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Interculturalism in Contemporary Teaching in Kosovo

Kosova'da Çağdaş Öğretimde Kültürlerarasılık

Öz

Tarih bize eğitimin tek başına insanları eğitmediğini söylüyor. Eğitim, meslek uzmanlığına giden bir yoldur, ancak yaşamın değerlerinin ve genel olarak değerlerin anlam ve duygusuna sahip olan kişiye mutlaka götüren bir yol değildir.

Kosova Çerçeve Müfredatı, genel konulara ve topluluklar için özel "ulusal" derslere ayrılmıştır. Bu dersler dil, tarih, sanat ve müziktir. Kosovalı Türkler ve Boşnaklar için ulusal dersler ilgili topluluklardan uzmanlar tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Ancak Roman, Aşkale ve Mısırlı topluluklar için ulusal ders müfredatları geliştirilmemiştir, bu da onlara kimliklerinin gelişiminin tehdit altında olduğunu hissettirmektedir. Kosova, dünya için çok önemli bir model olan kültürlerarası eğitim modelini hayata geçirmek için çaba sarf ediyor.

2008 yılında yürürlüğe giren Kosova Cumhuriyeti Anayasasına göre, topluluklar eşit haklara sahiptir ve bazı toplulukların yoğunlaştığı bazı belediyelerde daha da fazla tercih edilmektedir. Türk toplumu esas olarak Kosova'nın bazı belediyelerinde bulunmaktadır, Prizren bölgesindeki Mamuşa gibi belediyelerden biri esas olarak Türk toplumundan oluşmaktadır. Kültürlerarası duyarlılığı geliştirmek, insanların diğer kültürlerle karşılaştıklarında geçirdikleri aşamaları tanımlar. Kültürel değişimin ele alınması, değişimin varlığının inkar edilmesi aşamasından yani aşırı etnosentrizm, kültürel değişimin gözlemlenmesi ve kabul edilmesi aşamasından geçmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kültür, farklı, kültürlerarasılık, çok kültürlü, öğretim.

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Abstract

History tells us that education itself does not educate people. Education is the path to professionals, but not a road, which necessarily leads to man, which necessarily leads to a person who has a sense and a sense of values of life and values in general.

Kosovo's framework program plan is divided into general subjects, and in the 'national' special subjects for communities. These subjects are language, history, art and music. National cases for Kosovo Turks and Bosniaks have been developed by experts from relevant communities. But for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, curricula of national subjects have not been developed, making them feel that the development of their identity is threatened. Kosovo is making efforts to implement a model of intercultural education, which is a very important model for the world as well.

Based on the Constitution of the Republic of Kosova which entered into force in 2008, communities have equal rights, and are even more favored in some municipalities where some of the communities are centered. The Turkish community is located mainly in several municipalities of Kosova, one of the municipalities such as Mamusha in the region of Prizren is mostly populated by the Turkish community. The development of intercultural sensitivity, describes the stages that people pass through when confronted with other cultures. The elaboration of the treatment of cultural differences is developed by the stadium of denial of the existence of differences, namely extreme ethnocentrism, the stadium of observation and acceptance of cultural differences.

Keywords: culture, different, interculturalism, multicultural, teaching.

Introduction

Today, when we talk about contemporary teaching, we can say that this activity has reached its highest level of development both in terms of the process of knowledge and teaching, as well as in terms of the variants and forms of organization of the teaching work, opportunities for involvement and engagement of multiple factors in learning, the selection and application of methods and teaching means, contemporary technologies, the creation of more appropriate teaching conditions and the implementation of the most contemporary systems of technology and teaching technology.¹

The school as an institution of contemporary education is oriented towards the development that in the first place is the strategic importance of the national interest for the intellectual development and for the preparation of the students as well as the overall transformation for an open and qualitative society. It is a well-known fact that in order to achieve these goals, the school must be reformed and move towards a modern school.²

Education is and remains the most important investment of every individual; schools, as the main institutions that provide instruction, are responsible for providing qualitative education. This means that they are entrusted with the most valuable source of a nation - the power of the brain,

1 Nijazi Zylfiu, *Didaktika*, The University of Pristina, Pristina, 2004, p. 17

2 Xheladin Murati, *Pedagogjia e përgjithshme*, Logos-A, Shkup, 2004, p. 121

The development of a country depends a lot on the quality of education offered in schools and the preparation of the workforce; these facts should be sufficient even in the direction of respecting an intercultural education in our schools.³ In Kosova education, access to education is a right of everyone and guaranteed by law, to ensure that not a single child is denied the right to education. Pre-university education in Kosova includes children aged 0-18 who attend one of the four levels of education, regardless of ethnicity, language, race, etc.⁴

