



**The use of international
experience in the framework
of skill enhancement
course for UNESCO
ASPNET educators.**



THE USE OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF SKILL ENHANCEMENT COURSE FOR UNESCO ASPNET¹ EDUCATORS.
EL USO DE LA EXPERIENCIA INTERNACIONAL EN EL MARCO DEL CURSO DE MEJORA DE HABILIDADES PARA EDUCADORES ASPNET DE LA UNESCO.

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Fecha de recibido: 13 de noviembre de 2019

Fecha de aceptado para publicación: 30 de noviembre de 2019

Fecha de publicación: 10 de diciembre de 2019

Abstract

The relevance of the present issue is caused by a strong need to adapt educational curriculum of teacher training courses to the requirements of ever-more connected world and emerging of Knowledge Societies for fostering quality education and global citizenship principles at regional, national and international levels. The aim of the study is to demonstrate the pedagogical and humanitarian potential of adding UNESCO global agenda issues into career development programs for teaching staff on the example of successfully completed release of training course in Kazan, Russia. The key research method used within empirical approach was the study of the educational structure activity (extended courses “UNESCO ASPnet teacher”), monitoring of training materials and pedagogical observation. The research resulted in the conclusion that addressing global social, cultural, and educational issues is extremely beneficial to students and practicing teachers, providing the formation of a new outlook and understanding of global coherence and responsibility, boosting their personal and professional development. The article is of practical interest for acting and potential project participants, instructors and managers from secondary comprehensive, vocational, tertiary and extended educational institutions.

Keywords: teacher training, international experience, global education, UNESCO values, UNESCO Associated schools, sustainable development.

La relevancia del presente tema es causada por una fuerte necesidad de adaptar el currículo educativo de los cursos de capacitación docente a los requisitos del mundo cada vez más conectado y emergente de las Sociedades del Conocimiento para fomentar una educación de calidad y principios de ciudadanía global a nivel regional, nacional e internacional. El objetivo del estudio es demostrar el potencial pedagógico y humanitario de agregar temas de la agenda global de la UNESCO en los programas de desarrollo profesional para el personal docente en el ejemplo de la finalización exitosa del curso de capacitación en Kazan, Rusia. El método de investigación clave utilizado dentro del enfoque empírico fue el estudio de la actividad de la estructura educativa (cursos extendidos "UNESCO ASPnet teacher"), el seguimiento de los materiales de capacitación y la observación pedagógica. La investigación llegó a la conclusión de que abordar los problemas sociales, culturales y educativos globales es extremadamente beneficioso para los estudiantes y los docentes en ejercicio, proporcionando la formación de una nueva perspectiva y comprensión de la coherencia y responsabilidad global, impulsando su desarrollo personal y profesional. El artículo es de interés práctico para los participantes en el proyecto y potenciales, instructores y gerentes de instituciones de educación secundaria integral, vocacional, terciaria y extendida.

Palabras clave: formación docente, experiencia internacional, educación global, valores de la UNESCO, escuelas asociadas de la UNESCO, desarrollo sostenible.

¹ UNESCO Associated Schools Network



Introduction

It's a common knowledge that education as a social phenomenon is based on the best experience and knowledge of the past and present, but is focused on affecting future generations. And referring to a popular motto: "The future is now", we don't have much time to catch up with the progress if we lag behind common development. That is why modern teachers should be aware of the cutting-edge social and educational changes to make their professional activity relevant under current conditions [Kondrateva, Fakhruddinova, 2016].

According to the viewpoint of the UNESCO expert A.S. Kiselev, a new type of innovation society is arising. In comparison with network information society [Kurochkin, 2011] by Manuel Castells (1990-2040), focusing on global digital information and communications [Anttiroiko, 2015], the latter is based on nano technologies and nano services (2030-2090). "The sixth technological mode" according to the author, "is a kind of social panorama...in the form...of matter possessing specific social landscape, which essence is in emerging social relations able to radically change the social existence in the course of socio-innovation development" [Kiselev, 2008] Thus the interaction in the process of educational services delivery becomes the main instrument for providing the well-being of the community and generating a new scope of social opportunities. "The settings of consumer society gradually give way to understanding of interconnectedness and convergence of all processes, futility of satisfying short-term needs. Humanistic focus of science and education allows to form new ethically targeted perception of a man and thoroughly analyze and account for the consequences of scientific and economic strategies for the society and environment, being guided by the sustainable development concept" [Pruss, 2013]. Interdisciplinary approach, inclusion, accessible and continuous education are among the priorities nowadays.

