

Kharkov University of Humanities “People’s Ukrainian Academy”

The article deals with the problem of social trust formation in the context of implementation of the Lifelong Learning (LL) instruction model. The authors consider the influence of globalization processes on education in general and on the modern higher education system structure in particular. Historical, economic and social prerequisites of the emergence of epy LL instruction model as well as its role in the formation of new educational institutions have been analyzed. Kharkov University of Humanities “People’s Ukrainian Academy” (PUA), Kharkov region, Ukraine, has been exemplified as a new type educational institution implementing the LL model at all its key operation stages. The authors reveal the mechanisms involved in the process of social capital and social trust formation in PUA.

Key words: Lifelong Learning instruction model, globalization, new educational institutions, education, Kharkov University of Humanities “People’s Ukrainian Academy”, social capital, social trust.

Some Approaches to Social Trust Formation in the Context of Implementation of Lifelong Learning Instruction Model

The global education space is a relatively new concept. Without claiming exhaustive academism, the term can be defined as the total of all educational institutions, academic and pedagogical centers, governmental and public organizations involved in public education in various countries, geopolitical regions as well as globally, their interaction and cooperation in the context of intensive internationalization of various areas of public life.

Globalization has become a new stage of internationalization: global economy as a whole system is being formed; international division of labor is deepening, cultural ties are getting closer (other viewpoints on the problem are presented in special literature, though). Growing interdependence between countries and nations and extending contacts between people belonging to different nationalities, races and religions create an environment favorable to formation of shared values and efficient utilization of international experience. Globalization is not free from certain obvious negative aspects, though. High hopes for harmonious global convergence haven’t been realized. Neither have interstate, ethnic or religious conflicts passed into oblivion. Uneven development of countries and regions hasn’t been overcome either. Moreover, the gap between developing and developed countries keeps growing thus posing a serious threat to global interests of humanity and undermining world stability.

In the globalization context various aspects of human civilization come into close contact thus presenting new problems mankind has never faced before. But all attempts to slow down, stop or turn back globalization processes are, nevertheless, futile. Globalization is an objective tendency of current

development and the perceived task is to make the most out of the present situation for the welfare of mankind and minimize its negative aspects and effects.

Complex and contradictory globalization processes find their way into education affecting the areas of:

- interacademic international contacts development strategies;
- international education quality assurance;
- transnational education;
- regional and inter-regional cooperation;
- information and communication educational technologies;
- virtual universities;
- promotion of equality and access to higher education.

Globalization can be regarded as a major challenge education has ever faced and the one being more serious than those posed to the medieval university of the age of humanism by scientific and technical revolution or by revolutionary Europe with further industrialization, urbanization and secularization of public life, and even more important than the challenge of totalitarianism of the 21-st century.

The globalization process calls in question the very viability of the present university-based higher education system.

Not only do globalization forces alter economy and people's lifestyle, but they also question the status of the national state our ideas of civil and democratic rights are closely associated with, they pervade private life of informal groups, communities and families and go even further to penetrate into the private world of self-identity. Given the dramatic influence globalization exerts on such institutions and ideas as the market, state and individual, it can't but exert the same dramatic influence on the very university institution.

Consequently there exist at least three reasons of why globalization affects universities:

- 1) close connection with the problem of national culture dissemination;
- 2) education standardization processes as influenced by modern information and communication technologies and emergence of global research cultures and networks;
- 3) limitations put by global market activities on budget resources of prosperous states determining the number of university enrollments.

Universities may certainly try to go back to their roots and form certain new models of international cooperation meeting the new realities they are facing as they still have much in common. Universities do have international contacts that may prove useful, though developed with different purposes. As far as Europe is concerned one may try to breathe new life into these long-standing cooperation modes on the regional level. Moreover, the university still has the potential to act as the leading institution of the knowledge society and the center in which symbolic products are thought out and created, if not produced.

The volume of changes and the innovation rate have never been so high as in the recent decades. Modern universities differ greatly from those of the mid 20-th century. The number of students has dramatically increased resulting in changes in their social make-up: the majority of modern students don't belong

to privileged social groups any more, nor do they aim at holding elitist positions or making elite careers in the future. Not only do new subjects and curricula, new technologies, scientific concepts and knowledge constantly migrate, but they also 'go through' universities.

