

Eduard Balashov, PhD  
Associate Professor  
National University of Ostroh Academy

## **Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education and Sustainable Development: A Case of Ukraine**

***Abstract.** Global tendencies in development of higher education have been analyzed in the article. Increase of the financial support and massivity of higher education has been considered in particular. The influence of the main global tendencies on the Ukrainian educational system and its sustainable development has been characterized. Suggestions about using the positive potential for sustainability and overcoming the possible negative consequences in the process of internationalization of higher education in Ukraine have been presented.*

***Key words:** globalization, massivity of higher education, internationalization of higher education, sustainable development, higher education, student.*

**Introduction.** It has been a historical fact that education plays a necessary and decisive role for the economic, social and political development and impacts each area on a tremendous scale. This common understanding and truth has been shared by advanced and least developed countries alike. Just as it is the case for development, education in the world plays the crucial role also for sustainable development because intelligent and technical development and behavioral changes through education are recognized as the necessary means and ways for sustainable development. However we will have to question the type of education that could really bring such changes needed for sustainable development and also the agenda and means to teach sustainability.

Modern system of contemporary higher education is one of the main factors of increase of the human capital quality; generator of new ideas; factor of dynamic

development of economics and society in general. In order for the Ukrainian higher education to be truly efficient and execute these important tasks, it is necessary to modernize it considering the actual world trends in the development of education in the broad socio-economic context.

Any education may contribute to the development, but it does not mean that the expansion of school attainment necessarily guarantees the improvement of economic, social conditions. The important thing is the quality of education and schooling whether students are really learning what truly matters. However in order to drive our education more toward the sustainable development, we have to implement the quality education, that is oriented at the value and skills of sustainability into the various kinds and levels of education.

For these reasons, the role and responsibility of higher education in Ukraine can never be overemphasized or overestimated. Consequently there can be observed the crucial role of higher education for sustainable development in three major areas: a) higher education, especially universities are responsible for researches and findings of the ways of sustainable development and the necessary knowledge and skills and also norms of behavior; b) scientific and technological improvement; c) sustainable production and consumption should be carried on by researches of universities.

The crucial role of higher education as the highly advanced and comprehensive knowledge provider is to find out the best way to bring about harmony and synthesis among the three pillars of sustainable development, economic, environmental, and social tasks and issues, which are often in conflict with each other. Institutions of higher education are not just simple provider of advanced knowledge and technology, but should be deliberating, and searching for the holistic view and concept of sustainable development and the necessary strategy and action plan.

Higher education incorporates institutions that train and produce teachers for primary and secondary education, and also for the vocational, technical schools.

Quality education completely depends on the degree of qualified teachers and education for sustainable development can be practiced only through the teachers that have been trained of the value and perspective of sustainability.

Education for sustainable development is not a simple subject that can be learned through only knowledge transfer or text books, but through a course of interdisciplinary approaches to help the learners be familiarized with the complex problems of society and convinced of the necessary actions and involvement. Teachers must be trained to carry out this kind of teaching job, and the Ukrainian universities are responsible for training these kinds of teaching personals.

Higher education also produces leaders and elites of the country and society, who are directing and managing political parties, governmental bureaucracies, economic institutes and private industries, all the stakeholders of sustainable development. If higher education fails to educate the students for sustainability, the future leaders of various sectors and areas cannot be qualified agents for sustainable development. Sustainable development cannot be achieved or realized by some successful efforts of individuals or some groups in a sector. Stakeholders of sustainable development are from the broad areas of a country and society; scientists, businessmen, politicians, local governments, engineers, agricultural producers, journalists, students, and teachers etc.

### **Critical Review of University Education for Sustainable Development**

Regarding the present roles and functions of higher education for sustainable development, we will have to question frankly about the structural and programmatic situations of universities and colleges, as they are the representative and most influential institutes of higher education in every country.

If universities are concerned to their responsibility of education for sustainable development, they should think about ways to respond so that future graduates can deal with sustainability issues in their careers and lives, because universities play a vital role not only in shaping the future by educating the professionals of tomorrow, but also by creating a research base for sustainability

efforts, and providing outreach and service to communities and nations especially related to difficult sustainability issues (Mckeown 2002).

Let us reflect critically on the situations of universities in any country. How many universities do have research projects on these issues and do provide educational programs in their curriculum related to sustainability questions? Does my university have a special institute or department for research and training for sustainable development or for particular issues of sustainability in my region or community? How much are our universities concerned and involved in the community development activities, whether they are economic, environmental or socio-cultural problems, and preparing and encouraging students to devote and contribute to the global issues like poverty, health, education and ecological crisis?

