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# Higher Education And Sustainable Development Promotion: International Potential And Its Elaboration In Ukraine

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**Abstract.** This paper reveals the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the issues of global institutional transformations, transformative strategies of higher education, quality issues, personality-oriented strategies, multiculturalism, communication strategies of higher education. It presents the level and quality of internationalization of higher education in Ukraine, the formation of a worldview basis to stimulate and ways to ensure sustainable development of society, to increase the social responsibility of higher education and to strengthen its functional efficiency for society. In higher education now it is lack of basic systemic knowledge about sustainable development, its aims and ways. The environmental issues are quite often misevaluated as relevant only to natural sciences, social and humanitarian tasks of sustainable development are underestimated. In many countries, especially from former colonial or quasi-colonial status ones, the success of sustainable development policy is crucial dependent on recognition and acceptance of this policy by new generation of citizens. Students as an advanced and socially active part of new generation are the target audience for sustainable development enlightenment. In Ukraine these problems are additionally determined by low participation in international projects and some bureaucratization of such participation.

## 1. Introduction

In higher education now it is lack of basic systemic knowledge about sustainable development, its aims and ways. The environmental issues are quite often misevaluated as relevant only to natural sciences, social and humanitarian tasks of sustainable development are underestimated. In many countries, especially from former colonial or quasi-colonial status ones, the success of sustainable development policy is crucial dependent on recognition and acceptance of this policy by new generation of citizens. Students as an advanced and socially active part of new generation are the target audience for sustainable development enlightenment. In Ukraine these problems are additionally determined by low participation in international projects and some bureaucratization of such participation. Diffusion of ecological friendly technological innovation could be more effective in the scientific developed countries and in political environment of high ecological culture. Both conditions need wide participation of students and scientists in the international programs of environmental studies and ecological researches. Turning to the immanent content of the problems of institutional transformations for sustainable development of society in the context of internationalization of higher education and science, it should be noted that scientific reflection has always been present in the depths of globalist knowledge, as its content was associated with understanding the unity of natural and social, and within the latter – in the unity of educational, scientific, political, economic institutions of society. Scientific research "Strategies of higher



education in the context of internationalization for sustainable development of society", carried out on the basis of the Institute of Higher Education of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, aims to develop a strategy of higher education in the context of internationalization for sustainable development of society. It could be provided with social responsibility of higher education as a strategic resource for sustainable development of society, on the one hand, and a better realization of its socio-cultural and human potential, on the other. The direction of this research was determined by the requirements of developing a strategy for reforming higher education in Ukraine and its new models that would meet the needs of sustainable development of Ukrainian society. This research was relevant to the guidelines "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted by the UN and guidelines for European higher education policy.

## **2. Internalization of higher education as primarily goal of sustainable development education**

The official program document (Resolution) of the UN General Assembly formulates an appropriate global strategy "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are key areas for implementing this global comprehensive multi-level strategy for social, governmental and institutional sustainable development [1]. This document at the global level of education and science offers a mechanism for achieving and ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education and training, promoting all educational and lifelong learning opportunities. This document proposes a new, holistic concept of sustainable development, and its comprehensive, far-reaching and human-centered goals are expected to be on the agenda of all nations and peoples and all segments of society.

The strategy envisages providing and allowing everyone to receive and complete free, fair and quality primary, secondary and higher education, which will lead to appropriate and effective results of sustainable social development of both individual states and the global system [2]. It is also necessary to create preconditions for ensuring access of all, regardless of one's social, sexual, racial, ethnic origin to quality education at all levels, and to create appropriate conditions for this by 2030, which will allow them to successfully move to the next educational levels and carry out lifelong learning [3].

In recent years, scientific publications emphasize that the internationalization of higher education is not a self-sufficient goal, but should serve the purpose of improving the quality of education and strengthening its social function to ensure the interests of sustainable society [4-6]. Thus, Agenda 2030 sets practical challenges for governments to ensure, through the transformation of the education system ("education for sustainable development") and giving the maximum conditions for all people to participate (through the acquisition of quality knowledge and skills through education) in social life. In addition to the educational component of Goal 4 (Inclusive, Fair and Quality Education), the Global Program of Action will also contribute to Goal 12 (Sustainable Consumption) and Goal 13 (Combating Climate Change).

