Uzbekistan

Education for International Understanding: Interdisciplinary Approach in Uzbekistan

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The 30th session of the General Conference of UNESCO "recognized the need for international and intercultural understanding, and for education for peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, which has so much cultural diversity, urgent development needs and numerous possibilities for conflict". New philosophy of education and learning, based on interdisciplinary approach, must be capable to accommodate new and unforeseen demands and challenges of the 21st century, particularly new international democracy and human oriented sustainable endogenous development.

Adopting a new approach to education means accepting the scope and diversity of knowledge, particularly of the knowledge linked to science and technology. New relationship with knowledge which will gradually come into being in the 21st century will have to beyond a mere technological and scientific character. Greater emphasis would be laid on the complexity of problems, the globality and multidimensional aspect of events, whereby links could be established between various types of reality and various forms of knowledge.

Concept and practice of lifelong education has been introduced in Republic Uzbekistan in 1997 through adoption of the new Law on Education and National Programme on Personnel Training. Main objective of the reforms is the introduction and development of learning civil society. Particularly, each year characterised by special intersectoral approach. As example, the reforms in current year based on understanding of the interactive relationship between health, nutrition, education, social and economical development. Therefore, population education become crucial one for sustainable
development. Moreover, reproductive rights entered the arena of human rights, as a new kind of rights issue, rights of women to make decisions about their reproductive futures. The rights approach to population education focuses on reproductive and sexual rights within a framework of the right to learn. Following institutions in Uzbekistan could be considered as network partners for ACEIU: UNESCO Community Learning Centers (Namangan, Syrdarya, Samarkand and Tashkent Regions), "Soglom Avlod Uchun" (For Healthy Generation) Foundation, "Oila" (Family) Foundation.

On-going curriculum reform in Uzbekistan considering the introduction of new subjects on values and civic education, new standards and management system. In this regard several UNESCO programs, such as Associated Schools Project, UNESCO Chairs, Community Learning Centres and Inclusive Education, has been supported by the Government of Uzbekistan and outcomes of projects has been disseminated country-wide.

The multi-ethnic structure of the population has a significant impact on civic education, as it creates the need for a multicultural approach to education, and additional demands on teaching materials design and dissemination. Citizenship education is broadly concerned with the development of citizenship or civic competence by conveying the unique meaning, obligation, and virtue of citizenship in a particular society of the acquisition of values, dispositions and skills appropriate to that society. All the subjects in the curriculum contribute to this shaping of values. It is obvious that citizenship education is the cornerstone of the upbringing process, and is found at every stage, from pre-school to adult education. In this respect, the Regional Centre for International Understanding Education could contribute to the development of citizenship education at supranational level - considering every citizen as a member of global community. In this regard 26 UNESCO ASP Schools in Uzbekistan as well as UNESCO Chair on Civic and Values Education at the Tashkent State Pedagogical University and UNESCO Chair on Human Rights, Peace, Tolerance, Democracy and International Understanding at the Tashkent University of World Economy and Diplomacy could be a part of network with ACEIU as well. Currently, more space in school curriculum's is allocated to human rights values, starting from the global level (mostly on the basis of United Nations documents). Another example in the field of informal education is the joint project by UNESCO Office in Tashkent and Korean National Commission for UNESCO on publication of "Silk Roads Tales", which consists of folk stories from 21 countries along historical Silk Road. The tales from book already regularly
broadcasting through Uzbekistan's National TV and Radio programs, focusing auditorium to the intercultural understanding.

The task on identifying new approaches to global citizenship with further its integration in the new curricula could be considered as one of the field of studies of ACEIU. Democracy will, indeed, have to be anchored in the long-term, by placing at the heart of institution this anticipatory and forward-looking concept of citizenship as a project.

Globalisation, and particularly development of new informational technologies, establishing new links and forms of solidarity among nations. One of the most sensitive factors of identity is mother tongue. Linguistic conflicts exacerbate surges in nationalism and nourish separatism. We can expect languages to lead in the future to major political problems resulting in explosions and conflicts. One of the outcome of the Stockholm Conference on Culture and Development is broad understanding on development of linguistic diversity and multilingual cyberspace.

While the official language of Uzbekistan is Uzbek, Russian language remains as ingua franca between different ethnic groups. Every ethic group has a right to teach its children in own language. There are number of schools with various teaching language, such as Uzbek, Russian, Karakalpak, Turkmen, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, etc. Respectively, the Government of Uzbekistan producing textbooks on these languages. In order to meet new challenges, the Media Resources and Learning Centre in Tashkent (which has been created by National Commission with support of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Programme for Development of Communication) is ready to launch new project on multilingual virtual school in close co-operation with ACEIU. The main objective of the project is to facilitate of access to the international network by the computer processing of language. The expected outcomes will be in the form of series of educational multimedia curriculum's (CD-ROM) in different language's.

The information civilisation, which is also the civilisation of knowledge, holds out no hope of employment to the functionally illiterate. The functionally literate person should be able to make proper use of the new information technology in a global framework.

Multidisciplinary approach in education for international understanding also includes environmental questions, which are occupying an ever-increasing importance in the people's minds everywhere. Sustainable development means the establishing of harmony between human society and nature, meeting human needs of present and future generations, while preserving and replenishing natural resources. Environmental
education as life-long education, conveying environmental attitudes, knowledge, skills and preparedness based on pedagogical thinking so as to strengthen the environmental awareness of members of civil society.

There are several institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan, who could be a partners in this respect, such as National Committee on UNESCO "MAB" Programme, UNESCO Chair on Ecology of Aral Sea at the Nukus Pedagogical Institute, "ECOSAN" Foundation.

The ACEIU could carry out its activities on promoting of understanding and broadening the knowledge in all matters related to the concept of Learning Society and the Water-Environment issues; to offer an exchange of views among the providers of education and training, the software and multimedia developers and the end-users; to stimulate international perspectives and networking for enhancing the quality and pooling of expertise; to promote extensive interdisciplinary co-operation, more specifically with UN-agencies, IGOs and NGOs.

We do hope that Uzbekistan would benefit from programmes of the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding and by networking with educational institutions in the neighbouring countries would be able to promote ACEIU in the region.