Among over the 300 universities and colleges in Ukraine, there can counted only just a few universities that have established special institutes or programs for education for sustainable development. Of course, all the universities are equipped with many research institutes and projects, but most of them are doing some academic research and dealing with fragmental issues of science, technology, law, management and arts.

Our universities are still very isolated from society and social reality. They need to be more open to the needs of society and more connected with social innovation through partnership with civil society (Brito 2006). But Universities in many countries are remaining in the ivory tower isolated from the challenges by the rapid social change through globalization and technological revolution.

Equally serious as the problem of isolation and indifference to societal needs is the tendency toward unsustainable research and teaching at the universities. When the researchers and educators of university do not possess a strong awareness and sensitivity about what sustainability is, and how it is different from conventional philosophy and directions of development, they can easily produce unsustainable results in their academic activities. Especially many scholars in science and technology institutes, management and policy institutes are inspired

too deeply by development ideology to neglect and devastate the principle of sustainability (Mayer 2005).

Education for sustainable development should not neglect or forget the global dimension of sustainable future, and the interconnectedness of local and global development. However many research and teaching programs of university are oriented at the national developmental goals only and closing eyes on the global issues of sustainable world like poverty, illiteracy, war, and cultural diversity.

### **Problems of the Ukrainian higher education in global context**

Modernization of the Ukrainian higher education requires overcoming of number of the problems. Among them the most actual are: discrepancy between the structure professional education and the real demand of economy; decrease of quality of higher education; corruption in the system of higher education; slow pace of integration of the Ukrainian higher education to the European and world intellectual space.

The system of higher education in Ukraine has broadened since 1990<sup>th</sup>, and the numbers of educational institutions and students and graduates of higher educational institutions have increased significantly. Therefore, the system of higher education has faced many problems such as destruction of the system of vocational and professional education; shortage of skilled workers in the labor professions; impossibility to find work in specialty for the graduates; inflation of educational and vocational standards; excessive load on instructors; insufficient funding of the universities; growth of the level of corruption at the universities etc.

Undoubtedly, the opinion about the negative consequences of quick growth of higher education system is partially justified and grounded. About 85 % of the Ukrainian secondary schools enter the universities right after school (Oksamytna et al. 2010). This indicator is very high compared to the world standards. To compare, in the USA in 2012 only about 66% of the high school graduates entered the universities (*College...*). At the same time, in accordance with another important indicator, namely share of people with higher education, Ukraine is not

among the unconstrained leaders. According to the survey of OECD, the top ten countries with the highest percentage of University graduates are as follows: Canada (51%), Israel (46%), Japan (45%), USA (42%), New Zealand (41%), South Korea (40%), Great Britain (38%), Finland (38%), Australia (38%) and Ireland (37%) (The most...). It can be said that in accordance with the percentage of the persons with complete (22%) and partially complete higher education (20.5%) (*Level of...*), the real relevant indicator for Ukraine is about 35%.

According to the international indicator of the level of engagement to the higher education Gross Enrolment Ratio, Ukraine is at one of the leading places among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (73%). However, in terms of this indicator our country is behind such countries as Finland (93%), USA (82%), Sweden (79%) and Norway (78%), which have significantly higher level of social and economic development (*Education at...*). Thus, only some parameters of the system of higher education in Ukraine can be considered as excessively high such as number of graduates of secondary schools entering the universities, number of accredited universities, while the Ukrainian higher education in general demonstrates qualitative indicators comparable to those of the neighboring countries, including the states of Central and Eastern Europe.

### **Quality of higher education and globalization processes**

There are many, often contradictory, assessments of the current state and dynamics of quality of the Ukrainian education in general. This data is often used in political competition for criticizing or supporting the authorities. Recently, there were published a number of rating assessments of quality of the Ukrainian higher education in comparison with other countries, according to which Ukraine took place from the 70<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> at the same period. Undoubtedly, the methodologies of evaluation of some countries and their ranking may differ in various surveys; however such large differences in final results cause doubts.

It is obvious that the truly objective criterion for the quality of higher education in any country is the number of students from other countries studying at

its higher educational institutions. However, the academic student mobility still remains rather exception than the rule on the global scale in spite of high growth rate. Only 4.1 million students from of 150 million students worldwide (less than 3%) were studying abroad in 2010 and about half of them were from China, India, South Korea and other Asian countries (The most...). Higher education, unlike financial and goods markets, is far less impacted by globalization. Still, higher education remains mostly national and regional, and thus the competitive rankings of the Universities from different countries are still rather conditional.