Universities have also undergone fundamental organizational changes turning them into huge corporate bureaucracies. Thus, modern universities have changed dramatically but in all respects. Universities are faced with a great and even venturesome challenge of adjusting to requirements of the arising globalization age. If they hesitate to show the necessary flexibility they may run the risk of becoming useless, should they show it too dynamically, they may eventually cease being universities. In other words, in the 21-st century universities will have to balance really obsolete practices against renouncement of their traditional values.

The globalization age offers education essentially new opportunities for development yet making even heavier demands on its qualitative and essential parameters.

Globalization results in dramatic changes in the higher education system as well as in its profound modernization.

Emergence of a Lifelong Learning (LL) instruction model leading to relevant transformations of educational practices is regarded as a possible way of meeting globalization challenges.

The LL concept has become a fundamental idea at the turn of the century. The term recognizes that learning takes place throughout life with society aiding the process. LL is an essential demand placed on man by progress including its social, technological and economic aspects, as only the competent individual can creatively pursue any activity. The variety of activities in the modern context including, but not limited to, science and production, labor and entrepreneurship, education and culture require knowledge acquisition and updating that is not confined to childhood but takes place throughout life in all age groups.

The very LL concept in its current interpretation was formulate by UNESCO in 1972 and regarded as development of a comprehensive education system. The above definition makes it possible to apply the methodology of self-developing and self-organizing systems to LL.

Since 1972 the concept of LL has been gradually but rather dynamically working its way into the global education space. Analyzing materials of major international conferences and forums one can clearly see that the LL concept was reflected in almost all their key documents. It was quite clearly defined in the materials of the World Conference on Higher Education held in Paris on 5-9 October 1998. Paragraph 8 of its resulting document states that the LL concept requires maximum support and development, and the state is called upon for an all-out support of this process. The above 'Paris' attitudes were reflected in regulatory documents on education development in many countries. Ukraine is no exception in this respect as its national education development doctrine states the necessity of "forming generations capable of learning throughout life ...".

Similar stands extending and supplementing the national doctrine are documented in "Education in the Context of the Strategic Objectives of

Ukraine”, a memorandum to the government, trade unions, academic community, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, business groups and the community.

Special literature reflects the growing interest in the problem of the LL development. Historiography of the issue has been taking shape quickly and dynamically. It stands to reason that major early publications were limited to specialized editions such as “Vishcha Osvita Ukrainy” (“Higher Education in Ukraine”), “Vishcha Shkola” (“Higher School”), “Vestnik Vishchey Shkoly” (“Journal of Higher Education”), “Vishcheye Obrazovanie v Rossii” (“Higher Education in Russia”), “Vishcheye Obrazovanie v Evrope” (“Higher Education in Europe”), “Shlyakh Osviti” (“Education Ways”), “Osvita i Upravlinnya” (“Education and Management”), etc. Subsequent articles of general character dealt with the LL theoretical aspects and its application-oriented components from various perspectives and standpoints. In this respect of special interest are works by such authors as L. Grebnev, M. Lukashenko, P. Kilin, L. Petersen, M. Ushakova, K. Schurin, and others.

Works of comparative nature summarizing the experience of foreign education systems such as those by S. Romanova and L. Zorina could also be found in literature but they were rather sporadic and ‘inclusion-like’.

The close attention paid to the problem in Ukraine and addressing the LL model globally have solid grounds. Apart from the well-known dynamism and transience permeating the very essence of the 21-st century, rapid knowledge, skill and job obsolescence as well as the collapse-like accumulation of information, there exist other problems and contradictions that can be moderated and overcome by means of on-going learning, training and skill conversion only.

Every modern man is faced with a conflict between global and local issues. The paramount necessity is to help people gradually perceive themselves as global citizens without losing their ethnic and social identities and clashing their universal and individual values. The globalization process is both inevitable and ambitious yet fraught with serious challenges. It is up to education to attempt to reduce the possible risks and mitigate the possible shock caused by the collision of different traditions and promote social trust formation.

The education system is also intended to help overcome the contradiction between long- and short-term objectives. In an environment of dominating ephemeral immediacy coupled with information overload, people will inevitably focus on solving immediate problems. Permanently maintained and updated high educational qualification is able to create a certain balance between “today” and “always”.

There is another contradiction currently faced by modern man that can be regarded as fundamentally new, that is the contradiction between the unprecedented knowledge expansion and the individual’s capacity to assimilate it.

The list of contradictions and conflicts, which education is called upon to moderate throughout the individual’s life, is far from being complete. It is not their number that matters. The bottom line is that the education system in its

current sense and interpretation is in possession of really unlimited resources, including the influence it exerts on the social capital formation.

