopted by ministers of education of 29 European countries on the meeting in Bologna on 19 June 1999. This Declaration was based on Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988, where some universal educational principals with regard with study mobility and higher educational standards were imposed (Reinalda, Bob and Ewa Kulesza, 2005). The Bologna Declaration is based on the following general principles: Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, particularly through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement; Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate; Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility; Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement of students and teachers; Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies and Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programs of study, training and research (The Bologna Declaration, 1999).

Creation and development of the European region of higher education depends on the accomplishment of the responsibilities taken by the institutions of higher education. Their clear politics of internationalization should take in consider the following measures: Strengthening of the educational staff with international experience; Creation of student programs, which are going to be presented in one of the world languages; Creation of study programs which are going to provide transfer of credits for the domestic and foreign students; Development of information centers which are going to offer clear and transparent information for the students in relation with the international possibilities; Strengthening of students scholarships; Building mechanisms which are going to improve the transfer of scholarships and credits and Overcoming of the mobility barriers by better and easier mechanisms for obtaining visas (Denkova, 2005).

Adapting education system to deal with the changes

Adapting education system to new requirements and responsibilities is one of the main goals of education system. Modifying the role of teachers from traditional to modern education is a necessary but not an easy process, because foreign languages and new information and communication technologies make this process more difficult. Teachers should review their teaching methods and move from the role of speaker to the role of guide. Science and research as well as the intellectual resource must be developed. The information system network is the most important perspective of development. Foreign languages (especially English) should be introduced as official language, although there are many complaints about English dominance over minority languages. Old system was based on bureaucracy, which is noun by an excessively complicated administrative procedure. Labor market should be liberalized from daily political impact. Social arguments against globalization are related to the breakdown of community. The essence of old education system has been the community of the classroom, the physical reality of the textbook and face-to-face teaching style of work. But what we will have in the next few

years is an education system that is part of computer system. Unlike books, computers dispose us to think differently, to be engaged in a constantly changing process where information is not stable or fixed (Spender, 1995). The cultural arguments against global education system are equally compelling; the global education is seen as the new colonizer. In recent years, the Union European has also redoubled its efforts to reform its own education system in order to create overall convergence at the European level, as a way of enhancing international/global competitiveness. Since March 2000, the EU has formulated its policies in line with the ambitious objectives of the so-called Lisbon Strategy. This strategy recognized that knowledge, and the innovation it sparks, are the EU's most valuable assets, particularly in light of increasing global competition. EU Member States and the European Commission strengthened co-operation in 2009 with strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

The Bologna Process for the creation of the European Higher Education Area has inspired change in university systems, introducing a two-cycle (undergraduate-postgraduate) degree structure and wider implementation of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). The impact of globalization on education systems has been so relevant that there is a need for a shared definition of global education. The participating delegations of the Europe-wide Global Education Congress, Maastricht, (November 15-17 2002), representing parliamentarians, governments, local and regional authorities and civil society organizations from the member states of the Council of Europe. Among the trends typical of globalization, privatization is seen as that which has had the greatest impact in the field of education (Kogut and Macpherson 2004). In assessing globalization's true relationship to educational change, we need to know how

globalization and its ideological packaging affect the overall delivery of schooling, from transnational paradigms, to national policies, to local practices (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). The policies of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD), UNESCO, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) operate as powerful cultural forces, which, as supranational organisation, shape and influence education and policy around the world.

ICT in their ordinary work at school. New technologies are contributing to create new learning environments and new ways of teaching (Federica and Simona, 2012). As shown by Davide Parmigiani (2011), the features of an innovative learning environment include: involving all subjects and all classroom teachers; modifying the structural aspects of school (transmission versus construction of knowledge); experimenting new ways of representing knowledge and new language (books or digital content); experimenting new ways of organizing learning time and space of (school/home, presence/distance); avoiding abandonment and scholastic difficulties; providing a learning environment that is more "attractive" to students; promoting students creativity, both in the use of instruments and in the construction of knowledge.

Teachers and learners in a global society are structurally very different, as suggested by several authors (Federica and Simona, 2012). According to Marc Prensky, for example, the most useful designation for the young generation is Digital Natives (Prensky 2001). It means that young people are "native speakers" of the digital language of the computer, video games and the internet, because they were born in the digital world. By contrast, adults can be defined as Digital Immigrants: they learn to adapt to their

environment and, at the same time, they always retain, to some degree, their specific "accent". The "digital immigrant accent" can be seen in such thinks as turning to the internet for information second rather than first, or in reading the manual for a program rather than assuming that the program itself will teach us to use it, printing out your email, or needing to print out a document written on the computer in order to edit it. The young generation has been given many different labels: we thus have Digital natives (Prensky 2001; 2009), Net generation (Tapscott 2008), New Millennium Learners (OECD, 2009), and so on. Fuelled by technological developments, online distance education is changing the traditional face and form of higher education in developed and developing countries alike. This capacity creates new multi-level challenges for government agencies, policy makers, administrators, faculty, and staff (Ouanessa and Kayleigh, 2009).