Undoubtedly, the current situation can change, but considering the scale and inertia of education, significant changes are unlikely to occur over the next coming years. At the same time, about 65 thousand foreign students are studying in Ukraine in 2016, which is quite high indicator in comparison with even the most developed countries in the world. Ukraine is in top ten countries of the world countries by the number of foreign students, demonstrating the indicators very similar to the population of the European countries – members of OECD. For example, in Spain the population of which is about 47 million studied about 62.5 thousand foreign students in 2011. It is worth emphasizing that Spain unlike Ukraine was one of the most powerful colonial empires, still remaining a cultural metropolis for many inhabitants of the countries of Southern and Central America, and Spanish is the second most widespread language in the world after Chinese (*The most...*).

All this does not mean that the Ukrainian higher education does not require a significant improvement of its quality, but it is obvious that in this area a more balanced analysis of the international rankings and expert opinions should be combined with the independent formulation of the goals and tasks, and development and implementation of the efficient solutions for achieving these goals, primarily basing not on the image consideration, but on the real needs and interests of the Ukrainian society.

### **Economy of education in Ukraine and abroad**

One of the most significant differences of the current system of the Ukrainian education is in much lower absolute level of financing than in the developed countries. If in relative terms, the share of expenditures for the education is about 6-8% of GDP, however the absolute indicators of the Ukrainian GDP are much lower than the corresponding indicators of the European countries with a proportional size of population. For example, it is twice lower than in Poland and almost four times lower than in Spain which is almost of the same size population wise. At the same time, over 90% of the state investments to education in Ukraine are directed at maintenance – salaries, utilities, nutrition etc. (Expenditures on...), thus, the vast majority of funds spent on the educational system, is for maintaining its current state and not for development.

It is necessary to note that private investments into the sphere of higher education in the developed countries are not limited to only tuition fee. Essential incomes of the Universities are received from charities and as a payment for the executed contracts carried for the private companies for the scientific researches and applied developments. The developed systems of student lending in turn allow citizens to pay the tuition fee for a long period of time after graduating, thus transferring the expenditures to the banking systems of the according countries. Private financing of higher education is higher in the countries in which more citizens have higher education. In addition, the gradual increase of the share of private financing of education, especially at the universities, in developed countries does not occur at the expense of decrease in state financing; amounts of both public and private financing are steadily increasing, but the increase of private financing has much higher pace.

One of the most decisive trends that have been marked in the economic sphere consists in the constant growth of the educational budgets during the past 15 years. General size of the global educational services market in 2012, for example, was more than triple size of the total military budget of all the countries, and amounted in 4.4 trillion USD, while in 2000 it was only 2.3 trillion USD.

According to the forecasts of the experts foreseeing increase in the current high growth rates of the world educational services market, its size will exceed 6.3 trillion USD in 2018 and the highest amounts will be attributed to the higher education and corporate life learning education (Strauss 2013).

It is noteworthy that growth in the investment rates into the educational services markets was not directly affected by the world financial and economic crisis. This can be partly explained by the desires of parents to grant the better future for their children by investing in their higher education and also by the developed countries' strategies for additional financing of their economies and stimulation of the consumer demand. In the countries and the educational segments where financing has been decreased, it is compensated by private investments, including tuition fee. The citizens of the developed countries despite slight protests generally agree to pay more for higher education. Other reasons for increase of the global educational system, called by the experts are increase of the number of adults receiving additional education and the rapid introduction of new information and computer technologies such as distant courses, e-learning, e-books, e-systems of educational management etc., to the educational process.

### **Increase in massivity of higher education and sustainable development**

The main reason for increase of the expenditures for education during a few past decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a social phenomenon inherent in all developed countries – increase in the massivity of higher education. In many European countries, including Ukraine, higher education has turned to be a social standard instead of a privilege.

The most convincing reasons of increase of the massivity in higher education may be considered a demographic crisis and decrease in the number of workplaces in the industrial sector of economy. Systems of higher education, interested in own preservation under the conditions of decrease in absolute number of the entrants, naturally seek to maximize the number of graduates of the secondary schools entering universities. The employers also consider the document of higher

education as the additional filter which allows cutting off the excessive number of potential employees without such a document.

Development of the systems of higher education in developed countries is caused by the objective demand for higher education in the society. Higher education is considered to be necessary but not sufficient condition for receiving better job and climbing up a career ladder.

