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Република Македонија

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University
Faculty of Pedagogy “St. Kliment Ohridski” – Skopje
Republic of Macedonia

**VI меѓународен балкански конгрес за образование и наука:
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(Охрид, 29. IX - 1. X 2011г.) *Зборник
на трудови*

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THE MODERN SOCIETY AND EDUCATION**

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SOCIAL CHANGES, EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Introduction

In the last decade of the XX century and the beginning of this century, both in the world and in our country, the process of linking on economic, political, cultural, spiritual and communicational plan is increasingly felt. Modern technologies, especially information, as well as telecommunication and digital technology have immensely encouraged the process of globalization. Modern communication systems make it possible that a lot of new scientific knowledge, discoveries, innovations, cultural achievements, political and economical information spread quickly and are accessible to everyone.

In this world of change, contradictions, dilemmas, desires for humanization and democratization of social relations and for the respect of the rights and freedoms of man, all spheres of society change, including the educational system as part of the social system in which a multitude of changes and innovations caused by changes in the environment meet.

We ask for new solutions from science, the systems of values are changing, and with this our lifestyle is also changing. Some new trends are promoted in the sphere of education. One of them is the acquisition of new skills for all or universal and continuous access to learning, in order to gain and improve skills necessary for participation in the society in which knowledge is of great importance. These new skills include basic computer knowledge, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills. Learning systems should adapt to changing lifestyles. Education is an important factor for the development of society as a whole, as well as for the development of an individual.

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Modern tendencies and educational policy

One of the strategic goals associated with the development of our country is raising the educational level of the population, especially children and youth, and forming of a healthy person who will be able to fully fit in social relations, and thus exercise the right to work. The educational system is one of the major factors on which the proper development of an individual depends. The higher the level of education of an individual, the easier his/her fitting into the contemporary mainstream of social life is, it is much easier to find a job on the labor market. Education is one of the most powerful weapons for realizing individual's rights. The more an individual is educated, the higher the position he/she takes on the social scale is. All this, in turn, provides better social standard. Education as an individual's wealth is a huge capital of the whole social community. The position of a community in international relations often depends on the number of educated staff and their level of education. Therefore, there is no state that does not pay attention to the development of the educational system and especially to the formation of highly professional staff.

Modern approach suggests that education should be viewed as an investment in the future of our children. It is evident that in countries in transition, especially in our country, there is a system of education and training that is poorly adapted to the social needs and changes. Educational institutions have trouble coping with both rising demand and the number and diversity of target groups. Namely, our schools need to educate individuals able to cope with the challenges of time in which they live and work, especially in a multinational state such as ours. We need an effective education system that has mechanisms for preparing young people for the challenges and changes that they will confront in the future.

The key objective in developing the educational system is the opening and bringing education closer to the achievements and experiences of European countries, especially countries of the European Union. As we are a country that aspires to European integration and membership in NATO and EU, we should, by their example, completely leave the authoritarian relations in the educational system and everything that causes them. In contrast, we persistently maintain and introduce a growing traditionalism in teaching.

Through its institutions the Republic of Macedonia has a social responsibility to create conditions for improving education and opportunities for increasing the welfare of citizens.

Bearing this in mind, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia passed a significant decision to prepare a National Programme for Education Development as a strategic document that should determine the directions of education by 2015. The National Programme for Education Development helps to develop an effective educational system that has mechanisms to prepare young people and adults for the challenges and changes they will face in the future. This Programme anticipates the long-term needs of the state in the area of education. Active participation of the Republic of Macedonia in global integration processes means taking over responsibility for the realization of global policies in the area of education. In this sense, the Ministry of Education assumed responsibility for the realization of the objectives, principles and recommendations laid down in international documents on educational development in Europe and worldwide. Education for All Programme of UNESCO, the UN *Millennium Development Goals*, the *Stability Pact* and the *Bologna process*, are a reference framework that contains most of the objectives that the Ministry of Education and Science will strive to realize through the National Programme for Education Development in Macedonia.

The economic, political, educational and ecological globalization on the one hand, and the commitment of Macedonia to integrate into European and global processes of cooperation on the other hand, challenge the capacities of the state, human and material, as one of the prerequisites for achieving these objectives. The educational system, research, and innovation, as well as the development of goods and knowledge based on the know-how abilities are manifested as constituent elements of that competitiveness. National and international success of the Republic of Macedonia is directly determined by the existence of high standards in education, promoting research and strengthening of creativity and innovation, fostering specific features within cultural diversity, and the use of modern information and communication technology.

Unemployment and reduced opportunities for youth participation in work influence the structuring of educational needs. It is expected that one of the key challenges for the creators of educational policies and the educational system as a whole, in future, will be the raising of the education level of young people and adults, with special emphasis on increasing the quality of their professional, business and social competencies. Objectivization of the concept of lifelong learning and training should help in establishing a dynamic relation of education with the labor market and social changes. The creation of conditions for continuous magnification, change and refreshing of the competencies of young people and adults, will imply better

starting positions in the transition from studying to work, retention or change of workplace, and active participation in democratic decision making. A basic precondition for achieving this goal is to raise the quality and power of providers of educational, cultural and sports services and building effective mechanisms for their activity on strengthening capacities and improving the quality of individual lives and physical and mental health, as well as satisfaction of young people and adults.

In order to increase employment opportunities, parallel implementation of changes in the educational sphere is needed. In such a case, employment will be determined not only by the rate of economic growth and demand in the labor market, but also by the effectiveness in the realization of the education policy at a regional level. Economic and cultural development of each region in the country will depend entirely on the status of knowledge and professional qualities on the priority scale of values in the regions and the state. They should receive the status of factors decisive for successful economic and cultural development, as opposed to nepotism and favoritism of political parties. Only thus can the demands of the global economy and the unstoppable advancement of the information technology and their impact on the structure of professions, occupations, and production of knowledge-based work in all fields be met. In all forms of human activity, the application and development of information industry, especially computer technology, largely actualizes the issue of promoting information literacy as one of the key competencies that both young people and adults should have. In its development plans Macedonia should outline not only the introduction of new technologies into all sectors of actions, but also the following: increasing computer literate staff potential of the country; strengthening of information education and training in all sectors; functional training or computer literacy of young people and adults in sectors saturated with new information technology; promotion of information education in compulsory and post-compulsory education; and the use of ICT for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the education system. In this sense, knowledge and working with using ICT is an essential part of the competences of young people and adults and it is the precondition for their effective manifestation in the sphere of labor and social - political life.

Conclusion

Based on modern civilization values such as: knowledge, democracy, fairness, tolerance and humanity, the fundamental directions of education development in the state are created. The general principles that underpin the development of education in this country are: quality, civic responsibility, connection with the labor market, fairness, transparency and integration.

Educational policy is directed and oriented towards the following long-term strategic/key positions:

1. Education for all/providing educational equality;
2. Promoting a culture of life;
3. Increasing social participation;
4. Increasing of the educational, cultural and economic competence of Macedonian society;
5. Strengthening and promoting international cooperation;
6. Change management.

But despite the measures implemented by government institutions and civil society organizations to improve the situation in the education sector, the impact of policies and measures in many cases is limited because they are not accompanied by improvements in the educational system as a whole. In addition, many government programs contain only general guidelines and are only marginally translated into specific long-term initiatives. Furthermore, many programs lack adequate funding and in a number of cases, there is no assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the measures.

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