The LL model is unlikely to “be curtailed” to a short-term campaign as the processes taking place in society in general and education in particular are of a deep fundamental character and conditioned by certain external and internal factors.

It seems appropriate to focus on the phenomenon of transitivity inherent in our society in particular and in the civilized world in general. This transitivity has a particular influence on such fundamental basis of social systems as the inter-institutional isolation. Being major constituents of the LL model, school and higher school are forced to go beyond their institutional boundaries.

Performing specialized social functions, institutions are bound to be isolated from each other in a stable society. The phenomenon of inter-institutional isolation is an important attribute of an equilibrium system, a key to society stability. Such isolation can be spatial (different social spaces), temporal (long cycles of evolution and modernization are different in different countries), regulatory, etc. The fact that institutional hybrids are generally nonviable as they can't meet the competition of established institutions promotes further isolation.

Nevertheless, it by no means rules out the existence of certain areas of institutional intersection. However, in a stable society such forms are not general.

Transitional situations present a different case with an intensive process of institutional formation and generation of new institutional options for regulating social life being among their characteristic features. Reciprocal exchange of genetic information between the once isolated institutions leading to their enrichment and an increasingly wider selection of options of institutional organization in the context of new technological opportunities facilitates the process. However, it should be borne in mind that social and economic risks of such selection and experimentation are very high and generally reduce the current functional efficiency.

Thus, the LL model is a unique and very important step towards the formation of new educational institutions in society. For the time being it is impossible to definitely forecast either what they are going to shape into or which factors objectively add to the value of experimental and research activities.

The practice of developing and implementing the LL model in the Kharkov region (Ukraine) is the best illustration of the general theory about the issue.

Certain historical and socio-economic reasons promoted selecting Kharkov as a model. The most well-known of the former can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Kharkov is the largest higher school center in Eastern Europe;
- 2) Kharkov is rich in long-standing education and research traditions;
- 3) The period of rapid development of higher education in Soviet times in the 20s-30s of the 20-th century witnessed the formation in metropolitan Kharkov of a powerful academic society characterized by a certain “diversification” of institutions of higher learning (engineering, natural sciences, humanities, etc.)

Other rarely analyzed reasons can be summarized in the following way:

- 1) availability of scientific schools the importance of which for the reproduction of the intellectual potential cannot be overestimated;

2) availability in the region of long-established administrative and management resources facilitating reasonable and logical settlement of education sector issues.

Mainly spoken, nowadays the Kharkov region is undoubtedly the leader in development and implementation of the LL model in Ukraine. It is here where due to certain objective reasons the critical mass enabling further development of the LL model almost at all its key operation stages and monitoring the accompanying processes was formed.

People's Ukrainian Academy (PUA) was one of the first Kharkov institutions to implement this model. Since its foundation in 1991 PUA has been strategically oriented towards experimental and research activities in the framework of the LL concept. The status of an experimental site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine engaged in testing the module of continuous education in the humanities granted to PUA in 1997 and its subsequent prolongation have brought the experiment beyond the regional boundaries.

In terms of the problem under consideration, PUA is a four-unit complex comprising a children's school of early development, a specialized secondary economics and law school with intensive training in foreign languages, a university of humanities and a department of postgraduate education (used to be termed as a department of further and advanced training).

The idea of social trust formation as a key constituent of social capital was inherent in the PUA model operation as early as at its formation stage. The general concept intended to develop the education process based on the formation of trust in government institutions, state and society through building up trust in family, educational institution, city, etc. The above guidelines have eventually been specified in the document "The Concept of PUA's Development up to 2020" and its supplementing programs.

The ideas of the well-known Soviet philosopher Merab Mamardashvili were assumed as a basis for this approach. They were simple in their greatness and great in their simplicity. According to Merab Mamardashvili there is nothing in this world that is of any importance for a person that exists by itself: justice, good, beauty, love, everything that we value, exists as long as there are certain people who practice them. In order to make life good someone has to do good, and it can't be otherwise. Only man brings such concepts in the world, they cannot originate on their own. This rule is universal. For instance, for a law to remain valid in society there ought to be people observing the law; for social trust to exist in society, there ought to be people understanding its importance and promoting it.

In order to implement this concept PUA has worked out various educational programs and perfected a system of measures contributing to formation of an active and knowledgeable individual. Since PUA provides LL training for all age groups ranging from 18-month-olds up to octogenarians, it is self-evident that peculiarities of each age group are taken into account.

Much attention is paid to establishing contacts with parents since building up social trust is next to impossible without interaction with the institution of family.

