

## Holistic approach to multicultural education by the example of TEMPUS project DOIT<sup>1</sup>

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### *The actual state*

Formation of intercultural education as social phenomenon was encouraged by practical demand, created after the World War II, namely by powerful economic development of many countries and regions, revolutionary changes in technology and hereto related to globalization of economic activity.

The world apparently is getting smaller, since the intensity of long-term contacts between representatives of different cultures has increased and is still increasing. Close intercultural communication becomes necessary in various spheres – economics, politics, science, tourism etc.

As is mentioned in Key competences for lifelong learning, European reference framework: “In this climate of rapid change, there is increasing interest and concern about our social cohesion. There is a risk that many Europeans feel left behind and marginalised by globalization and the digital revolution.”<sup>2</sup>

Topicality of the problem of intercultural education is linked not only with interest in learning of other cultures and the strive for enrichment of one’s own culture, but also with objective social, political and economic processes, and deepening of diverse connections between representatives of different nations in various spheres of contemporary social life.

It is becoming more and more apparent that technological development and close collaboration in various spheres makes necessary strong partnership of representatives of different cultures. This change has lead us to putting the problem of intercultural communication in the forefront that in its turn necessarily requires to pay special attention to intercultural issues.

Recognition of global cultural diversity as an absolute value, vulnerability of existence of most of traditional cultures and risk of their disappearance caused creation and development of disciplines related to multiculturalism and intercultural education.

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<sup>1</sup> DOIT – abbreviature of Development of International Model for Curricular Reform in Multicultural Education and Cultural Diversity Training.

<sup>2</sup> Key competences for lifelong learning, European reference framework, 2007, p. 3.

Humans consider the world by means of their own assumptions and attitudes, through their own “cultural glasses”. At the more fundamental level, interpretation of each individual world is different and depends on the group, to which it belongs (nationwide, regional, local, professional, family groups).

Recognition and appreciation of the fact that individuals with different cultural identity have different standards, experience and expectations is important for creation of global world.

### *Expected response to real challenges*

„Today the mankind faces several risks created by humans themselves: there are rather cultural risks than nature-related dangers, which our ancestors frequently encountered”.<sup>3</sup> How should the education system meet variable requirements of the dynamic world? How can we get rid of “cultural risk”?

Experience of past years shows that future generations need the elaboration of some new knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to become successful members of global world both in their own country and elsewhere. It will give them an opportunity of effective interaction when working in the groups, members of which are the representatives of different cultures.

Education must care for “upbringing of such citizens, who will face challenges and requirements of modern world”<sup>4</sup>. Importance of intercultural literacy as one of the basic directions of civic education is emphasized in National Curriculum, in which it is mentioned that “civic education will assist a pupil with: recognition of his/her own role in the process of sustainable development in the contemporary world and taking appropriate steps; economic thinking and apprehension of its importance in the context of sustainable development; intercultural literacy and relationships”.<sup>5</sup>

Transfer of multiculturalism into education creates intercultural educational environment. There is no alternative to intercultural education and intercultural pedagogics. According to Ouellet (1991)<sup>6</sup>, intercultural teaching promotes:

- better cognition of culture in contemporary society;

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<sup>3</sup> G. Hofstede, G.I. Hofstede. Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind. Ilia State University. Tb., 2011, p. 341.

<sup>4</sup> National Curriculum 2011–2016, p. 2

<sup>5</sup> ibid, p. 1004.

<sup>6</sup> It is cited from a book “Intercultural education T-Kit”, Publishing house of European Union, 2000, p. 56

- improvement of skills of communication between representatives of different cultures;
- open-minded attitude to cultural diversity;
- skills of social interaction, formation of sense of identity and belonging to mankind.

In the opinion of Georgian authors Sh. Tabatadze and N. Natsvlishvili, “intercultural education intends to form the worldview and behavior among the youth, which will be based on principles of humanism, responsibility, solidarity, mutual understanding, democracy and tolerance.

Intercultural education has two pronounced characteristics: 1) education, which recognizes, respects and confirms diversity in all spheres of life as a norm; 2) education, which brings to the forefront equality and human rights, and opposes unreasonable discrimination and promotes development of such values, on which the equitable life pattern can be founded”.<sup>7</sup>

### *Steps taken*

Based on abovementioned, the importance of intercultural education in the context of multicultural society becomes even clearer. Important steps have been taken in Georgia to promote intercultural education, though at this moment we will focus our attention only on the steps, in which authors of this article take part:

1) Since 2012, 5 higher educational institutions and 2 non-governmental organizations<sup>8</sup> of Georgia have been involved in the TEMPUS project „Development of International Model for Curricular Reform in Multicultural Education and Cultural Diversity Training – DOIT”; the project is initiated by Academic Gordon College of Education and is coordinated by Professor Rhonda Sofer., Apart from 7 higher educational institutions and 1 non-governmental organization on the Israeli side, there are six European higher educational institutions involved in the project. The number and scope of the consortium shows the topicality of multicultural education for countries and institutions in the countries involved in the project.