Education for Sustainable Development (SDR), due to the global scarcity of resources and the associated problems of distribution, must contribute to the creation of a peaceful coexisting in freedom and prosperity and a favorable environment for present and future generations. Critical reflection of one's own reality of life, social conditions, currently existing models of thoughts and value judgments, aimed at responsibility and maturity of the individual [7]. People of all ages, genders and cultures should be supported in developing alternative ideas about a sustainable future and working creatively with others to realize these visions [8]. SDR not only raises awareness of the complexity of the problems, but also facilitates the communication of sustainable development and its concrete implementation. The goal is to develop the ability for critical reflection and systematic and future-oriented thinking, as well as for practices that promote sustainable development.

More and more supporters in the philosophy of education, pedagogy and sociology of education in developed countries are gaining the view that society needs a person who is characterized by activity, dynamism, ability to navigate quickly in difficult situations, independence in decision-making, a sense of responsibility [9]. Voices advocating the education of the "effective citizen" as an important condition for

strengthening modern society are becoming louder and louder. In this regard, the problem of individual behavior, the search for forms and means to give it the right direction is especially acute [10].

The focus is on sustainable development, people need to focus more on its issues in the education. The new goals set guidelines for sustainable development at the economic, environmental and social levels. Education should contribute to the achievement of all 17 goals, but Goal 4 is specifically about education: providing comprehensive, equitable and quality education and promoting lifelong learning.

### 3. Internalization of higher education in Ukraine

In Ukraine, it was conducted a survey on the participation of Ukrainian universities in European international projects [11]. 37 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) took part in the survey, including: public - 33, private - 2, municipal - 2. Answers to the questionnaire proposed for the survey were provided by research and teaching staff of higher education institutions (which are additionally classified into two categories – university employees (managers and teachers / researchers), as well as applicants for higher education (students / graduate students).

**Table 1. Groups of respondents**

Total HEIs – 37	Managers	Teachers/ researchers	students / graduate students	Total respondents	Total university employees
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>1076</b>	<b>856</b>

Institutions represent 17 regions, including the leading university centers – of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, Odessa, Dnipro and Donetsk cities. According to formalized features, institutions mostly belong to the better part of the HEIs of Ukraine. Among them, 29 (78%) national, 27 (73%) hold positions in the first half of the rating "Consolidated" in 2019 out of 239 institutions, which integrates the ratings "Top-200 Ukraine", "Scopus" and "External Evaluation Score for contract". In addition, Lviv Polytechnic National University is in the group of 801-1000 international university rankings "Times", and the National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute", Sumy State University and the mentioned National University "Lviv Polytechnic" occupy 651-800 international university QS rating. Thus, the obtained conclusions can be considered valid for HEIs or university practice of Ukraine.

**Question: To which areas of internationalization that are implemented in your HEI are you personally involved?**

**Table 2. Involvement of university employees in the areas of internationalization, which are implemented in HEI**

#### Managers (223 people)

<i>Directions of internationalization</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>%</i>
International educational projects	116	52
International research projects	91	41
International mobility of administrative staff	66	30
Joint educational programs with double diplomas	64	29
Development of English-language competence of NNP	83	37
Training of foreign applicants for higher education	87	39
Teaching foreign languages of profile disciplines	53	24
Joint scientific publications with foreign researchers	74	33
Involvement of foreign teachers in teaching disciplines	38	17
International mobility of teachers	73	33

**Teachers / researchers (633 persons)**

<i>Directions of internationalization</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>%</i>
International educational projects	199	31
International research projects	204	32
International mobility of administrative staff	58	9
Joint educational programs with double diplomas	111	18
Development of English-language competence of NNP	157	25
Training of foreign applicants for higher education	198	31
Teaching foreign languages of profile disciplines	143	23
Joint scientific publications with foreign researchers	193	30
Involvement of foreign teachers in teaching disciplines	72	11
International mobility of teachers	134	21

The data suggest that "managers" are most involved in activities related to the implementation of international educational / research projects (52% and 41% respectively).

It was revealed that managers and teachers / researchers are of paramount importance in the process of internationalization of educational projects (52% and 31% respectively), research projects (41% and 32% respectively) and joint publications (33% and 30% respectively), it was stated that that joint scientific and educational activities (especially at the professional and personal level) are considered by the representatives of these academic groups as the most important factor of "convergence, mutual understanding and mutual influence".

The above allows to define such an "institutional policy of internationalization" of Ukrainian HEIs as transversal, that promotes education for sustainable development. At the same time, it is not very comforting that only 30% of teachers / researchers are involved in joint scientific and educational activities based on personal and professional communication. This indicator is insufficient for the implementation of internationalization in the context of modern requirements and can be considered only as an intermediate result of the implementation of "transformative strategies" for the development of higher education in Ukraine. In the category "teachers / researchers" it was stated the fact that slightly less than 1/5 of this group (18%) at the time of the survey are involved in the implementation of joint educational programs with double degrees.