- To ensure mutual communication between students who learn in different languages and cultures, the ministry of education should create conditions in municipalities that:
- will promote cooperation between monolingual schools with instruction in different languages, within the same municipality,
- will stimulate students from mixed language / ethnic circles to learn in multilingual schools,
- will ensure that multilingual schools organize all extracurricular activities without dividing students on the basis of language and community,
- will ensure that multilingual schools organize teaching so as to enable the maximum possible communication between students of classes with different languages of instruction and ethnicity.⁵

This study describes interculturalism in contemporary education and its tasks. It shows that in Kosovo there is a law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members which regulates the education process. Moreover, it gives details on intercultural education such as: its description, its aim, the most important constitutional provisions that have a direct impact on guaranteeing communities at the municipal level, number of students by ethnicity. By the way of conclusion, it presents four approaches to curriculum reform specifying that intercultural education is a key part of the goals of the Kosova Curriculum Framework. The results show that even though various communities in Kosova are fully integrated into the education system, the low level of school attendance, especially of children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, remains a concern.

Interculturalism in Contemporary Teaching

Interculturalism in Contemporary Teaching presents an expression of belief that people of different cultures interconnect between them and learn from each other. Intercultural education implies: - the individual's productive ability to act in a multicultural context.⁶

Culture is precisely the community of knowledge, ideas, values and norms that a person takes from past generations and who tries to convey, often altered, to the next generation.⁷

3 European Union for Kosovo, *Menaxhimi i Arsimit Parauniversitar në*, KEEN, Prishtinë, 2018, p.20

4 European Union for Kosovo, *Menaxhimi i Arsimit Parauniversitar në Kosovë*, KEEN, Prishtinë, 2018, p.20

5 *Multikulturalizmi dhe marrëdhëniet Ndëretnike në Arsim*, UNICEF, Skopje, 2009, p. 18

6 Fatbi Osmani, *Interkulturalizmi dhe Arsimi*, SUT, manuscript from lectures in SUT, 2010, p. 72

7 Group of Authors. *Spektri*, Rozafa, Prishtinë, 2006, p. 141

Interculturalism in contemporary education has these tasks:

The individual's awareness of national identity, but it does not mean not respecting the identity and culture of others,

The individual's awareness on tolerance and respect for differences as the starting point of cultural values, national values, religious values, etc.⁸

In Kosova, the education process is regulated by law for all communities, even communities that do not have their language as an official language in the municipalities where they live, they have the right to be educated in their mother tongue. For these communities, the government develops integrated curricula in the language to which they belong. The Ministry of Education provides curriculum training in community languages. If even within the municipality where the community lives, education for students cannot be organized, transportation is provided to the nearest school in the mother tongue.⁹

According to the Law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in the Republic of Kosova:

*“All persons belonging to communities have the right to receive public education at all levels, in one of the Kosova official languages that they choose. Persons belonging to communities have the right to public pre-school, primary and secondary education in their own language even if it is not an official language. The government sets reasonable and applicable thresholds for the establishment of separate classes or schools operating in the languages of the communities. The minimum threshold for such classes or schools is lower than the thresholds normally set for institutions and school classes. The maximum thresholds will correspond to the thresholds normally set for school classes. This is regulated by law”.*¹⁰

Intercultural Education

Intercultural Education attempts to overcome passive coexistence and realize a developed and sustainable way of life in a multicultural society. This can be achieved through mutual understanding, mutual respect and dialogue between groups belonging to different cultures, as well as through ensuring equal opportunities and fighting discrimination.¹¹

Intercultural education includes on the one hand the assurance of a communication authenticity with the individual and acquaintance with their culture, identity, and on the other hand enables active communication in a society, individual or group as a citizen of Europe and the world, strengthens critical thinking, cultivates reflection for daily experiences, self-awareness and

8 Aurora Gixhari, *Metodat e efektive të komunikimit në mësimdhënie*, Botimet Streha, Tirana, 2016, p. 68

9 *Qasja e komuniteteve në arsimin parauniversitar në Kosovë*, OSBE, Prishtinë, 2018, p. 12

10 Ligji NR. 03/L-047, Për Mbrojtjen dhe Promovimin e të Drejtave të Komuniteteve dhe Pjesëtarëve të Tyre në Republikën e Kosovës, Kuvendi i republikës së Kosovës, Prishtinë, 2008, Neni. 8