Engaging active and competent families in a full-scale education process at

school and during junior university years as well as in running various courses on enhancing parental competence for families lacking social and cultural capital to support student development is employed as a means of establishing contacts with parents.

The academic corporation is another category central to dealing with issues of social trust formation and accumulation of social capital that requires constant attention. Academic staff has been and is experiencing dramatic transformations promoted, on the one hand, by globalization and informatization processes, and, on the other hand, by active implementation of the LL system. Mainly spoken, maintaining the academic staff loyalty to the concept which is being implemented in PUA and yearning for their conscious involvement in the achievement of its goals are tasks of paramount importance.

Meeting the objective of social trust formation set by the education and research complex involves interaction with academic staff and parents as well as establishing contacts and developing constructive interaction with alumni, employers and the business community at large. This form of interaction is being perfected through building up a system of regular contacts (through the Board of Trustees, Alumni Association and numerous programs and projects). In this respect, geometric integration seems more important than the arithmetic one. Only this approach ensures further development of a fundamentally new educational practice such as Kharkov University of Humanities "People's Ukrainian Academy" is. Another argument in favor of this statement is a higher level of social capital formation characteristic for PUA graduates. Of course, the standards of social capital measurement are quite controversial and so far are not widely-accepted. However, a range of such categories of "measurement" as trust, respect and willingness to help, tolerance, greater social activity resulting in a high degree of adaptability to change do allow to record presence / absence of social capital and the degree of its formation.

In the most general terms, it seems appropriate to reveal the mechanisms involved in the process of social capital formation in PUA, one of the institutions implementing the LL model.

At the level of subjective perception of the problem, the educational institution has designed a system of civil and patriotic education, implementation of which in the context of modern Ukrainian realities is extremely difficult.

Creation and development of a certain cultural and educational environment, maintenance of a corporate culture based on the principles of academic ethics are other control points of the mechanism of accomplishing PUA's mission and developing its concept. Of equal importance are implementation of the principles of cooperative pedagogy and development of school and student self-government. The School and Students' Self-Government Unit, the Students Union, numerous clubs and societies including the Business Club, the Political Club, the Film Society, the Sports Club, the Euro Club, etc and other organizations created in PUA contribute to "absorption" of social activity and drawing on it to build up social trust.

Regardless of the LL model stages, the PUA education complex aims to provide maximum opportunities for personal development, formation of different competencies and full-scale self-fulfillment. With this purpose, PUA

students in the first place are given access to the Volunteer and Young Leader Movement, summer training and vocational courses, scientific and research activities not to mention the above club activities. Major socially significant projects such as the construction of the “Fire of Knowledge”, the first Kharkov memorial monument, St. Tatiana’s Chapel, the first students’ chapel, laying out the Memory Lane, a lane dedicated to the victory in the Great Patriotic War, etc. are regularly implemented in PUA.

Certain “structural units” exist to institutionally maintain this rather complex system. The Students’ Scientific Society, the Association of Young Scientists, a number of public boards (professors’, library, arts, PUA’s history museum board, etc.) and centers (Ukrainian, Russian and German Culture centers, etc.) are among them.

The Career Planning Unit plays a significant role in ensuring the functioning of the whole complex by providing the organization of training and vocational courses as well as by assisting to job placement for graduates, tracking and analyzing their professional and career development, creating social channels for communication and interaction.

The initial level of social trust and its permanent maintenance and enhancement are basic to ensuring the operation of this institutionally complicated model. However, the solution of such complex problems requires constant overcoming of objective obstacles. The very enumeration of such obstacles and peculiar “institutional traps” would take several pages. It seems appropriate to name only one obstacle, which scope and complexity can significantly reduce, if not completely destroy, the effective formation of social trust in the system of higher education in the first place. This obstacle is massification of higher education.

In the context of massification of higher education it is next to impossible to take the approaches adopted – as an option – in the above described “Kharkov precedent” since massification comes into a conflict with the individual approach principles. It makes it impossible to realize dialog-oriented forms of interaction basic to almost the entire education culture. If the student is deprived of dialogue, he is thereby deprived of real access to know-how and cannot be prepared to brace innovations. Moreover, given the LL model context, we cannot offer an individual learning pattern to the student.

The chain of contradictions can be easily traced further. However, the complexity of the tasks does not mean that they do not require any solutions. The problem is that under current conditions the tasks of social trust formation are to be solved responding both to permanent changes and resource limitations, as well as to on-going reduction in the time allocated for decision-making.

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