Current paradigm in thinking proposes that knowledge gives significant benefits only if it is practically applied in the global social development interests [Vodolazov, 2018]. We believe that the quintessence of a modern progressive view on teaching is embodied in the four pillars of Education for the 21st century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together [Cua, 2013]. 3 "New Humanism" or "Ecology of Culture" is in line with UNESCO ideology and characterizes its forward-looking activities on all educational levels [Zolotukhina, 2012].

Under consideration of the authors is one of the most successful acting international projects on the level of secondary comprehensive education in Russia – UNESCO Associated Schools Network, comprising more than 260 Russian schools [Pruss, 2012]. Presently "UNESCO Associated schools" Project embraces the whole country, conventionally divided into 9 regional centres of the project: "Moscow", "Centre", "Baltic-North", "South-Caucasus", "Volga", "Bashkortostan", "Ural", "Sakha-Baikal" and "Siberia-Altai". It has a smoothly running system of the project realization, according to which each UNESCO Associated school works under the guidance of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO and National Coordination Centre at international, national, regional and local level on the base of educational institutions in the framework of the priority lines:

- [ASPnet and UN priorities](#)



- [Education for Sustainable Development](#)
- [Peace and human rights](#)
- [Intercultural learning](#)

The present article is devoted to the issue of professional teacher training under modern conditions of open global educational space and an urgent need to integrate new pedagogical skills and principal world vision for educational quality enhancement in accordance with UNESCO SDG4 (Sustainable Development Goal 4/ Target 4.7²). The rationale behind the experiment in teacher education was the conviction that the ideology, methods and goals of the International organization are closely bound to the global educational discourse with its strive for innovations in technological, scientific and cultural spheres.

From January 28 to February 1, 2013 extended courses were organized on the basis of the University of Management “TISBI” (Home to National ASPnet Coordination Centre and International UNESCO Chair), Kazan, Russia. The occasion united teachers all around Russia (Astrakhan, Volgograd and Volgograd region, Izhevsk, Irkutsk and Irkutsk region, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar and Krasnodar region, Krasnoyarsk region, Zheleznogorsk, Nizhniy Tagil and Sverdlovsk region, Samara and Samara region, Sayanogorsk, Tomsk, Uliyanovsk and Uliyanovsk region) under UNESCO aegis. 38 school principals and teachers joined the courses with one common goal – to obtain the knowledge of UNESCO ASPnet projects, stimulate pedagogical community and exchange experience. The initiative of the courses was approved by UNESCO ASPnet International Coordinator Ms. Livia Saldari.

Methods

The aim of the study was to demonstrate the benefits of integrating best international humanitarian principles and practices into teacher training programs following the tendency of modernization of domestic educational system and fostering quality education and internationalization.

Among the research methods used by the authors were: social and cultural analysis of the UNESCO core values, priorities and guidelines in respect to domestic educational needs, the study of practical experience gained during several local UNESCO-oriented educational events, and in the framework of the extended courses “UNESCO ASPnet teacher” held from January,28 to February,1 in 2013 (72 academic hours). The major research method used within empirical approach was the study of the UNESCO Chair and ASPnet National Coordinator’s activity, monitoring of training materials and pedagogical observation.

The experimental basis of research was The University of Management “TISBI” and International UNESCO Chair “Training and retraining specialists under market economy conditions”, Kazan, Russia.

Results

² Quality education for sustainable development: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of culture of peace and non-violence, cultural diversity and global citizenship



Following the principle: “Think global, act local”, the teacher training course was designed with the account for all recent UNESCO educational policy priorities, but customized for domestic reality and instructional needs to ensure its better cultural adaptation [Belyaeva, 2018]. Therefore the content of the course was built around 4 key elements: 1) Inclusive education and tolerance; 2) The use of ICT technologies in education; 3) Multiculturalism combined with Patriotic Education (promoting respect for other cultures and national historical background); 4) The concept of sustainable development (Preserving world’s natural environment, cultural and historical heritage).

The curriculum of the courses also included:

- Main UNESCO activity directions in education, science and culture;
- UNESCO mission, principles, objectives and strategy;
- UNESCO ASPnet Project: World cultural and natural heritage, environmental protection, tolerance, respect for human rights, Education for All;
- UNESCO ASPnet Teacher status and regulation;
- Effective communications in educational sphere (training);
- Social partnership as a mechanism of intersectional cooperation: government-non-commercial/public organizations-business;
- Open education as the source of opportunities for learning and communication;
- ICT implementation in educational process and creating a unified educational, social and cultural environment of the UNESCO Associated school;
- Social project development and management/Fundraising;
- Interaction with media and PR-campaigns at school;
- Basics of volunteering activity organization on the example of the Expert Centre of the University of Management “TISBI”;
- Educational trips to the objects of cultural and historical heritage of the Republic of Tatarstan (World Heritage site – Kazan Kremlin and others);
- Sharing ASPnet teachers’ experience of interaction with students, parents, public organizations.