11 Group of Authors, *Të kuptuarit e arsimit interkulturor*, Teacher Training Manual, Belgrade 2007. p. 5

respect for others, etc.¹²

Intercultural education is based on cooperation and interaction, learning and interacting together, therefore the school atmosphere is safer with intercultural education and more suitable for each individual. Every teacher and member of the school must have a positive attitude towards intercultural education in order to succeed in this process.¹³

Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the most important constitutional provisions that have a direct impact on guaranteeing communities at the municipal level are:

Official use of language which specifies as an official language in the Republic of Kosovo Albanian and Serbian, while the Turkish, Bosniak and Roma languages have the status of official languages at the municipal level (Article 5).¹⁴

Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (Articles 21-56), which determine the applicability and primacy of the human rights and fundamental freedoms in Kosovo, guaranteed by the most advanced international agreements and instruments.

Rights of Communities and Their Members, that regulate the state's responsibility to protect community rights and their representation in public institutions as well as in local government. Other provisions of the Constitution that regulate relevant issues for communities at the municipal level are: equality before the law (Articles 3 and 5), cultural and religious heritage (Article 9), local government (Article 12), civil service (Article 101), and refugees and returns (Article 156).¹⁵

Table 1. Number of students by ethnicity (2010/20211)¹⁶

Ethnicity	No. of students
Albanians	321.011
Bosnians	3.408
Roma	1.330
Egyptians	1.340
Ashkali	4.195
Turkish	2.743
Gorani	430
Croatians	23
Serbians	418 (the data on the Serbian community are only from a few schools in Kamenica)
Others	372

12 Marina Carmen Gheorghiu, *Intercultural education – Analysis, Florya Chronicles of Political Economy, 2017, p. 71-104*

13 Tania Polat & Soner Ogay Barka, *Multiculturalism and Intercultural Education: A Comparative Study with a Sample of Swiss and Turkish Candidate Teachers. World Applied Sciences Journal, 2012, p. 1180-1189*

14 *The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo*, Entered into force, 15 June 2008, p. 5

15 *Politika lokale në komunitetet multietnike*, KIPRED & SOROS, Pristina September, 2009, p. 7

16 *Të dhëna mbi arsimin - Shënime statistikore 2010/20211*, MASHT, Prishtinë, 2011, p. 12

Table 1 and Table 2 show the data of students attending nine-year education in Kosova by ethnicity. A significant change can be noticed in the 10-year period, there is a decrease in the number of students in general for all communities, including the number of Albanian students in schools.

Table 2. Number of students by ethnicity (2020/2021)¹⁷ (MEST, 2021)

Ethnicity	No. of students
Albanians	321.011
Bosnians	3.408
Roma	1.330
Egyptians	1.340
Ashkali	4.195
Turkish	2.743
Gorani	430
Croatians	23
Serbians	418 (the data on the Serbian community are only from a few schools in Kamenica)
Others	372

Access to cultural reform of school curricula

If we focus on thinking about intercultural education, we set the curriculum, four approaches to curriculum reform can be distinguished:

Contribution - there is a minimum access to intercultural education in the curriculum when periodically analysing selected books and celebrating important dates, heroes or events from different cultures. This approach does not imply systematic linkage of books and different cultural topics in the curriculum. Typical example is special time planning in January when Martin Luther King is read and talked about in the United States.

Fulfilments – It is an approach in which content, concept, themes and perspectives of different cultures are added to the curriculum, but so as not to change its existing structure. Although with such an approach, books and topics of different cultures are included in the existing curriculum, it does not even provide a change in the way students think. Typical example is to look at the Thanksgiving Day from the point of view of the American Indians as a traditional (majority) complement to the prospect of this celebration in the USA.¹⁸

Transformation – is an approach that changes the structure of the curriculum so that students are encouraged to see the concepts, themes and problems from different angles and different

17 *Të dhëna mbi arsimin parauniversitar - Shënime statistikore 2020/2021, MASHT, Prishtinë, 2021, p. 16*

18 Group of Authors, *Të kuptuarit e arsimit interkulturor*, Teacher Training Manual, Belgrade 2007. p. 5

cultural perspectives. Thus, for example, the Thanksgiving Day theme becomes a learning unit that analyses cultural conflicts. This approach of learning implies the development of critical thinking on the learner and the acceptance of differences as an initial assumption.