Higher Education in South-Eastern Europe Countries and in RN Macedonia

The diversity of the region of South-Eastern Europe reflects on the differences and specifics in the Higher Educational Systems. Western Balkans region joined the Bologna process from the year 2003. This change can be seen in the multiplication of the Higher Educational Institutions in the Western Balkans region, from around 20 state universities and no private ones in 1990's to more than 50 state universities currently, and more than 250 private ones. Even the number of private universities is bigger, yet, in the region of South-East Europe most of the students are enrolled in state funded universities. In 2015 in the region of the Western Balkans there were 140 registered Higher Educational Institutions (HEI). Regarding the general number of the population, Albania and Kosovo have a high number of students. The growth of private universities is often diminished by lack of

resources, part-time employment, contract work, and the employment of practitioners and teaching staff without a doctorate degree (Strashko, 2018). For all institutions, one of the biggest problems is lack of research funds. Even the European programs cannot fill the gap of the weak state economies (Brajkovic, 2016).

Higher Education in Republic of Macedonia has some similarities with the trends in the wider region, but also some specifics. Today, in Republic of Macedonia there are 20 Higher Educational Institutions, of which 6 are state universities and 14 private. The process of reforms started more intensively with the process of adoption of Bologna standards in 2003, with full implementation in 2004, and multiplication of higher educational institutions and study programs. Also, we should notice the problem of ethnification of the higher education in Republic of Macedonia. The segregation based on ethnicity and language of usage can be found in all educational levels, from primary school to university education. This is one of the basic factors for creating segregated society (Bakiu and others, 2016). Segregation of education in multi-ethnic countries is part of a global debate, especially in post-conflict countries like Macedonia. This type of segregation, especially between Macedonians and Albanians, does not promote contact and the creation of positive identities which can tackle discrimination and prejudice thus leading to reconciliation. Ethnicized divisions create parallel societies within a country, which mistrust one another (Kavaja, 2017). Beside universities where the educational process is based on the Macedonian language, there are three state funded Albanian universities and several private, as well as some private Turkish universities.

The main problems of the higher education can be traced to insufficient investment in education by the state, where many

recommendations are suggesting up to 5 % of national GDP to be allocated to this sphere (Shaqiri, 2017). Regional trends of depopulation due to lower rate of fertility and mechanical depopulation by migration is characteristic of the region and Macedonian society. The most popular destinations for students from Republic of Macedonia, beside Western European countries as UK or Germany and USA, are Bulgaria, where in the last decade the number of students from Macedonia was estimated to be a few thousand, some of universities in Salonika, Greece, and Universities in Slovenia where in recent years there have been several hundred students enrolled. For example, on University of Ljubljana only, in 2016/17, from 2,345 total foreign students, estimated 500 were from Macedonia (factor.mk).

According to Abdulmenaf, B. (2019), two factors are important today for a successful economy, human resource and technology. Izet, Z. (2019), gives information on how the state of North Macedonia is damaged about 500 million € per year, as a result of migration. The state cost per pupil: for elementary education is 10-12 thousand €; for secondary education is 18-20 thousand €; for university studies is 35-40 thousand €; for medicine sciences is 50-55 thousand €. It seems that small states like Northern Macedonia are at a double loss, both in human resources and technology.

Conclusion

The main reforms in the region of South-Eastern Europe and Republik of North Macedonia in particular in the last 25 years is the Bologna process. This triggered standardization of the education curricula and better possibility for students and teachers mobility. Regarding higher education, the

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main problems of Macedonia's universities are related with the wider context of the region with some specifics. Ethnification of educational space of all levels, including higher education, creates parallel societies, especially between two biggest ethnic communities- Macedonian and Albanian. But the biggest problem is related with demographic characteristics and the trends of decreasing of young population and therefore potential students. School students are willing to continue their education at university, mainly because they see education as a precondition for better future prospects, as well as the lack of employment immediately after finishing high school. The wider trends in Macedonia also show that state universities are the most popular choices (Strashko, 2018). The main problems of the higher education can be traced to insufficient investment in education by the state, where many recommendations are suggesting up to 5% of national GDP to be allocated to this sphere (Shaqiri, 2017). Depopulation by migration is characteristic of the region and Macedonian society. The lack of modern technology and the daily deportation of young people as a result of the migration phenomenon make the educational process in North Macedonia more difficult. As stated above, the state of North Macedonia is damaged about 500 million € per year, as a result of migration. According to Bernadeta (2016), we cannot stop the process of globalization and digitalization of the world bat we have to try to keep a healthy balance between real and virtual world. As a conclusion, contemporary and well-balanced education as well as preparation of fully aware model of citizenship 'global citizens', is also essential in building a democratic society and is crucial for shaping the world.

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