In Ukraine and other post-soviet states in which higher education in the past was considered elite and gave real social benefits, the inertia of social consciousness contributes to further development of the educational system. In addition, in post-soviet societies the possibility to receive higher education for most young people has become a part of an unwritten contract between the authorities and population. The possibility of receiving higher education, often nominally or really free, for the adolescences is often considered to be a kind of compensation for unsatisfactory social and economic condition in which is the major part of the society for quite a long time. Considering the above mentioned it is clear that in Ukraine all the measures aimed at reduction of higher education system or the possibilities to obtain it will inevitably be accompanied by dissatisfaction and resistance in the society with an additional intensifies opposition from higher education system itself. Mass higher education, despite all its weaknesses and negative consequences, is increasingly becoming a social reality like literacy or internet connection. Therefore it is not needed to justify the needs for reducing the higher education system, but it is necessary to look for the mechanisms of its efficient use in the interests of citizens and the state in general.

### **Negative consequences and positive potential of the massivity of higher education**

The most obvious negative consequence of increase of the level of massivity in higher education is inflation of the qualifications received by the graduates. The more graduates receive a diploma of higher education, the greater is a competition for the workplaces which require the diploma. The situation is even worsened

under the conditions of inappropriate connection between the structure of preparation of the professionals at the university and the real needs of economies which has been an outdated problem in Ukraine. In this regard, there is an obvious need in bringing the state order for preparation of the professionals in accordance to the real needs of the national economy. If to reject the political consideration, remain indisputable the following grounds for providing the state with a capacity to fully or partially grant higher education in the following.

1. In specialties and in volumes that are actually demanded by the state sector of the economy and the system of providing the critically important public goods such as defense, education, medicine etc., and also in the specialties and in volumes which are forecasted to be demanded by the private sector of the economy;
2. For the entrants who demonstrated much higher than average abilities to continue education.

In the vast majority of other cases the reasonable and balance gradual restructuring and optimization of the state order for preparation of the specialists, under the conditions of real decentralization of higher education, autonomy of the universities, reduction of corruption and introduction of the new independent system of control over the quality of education, will not only have positive consequences for the state, but will also find understanding in the society in which higher education will remain demanded for a long term period.

Nowadays both in Ukraine and abroad the majority of entrants give the higher education a social meaning, thereby contributing to increase in massivity of higher education and overstating the expectations about its results. These high expectations themselves have a tendency to inflation as higher education in the result of massivity turns from the advantage to the standard which has both negative and positive character as not presence of higher education gives some preference, but absence of it becomes a significant disadvantage.

In public opinion in Ukraine there exists an idea about the critical need for “professionalism” which is not necessarily embodied in certain knowledge and skills, but necessarily formally confirmed by a diploma of higher education. Higher education or a scientific title is becoming the attributes of the social status, and the importance of symbolic component of education is increasing. Neglecting the value of higher education contributes to it, and absence of reforms which would be directed at economic efficiency in the domestic economy stimulates demand for the abstract “universal” educational specialties such as manager, lawyer, economist or journalist. Moreover, lack of the clear criteria of practical evaluation of such “universal” professions creates additional conditions for further decrease in the quality of higher education in Ukraine.

Modern computer technologies opening wide opportunities for development of various forms of low-quality distance education contribute to the process of massization of higher education. However, a truly high-quality professional education involves acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills and establishment of efficient social connections, and still requires long-term personal cooperation between the instructor and student in the process of solving the time-consuming tasks, including the ones of creative nature. Therefore any modern technologies which do not foresee such personal cooperation, can serve only as an addition to the traditional methods of education, but not at all as their substitution. Also, inflation in higher education in many traditionally industrial countries is stimulated by political ideological rhetoric in which the ideas of “informational society” and “knowledge-based society” sometimes are used basically for justification of the positivity of refusal from traditional production oriented at the regional and national markets, which is supposedly superseded by the new “knowledge-based economy”. This in fact leads to further decline of the national material, technical and infrastructural basis.

Despite the obvious negative influences, the main of which is qualification inflation, the growth of massivity in higher education which is becoming a social

reality, has a rather powerful potential, which in case of proper implementation can significantly contribute to solving acute social and economic problems. The main components of this positive potential include the improvement in quality of human capital due to better targeting of the youth with higher education to the international markets of labor, goods and services, greater dynamism in borrowing the best experiences for further creative development.