Social action – is an approach that combines the approach of transformation and activities aiming social change. We not only teach students to understand and analyse current social issues, but also regarding this issue. Typical example is that students following the topic on immigrant status in the US write a letter to senators, congresses and newspapers, expressing their views on state policy towards immigrants.¹⁹

Intercultural education is a key part of the goals of the Kosova Curriculum Framework, in this context the following goals have been set:

- Cultivation of personal identity, national identity, state cultural affiliation
- Promotion of general cultural and civic values
- Development of self-responsibility, responsibility for others, for society and for the environment
- Life and work training in different social and cultural contexts
- Entrepreneurship development and use of technology
- Lifelong learning training.²⁰

In Kosova, various communities are fully integrated into the education system, except for children who attend schools in the Serbian language. However, despite considerable efforts by the MEST, EU progress reports on Kosova continue to highlight the difficulties faced by children of marginalized groups, as well as children of different ethnic groups. The low level of school attendance, especially of children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, remains a concern.

Right to School Life - The school notion has a very broad meaning. Indeed, there are schools of different types and levels. The goals and objectives of certain schools differ, and their organization and educational work depends on those goals and objectives. The school arises from objective and social needs and has a long development and tradition. Throughout history it has changed and is perfected, so its educational work today, is methodical and well planned. Speaking of school education, it is impossible not to mention intercultural education as well. History tells us that education itself does not educate people. Education is the path to professionals, but not a road, which necessarily leads to man, which necessarily leads to a person who has a sense and a sense of values of life and values in general. There are no schools, which could perhaps be called “schools of humanity”. To become man cannot be “schooled”, but only to educated, Kershen Steiner was saying in his time. Schooling values therefore have a different meaning from the values of education.²¹ Council of Europe draws from its archives to promote European standards and examples of good practice in Europe. These standards should also be practiced in our countries

19 Group of Authors, *Të kuptuarit e arsimit interkulturor*, Teacher Training Manual, Belgrade 2007. p. 7

20 *Kurrikula bërthamë për klasën përgatitore dhe arsimin fillor të Kosovës* (klasat 0, I, II, III, IV dhe V), MASHT, Pristina, 2016, p. 51

21 Muhidin Ahmeti, *E drejta e jetës në shkollë*, Takvim, Sarajevo 1999, p. 193

after showing successful results in Europe. The standards that each state must fulfil in education are the following:

- “How Can All Teachers Support Education for Citizens and Human Rights: A Competency Development Framework”, authors: Peter Brett, Pascale Mompoin-Gaillard and Maria Helena Salema (EDC Package)
- “Tools for Quality Assurance of EDC in Schools” (EDC Package)
- “Living in Democracy”, authors: Rolf Gollob, Ted Huddleston, Peter Krapf, Don Rowe, Wim Taelman (EDC Package)
- “Explore Children’s Rights,” authors: Rolf Gollob and Peter Krapf
- “Democratic Governance of Schools”, authors: Elisabeth Bäckman and Bernard Trafford (EDC Package)
- The Common European Reference Framework for Language Learning
- Guide to European Language Policy Policies
- Language Portfolio Documents
- Pedagogical facts about the history of Roma, Council of Europe’s series on Roma children’s education in Europe
- “Guide to Intermediary / Assistant at the Roma School”, authors: Calin Rus and Mihaela Zatreanu, Council of Europe’s Roma Children’s Education Series in Europe
- “Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research, Council of Europe’s Higher Education Series no. 2.
- “Qualifications: Presentation of the Concept” by Sjur Bergan, Council of Europe’s Higher Education Number Nr. 6.²²

Goals and Objectives Education Project in Kosovo; Interculturalism and the Bologna Process, an EU-funded project managed by the European Commission Liaison Office and implemented by the Council of Europe, is operating throughout Kosovo, including all public and private schools and universities. The main objective of the project is to support reforms in primary, secondary and higher education in Kosovo, taking into account European standards and best practices and facilitating further the integration of Kosovo into the Bologna Process. Through the drafted standards, intergovernmental approaches and monitoring mechanisms, the Council of Europe is in a unique position to support these reforms. The efforts of this project assistance can be grouped into four categories: training of staff for education professionals, teacher training, development of materials and dissemination of good practice.²³

Education aims to promote and develop:

- Real understanding of culture in contemporary society

22 *The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo*, Entered into force, 15 June 2008, p. 5

23 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eyscs>, Council of the European Union, 7 July 2020

- The ability to communicate between people, who belong to different cultures
- More flexible attitude to cultural change in society
- Greater willingness of people to engage actively in social interaction with people who have different cultural backgrounds, as well as recognition of the fundamental qualities of human nature as something in common.²⁴

The key dimensions of intercultural education contain two key dimensions:

Intercultural education is considered education, which respects and supports differences in all areas of human life. It makes students feel sensitive to ideas that people have naturally developed the different ways of life, traditions and the worldview, and that this variety of human life enriches us all.