Educational program of the courses contained lectures, seminars and training aimed at considering key directions of UNESCO activity on educational, scientific and cultural issues as well as useful theory and practices on improvement of school work. Within classes teachers had a lot of opportunities to share their expertise and ideas on pedagogical interaction with students, parents and public organizations while working in the frames of UNESCO Associated Schools Project. The attendees have enhanced their skills developing and carrying out social projects, learned about innovative approaches in ICT implementation. Teachers have established new contacts, formed new networks and worked out prospects of further cooperation. Visiting cultural heritage sites: Kazan Kremlin (UNESCO World Heritage object), Raifa Godmother Men’s Monastery, Island-town Sviyazhsk was a part of the program of the courses. Teachers also got a chance to communicate with national UNESCO decision-makers during meetings with the officials



(Second Secretary of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO Ksenia Gaverdovskaya, aide of the President of the Republic of Tatarstan on social issues Tatiyana Larionova. National ASPnet Coordinator Nella Pruss). Upon the completion of the courses the attendants were awarded UNESCO ASPnet Coordination Centre extended training certificate and state-recognized advanced training certificate of TISBI Institute of Continuous Education.

Discussions

There are different restraining factors to the dissemination of the experience: a) the unpreparedness of a part of pedagogic society to introducing positive international practices; b) focusing on short-term educational needs; c) underestimation of the humanitarian component of training; d) insufficient flexibility of the national educational system to answering challenges of today.

To succeed in organizing UNESCO ASPnet training and to promote UNESCO events an educational establishment needs different kinds of resources (financial, human, educational, administrative, etc.) Another challenging task is attracting policy support and the financial aid of the private and state agencies, as it requires long process of negotiation.

It is evident that the structures providing teacher training should be entitled to issue certificates of attendance, which implies that their status allows them to do so. One more difficulty is achieving cooperation with colleagues from the higher educational structures and promoting contribution to the development of the ASPnet project of UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs based at universities.

Still the plans for organizing UNESCO teacher training have come to life due to : 1) the support of International UNESCO ASPnet Coordinator, National Commission for UNESCO, the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education; 2) sufficient experience in UNESCO project activities and wide range of partnerships of the International UNESCO Chair “Training and retraining specialists under market economy conditions” [Pruss, 2013]; 3) “Human potential” – talented and committed educators.

Conclusions

So the outcomes of the extended training can be summarized in the following points:

- Developing the international educational competencies of the ASPnet teachers and students;
- Raising of the overall quality of education in ASPnet;
- Introducing of proactive innovation teaching methods and instruments;
- Harmonizing teacher/student relationship at schools;
- Humanizing education, promoting moral values, civic culture and volunteering among students;
- Familiarizing vast number of the community representatives with the topical issues of the global agenda;
- Attracting partners from other sectors in joint activities and campaigns;



-Uniting creative educators and practitioners in the framework of the education for sustainable development and intercultural education.

The professional development training course on UNESCO philosophy and ideology as well as its offshoot for school pupils, according to the majority of teachers interviewed, have all reserves and preconditions to take its place in fostering of new generation on a general basis, as well as an elective curriculum component at schools. The added value, from the attendees' opinion, is providing means for educating a new generation of responsible citizens, some of whom will become policy-makers and decide national and international social, economic, political, cultural strategies. Another positive impact of the program on the Russian ASPnet teachers is the improvement of their cross-cultural competencies, language skills, fostering research and human development as well as prospects for academic mobility through maintaining cooperation of their schools with foreign counterparts.

The multiplicative character of the courses make them universal pedagogical career enhancement strategy.

Recommendations

One of the outcomes of the research was a set of recommendations to use in teacher education: 1) It is important to determine the criteria of the new teacher type desired competencies obtained by the end of the course; 2) personality development and fostering young generation should be closely tied to educational tasks; 3) teachers should be emotionally and ideologically driven to be able to motivate their students. UNESCO activities could become an inexhaustible source of inspiration for all participants of the learning process; 4) though being a part of UNESCO ASPnet Project significantly simplifies gaining from the pedagogical resource of UNESCO activities[Mabunga, 2016], it doesn't restrict committed teachers from using it at non-participant schools; 5) Designing UNESCO issues – related MOOCs for Russian teacher training courses would make the subject more accessible for all and popularize it in teaching community.

Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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