Perhaps the greatest positive potential in growth of the level of massivity of higher education in Ukraine is in creation of the whole modern educational history with a great number of the workplaces, and the results of its activities are greatly demanded. This social and economic result is especially important under the conditions of long-term demographical crisis and ageing of population. For the full use of this potential it is necessary to actively promote the development of lifelong education, including vocational education, mastering new specialties, advanced training etc. An important potential socio-political consequence of massivity of higher education is increase of social expectation of the youth seeking for a better quality of life and is ready to make personal efforts in economic and political life of the state and the processes of its renewal in Ukraine.

### **Conclusions**

Reorienting existing education in Ukraine at all levels to address sustainable development is very urgent and necessary, so that all citizens could be educated to learn the knowledge, skills, perspectives and values of sustainability and to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future and lifestyle.

In this regard sensitizing youth in the basic and secondary education is most efficient and powerful, because their value system and behavior can be well changed through the reoriented education. However, the crucial point is to have the qualified teachers who could deliver the reoriented lessons and convince the children of the sustainable awareness and behavior. So the implementation of the effective education in schools is not possible without the institute of higher education, universities being innovated and restructured. Universities should play

the role of capacity builder, in terms of training teachers and formulating the conceptual framework of appropriate education for sustainable development.

In order to meet this role and responsibility of higher education, some general elements should be innovated in any university program and structure. The following categories of university program should be innovated and transformed.

1) First of all, the research institutes and program of universities should be innovated and changed to meet the needs of sustainable development. Since the concept of sustainable development is very broad and comprehensive, and also evolving and expanding, the establishment of a specialized institute of sustainable development is to recommend, in order to study on the holistic philosophy and contextualized methods of education and to maintain access to information and global cooperation networks. Other research institutes in science, technology, economy, law and management can be related to the themes of sustainable development, like environment, climate change, poverty eradication, health, human rights, peace and conflicts, sustainable production and consumption.

2) Educational program of universities in terms of curriculum of professional education should be innovated and improved in order to conscientize and sensitize students of sustainable development. Courses and subjects of university education are in general compartmentalized according to the diversification of academic principles and perspectives. But the goals and mission of education for sustainable development are to bring the learners to the comprehensive understanding and awareness on the needs of structural change to achieve sustainability. So special curriculums for separate space and time to deal with the challenges of sustainable development is both sensible and recommendable, because this kind of foundational course is relevant for evoking responsibility to care for the limited resources and lives of the global human beings.

3) University programs, whether researches or education, or outreaches, should be innovated to develop partnerships with their communities, governments,

industries and cultural institutes, so that the knowledge, skills and results of their researches can flow into society and also can be challenged by the needs of society.

In order to maximize the use of positive potential of the modern global tendencies in the development of education and overcoming its negative effects particularly in Ukraine it is necessary to implement the following measure:.

- Decentralization of system of higher education, real autonomy of the universities including its economic activities, development of private sector of higher education along with implementation of the efficient system of evaluation of quality of education based on assessments of the independent agencies;

- Gradual restructuring and optimization of state order for preparation of the specialists with participation of employers for bringing the state order in accordance with the real needs of the state and private sectors of the national economy;

- Development of the system of lifelong learning;

- Further development of export potential of domestic higher education with the aim of receiving the economic results, accelerating the modernization of education and strengthening the influence and prestige of Ukraine in the world;

- Active implementation of the entrepreneurial component to the programs of higher education, primarily in terms of acquiring by the students the practical skills needed for the independent economic activities, and receiving the necessary knowledge about legislation and conducting business in Ukraine and abroad;

- Drawing attention to the social block of higher education and issues of the university management, from which largely depends future participation of the youth in social and political life;

- Purposeful educational work for objective informing the entrants and their parents about the value of certain specialties on the domestic and international labor markers.

So it is very crucial to educate and build up a vanguard group of leaders in each sector of society, public or private, that will take leading roles in promoting

the values of sustainable development and transforming the unsustainable sector toward the more sustainable society. On the base of this perception and orientation the present situation of higher education in Ukraine should be reviewed and critically questioned on how much our universities are responsible and responding to the education for all and sustainable development goals and how our higher education can be reformed and innovated in order to meet the needs for participatory and sustainable development.

The institutes of higher education have to strengthen the networks of cooperation and exchanges with other centers of excellence at the national, regional and global level in order to create synergies and mobilize greater resources and capacity to ensure sustainable development. In this regards Ukrainian universities should become more globalized and start working on their strategies of internationalization.

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