At the same time, it is about education, which promotes equality and human rights, opposes injustice and discrimination, and promotes the values with which equality is built.²⁵ Thus, Kosovo legislation recognizes the right to gain public education at all levels of the elected official language and to acquire preschool, elementary and secondary education in other languages of Kosovo's traditional communities in those municipalities where these communities live.²⁶ Many children because of the difficult economic situation are forced to abandon the school to work for their parents. Prejudices and stereotypes of members of other ethnic communities towards these communities are notable in the education system, which reflects the discrimination against students and parents of these communities.²⁷ Given that education is a necessary condition for competition in the labour market, it is necessary for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities to complete at least primary and secondary education. To achieve this, the strategy foresees the development of supportive policies such as granting scholarships, quota for children of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in order to continue their studies in different fields. Although Kosovo has specific anti-discrimination legislation while education legislation prohibits all forms of discrimination and segregation, however, in practice, there are cases of discrimination and segregation in relation to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.²⁸

It is in the interest of the entire society that emigrated people offer them a good education even in their own languages that they have brought with them. This is not just a multicultural asset but also of great economic and political benefits. The public funding of the first language learning (hitherto perceived by the "Language and Culture Courses of the Fatherland") is also one of these justified reasons. Learning in the first few languages strengthens the language skills and personal awareness of the children. Based on experiences, building personal awareness is also a contribution to integration and prevention of violence. In this sense, such teaching has a great integration impact on a school field influenced by monolingualism and contributes for a good "school climate".²⁹

24 Group of Authors, *Të kuptuarit e arsimit interkulturor*, Teacher Training Manual, Belgrade 2007. p.6

25 Group of Authors, *Të kuptuarit e arsimit interkulturor*, Teacher Training Manual, Belgrade 2007. p. 7

26 *Politika lokale në komunitetet multietnike*, KIPRED & SOROS, Pristina September, 2009, p.9

27 *Strategjia për përfshirjen e komuniteteve rom dhe ashkali në shoqërinë kosovare 2017-2021*, MASHT, Prishtinë, 2017, p.14

28 *Strategjia për integrimin e komuniteteve rom, shkali dhe egjiptian në Kosovë, Komponentë e edukimit*, MASHT, Prishtinë, 2007, p.20

29 IGE, *Gjuhët e para të fëmijëve të përkrahen – një detyrë qendrore e arsimit public*, IGE! Interessen

The development of intercultural sensitivity, describes the stages that people pass through when confronted with other cultures. The elaboration of the treatment of cultural differences is developed by the stadium of denial of the existence of differences, namely extreme ethnocentrism, the stadium of observation and acceptance of cultural differences, which Benet calls etnorelativism.

Intercultural communication is defined as communication between at least two individuals of different cultural backgrounds using verbal or nonverbal communication instruments. Intercultural communication skills have three dimensions: cognitive, behavioral and affective.³⁰

Conclusions

Contemporary teaching as an educational process adapts to the current circumstances of pedagogy advancement through contemporary methods and techniques as well as forms of teaching that have advanced the complete teaching system in the Republic of Kosovo and in this case primary education grades I-V.

As far as intercultural education is concerned, the problem could be solved by including a separate subject or a series of extracurricular classes with an appropriate, set number of hours divided into lectures, methodological classes and study visits to institutions specializing in intercultural education and holding achievements in this field.³¹

New school practices have started since 2000-2001, with new educational reforms, inclusiveness, use of technology, etc.

All communities in the Republic of Kosova learn in their mother tongue

All communities are integrated socially and culturally and their rights are guaranteed by applicable laws.

In different cities of Kosovo where members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities live, learning centers have been established where programs are implemented that help children from these communities to:

- attend school regularly (participation);
- achieve the best learning outcomes (quality);
- develop competencies in the same way as their peers (equality);
- increase self-confidence;
- ensure the involvement of parents;
- attend other educational levels;
- increase employment opportunities.³²

Gemeinschaft Erstsprachen, Zyrich, 2009, p.30

30 Hanifi Şekerci & Dogan , M. Cihangir, *An analysis of prospective primary school teachers*, Electronic Journal of Social Sciences, 2020, p. 1170-1184

31 Katarzyna Wereszczyńska, *Importance of and need for intercultural education according to students' future teachers*, Polish Journal of Educational Studies, 2018, p. 212-228

32 *Përfshirja e fëmijëve të komuniteteve rom, ashkali dhe egjiptian në arsimin parafillor dhe fillor*, KEC, Prishtinë, 2015, p. 12

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