According to the results of the survey, it is also possible to state a general level of involvement of members of the academic community of HEIs of Ukraine in the processes of internationalization, as for most areas of internationalization this figure is about 30% or less. In addition, it should be noted that the assessments in some areas (joint educational programs with double degrees; joint scientific publications with foreign partners) are quite high, which can be clarified by involving the most active in international activities representatives of university employees.

**Table 3. Involvement of students in the areas of internationalization, which are implemented in HEI**

**Students / graduate students (220 people)**

<i>Directions of internationalization</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>%</i>
International educational projects	78	35
International research projects	72	33
Joint educational programs with double diplomas	35	16
International mobility of university programs applicants	67	30

Data from surveys of higher education seekers showed that more than a third of students / graduate students are involved in international educational / research projects (35% and 33% respectively). According to the results of the survey, the involvement of students / graduate students in international mobility was quite high, which is 30% of the representatives of this group. It should be further noted that the types and terms of international mobility were not determined by the criteria.

Comparing the data on students / graduate students with the data on university employees, it was revealed that the levels of involvement in the internationalization of higher education "international projects" and in the direction of "joint educational programs with double degrees" are commensurate for these two groups (35% vs. 31%; 16 % vs. 18%). At the same time, international mobility among higher education seekers is slightly higher – 30% versus 21% among teachers / researchers.

These tables do not take into account Task 4.7. SDG 4 "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" – both in Ukraine and HEIs – namely by 2030 to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including, inter alia, education for sustainable development and sustainable living, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity, and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.

#### **4. How can the OECD and the EU analyze the results of their sustainable development strategy through education?**

The concepts and models developed by The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - "OECD Learning Framework 2030" and "The Future of Education and Skills Education 2030 - OECD" - offer some recommendations, according to which – the mission of universities of the XXI century is to study a socially responsible person, a person of high cultural level, who can act in a situation characterized by significant environmental risks [12].

A freelance graduate who is able to carry out a successful life in such conditions and to act as a subject of implementation of guidelines for sustainable development, must have not only and not so much individual professional competencies, but such common qualities as problem-solving ability, ability to critical, independent and original thinking and the ability to generate new knowledge and to act in situations of uncertainty and complexity, when knowledge or skills are available, as well as any ready-made instructions, are absent or do not function [13].

That is why higher education is to be able and designed to form a cultural personality and a citizen of a global society capable of living and acting in a world of the XXI century, characterized by uncertainty and risk. That is why higher education is a key factor in implementing the guidelines of sustainable development, their implementation in shared social values followed by future professionals - both in their professional activities and in everyday life.

The European Union is increasing its support for fragile states, both by increasing the share of humanitarian aid allocated to education to 10% from 2019, as stated in the Communication on Education in Emergencies and Prolonged Crises.

1) Strategic assessment of support for EU development cooperation for higher education in partner countries. This assessment examines the European Union's support for higher education in partner countries. Therefore, it is a thematic evaluation that provides general judgments rather than the evaluation of individual programs.

A seminar on dissemination (the concept of "dissemination" defines a special way of dissemination and development of experience adequate to the specific needs of its recipients, which has the nature of formation) was held on December 18, 2017 in Brussels, to present stakeholders with key findings and evaluation recommendations.

2) World Meeting on Education 2018. The 2018 World Education Meeting in Brussels brought together education leaders from around the world to review progress in meeting the global commitment to education since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

3) Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO).

3.1) In DEVCO Unit (Sector) 04 "Assessment and Results" together with the thematic divisions were developed sectoral guidelines to improve the quality of DEVCO interventions in terms of design, monitoring and reporting. Education is one of the various sectors covered by management. It presents the results that are in line with DEVCO's policy priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as a number of indicators to monitor progress.

3.2) Regular conference on the management of sectoral indicators – improving the quality of DEVCO interventions "DEVCO B4 – Culture, Education, Health" in terms of design, monitoring and reporting.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper reveals the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the issues of global institutional transformations, transformative strategies of higher education, quality issues, personality-oriented strategies, multiculturalism, communication strategies of higher education. It presents the level and quality of internationalization of higher education in Ukraine, the formation of a worldview basis to stimulate and ways to ensure sustainable development of society, to increase the social responsibility of higher education and to strengthen its functional efficiency for society.

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