2) In 2014 by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation was approved and funded project represented on behalf of Ilia State University “Problems of intercultural education, their analysis and prospects for development in Georgia”, which is coordinated by one of the

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<sup>7</sup> Sh. Tabatadze, N. Natsvlishvili, Intercultural education, National Center for Teacher Professional Development, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Among these organizations are: Ilia State University, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Sokhumi State University, I. Gogebashvili Telavi State University, Samtskhe-Javakheti State University, Civic Development Institute and Center for Civic Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations.

authors of this article, Professor David Malazonia. Project will make its contribution to researches related to intercultural education.

3) From 2013/2014 several BA and MA courses developed in the framework of project are taught in at participant HEIs.

At this moment we will focus our attention on the first step and will familiarize you with pedagogical approaches, with the use of which the participating individuals are going to do some changes in the framework of TEMPUS Project regarding intercultural education.

With the purpose of promotion of multicultural education our Project sets a goal of establishment of theoretical courses on cultural, ethnic, religious and other diversities, in general, and creation of syllabuses reflecting pedagogical approaches. Lets consider the latter. Georgian side must create general theoretical pedagogical material and several syllabuses under the common name “Principles and strategies of multicultural education”, which sets a goal of teaching of pedagogical approaches at the levels of Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes and also with the purpose of teacher retraining. Syllabus will be made according to holistic approach, which in its turn will be based on the following formula:

$$\text{knowledge} + \text{skills} + \text{attitude/disposition} = \text{competence}$$

What content is laid in each component of this formula?

**Knowledge**<sup>9</sup> – the terms “knowledge” and “information” are interchangeably used in many contexts, but when discussing the study of vital skills, “information” points at message (communication) about concrete fact or subject, while “knowledge” indicates the state of understanding/perception that gives us an opportunity to link factual information with other information or knowledge, to synthesize it into more comprehensive concepts and use it to advantage.

**Skills** – are defined as a psychological ability of adaptational and positive behavior, which enables an individual to effectively meet requirements and challenges of everyday life. Skills are grouped into three wide categories: cognitive skills of information analysis and application, personal skills of personal development and self-management, and interpersonal skills necessary for effective communication and relationship with others.

**Attitudes** – the term is used in context of study of vital skills and consists of wide range of social norms, ethics, morality, values, rights, culture, traditions, spirituality and religion, self-concept and concept of others, and feelings.

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<sup>9</sup> Explanations of knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences are derived from the UNISEF website [http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_7308.html](http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html)

**Competence** – is defined as knowledge, skills and attitudes, compatible with context. Key competences are represented by competences, which are necessary for each individual for self-fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social integration and employment.

When elaborating holistic approach we shared J. Banks' opinion that for multicultural education the teacher should be able to do and to teach pupils three things: *to know, to be able and to care for*. The reader guesses that there is again a talk about model of knowledge-skills-attitudes, which is named "3H", according to first letters of English words head, hand and heart.

Thus, according to the model, three things are important: knowledge, or head – human should know, skills or hands – human should be able to do and attitudes, or heart – human should be concerned about, must look after.

In P. Gorsky's<sup>10</sup> opinion, the main objective of multicultural education is a challenge of social change. The road to this objective implies a triple transformation:

- transformation of "ego";
- transformation of school and teaching;
- transformation of society.

This triple transformation is mutually interconnected and interdependent. In our opinion, on the way of such transformation the use of Uri Bronfenbrenner' altered model of "ecological systems theory"<sup>11</sup> will be profitable. It will assist us to represent teaching material from nearest context to distant context with reflection of double-sided influence between systems and inside the systems.

And finally, it is important for us that National Curriculum is based namely on abovementioned formula when determining competencies and the syllabuses, Readers or other teaching materials, which will be prepared within the framework of the project, represent continuation of this plan at the stage of higher education.

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<sup>10</sup> [The Challenge of Defining "Multicultural Education" by Paul C. Gorski, edited and updated on April 14, 2010.](#)

<sup>11</sup> Ulla Härkönen, The Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory of human development, 2007, p. 15, is derived on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2013 from website: <http://freepdfdb.com/pdf/the-bbronenbrenner-b-becological-b-systems-theory-bof-human-b-bdevelopment-b-2167730.html>