

## **EDUCATION, MIGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - PERSPECTIVES OF AGENDA 2030**

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Ivanka Buzov**

University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia

### **ABSTRACT**

Global development programs from Agenda 21 (1992) to Agenda 2030 (2015) inevitably promote the importance of education for all, ie they call for equality in access to educational resources. Recognizing the reality of the emergence of a growing category of “mobile population” in the world and the challenges of regular and new migration, for the first time the current Agenda emphasizes the commitment to migration. In this context, it is challenging to monitor the links between migration issues and the highlighted objectives of the Agenda, with a particular focus on sustainable development goal 4 (SDG 4) relating to quality education. Its targets as well as the objectives of the Agenda relating to poverty reduction, the right to employment and decent work (SDG 8), access to justice for all (SDG 16), and the strengthening of the global partnership (SDG 17) primarily imply access to educational resources for all. By promoting the thesis of education as an “enabling right” which, in addition to supporting opportunities for personal development and integration, can also be a driving force for global sustainable development, education is seen as a generator of sustainable development and knowledge society. In the context of the situation of migrants it supports the protection and security of acquired knowledge, prevents the risk of exclusion, ie contributes to their empowerment for sustainable life in the community.

***Keywords:** Agenda 2030, education, migration, sustainable development*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a continuation of previous programs for global sustainable development, and taking into account the dynamics of change in world society, the latest declaration for sustainable development, for the period from 2015 to 2030, The United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development [1] (Agenda) for the first time through its goals emphasizes the commitment to the migration issue as a global one. Explicit commitments have been set and migration has been officially recognized in international development frameworks and processes. Thus, inclusivity and the promise that “no one will be left behind” are promoted as a central principle of the Agenda, and the importance of migration is presented as a factor that can contribute to both development and poverty reduction [2]. In addition to the strong interest in trying to secure more comprehensive agreements on safe, orderly and regular migration that include full respect for human rights and humane treatment of migrants, it is recommended that “states recognize the

positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development”[3]. Setting these goals and recommendations in the Agenda opens the perspective for making progress in moving away from the dominant perception of migration as a problem [4]. In this regard, the positive contribution that migrants make to inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination [5] is increasingly emphasized. In this sense, the thesis that education is crucial for the distribution of life opportunities for all is particularly acceptable [6], ie as a means to achieve all goals of sustainable development [7].

When it comes to migrants, education applies equally to the issue of inclusion as well as to the contribution to their empowerment for sustainable living in the community, through regular and lifelong education. This certainly implies an approach to transformative education that presupposes the need to view education in a broader context, beyond formal institutions and schooling itself, as a concept that takes place in different instances and in different environments throughout life [8].

## **APPROACH**

Using the method of analysis the literature and online sources on the potential goals of the 2030 Agenda related to the role of education in migration issues, as well as recent research on this connection. The analysis of the Agenda as a document of the World Development Strategy implies and provides a selection of goals related to education and migration as well as other goals that affect migration issues. This analysis is contextualized by reference studies on the importance of education and on the goals of the Agenda for the perspective of creating inclusive and sustainable communities.

### Education and migration in the 2030 Agenda

In addition to the separate chapters of the Agenda presented through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly linking education and migration, and the reduction of inequality (SDG 4 and SDG 10), the issues of migration and migrants are contextualized through several other goals/chapters. This recognizes the economic value of migrants by considering the importance of ensuring decent work (SDG 8), followed by engaging in trafficking issues (SDG 16) with a strong call to facilitate safe, regular and responsible migration and well-managed migration policies (SDG 10.7). The last chapter (SDG 17) attaches importance to improving the disaggregated data and “migration status” as relevant national characteristics. Regarding the very importance of educational potential and equal access to educational resources for all, in Chapter 4 there is a strong link between goals that can be contextualized with migration issues, related to the possible contribution of migrants to sustainable development (SDG 4, Targets 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.7). In its title this chapter calls for inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning for all, and in particular within its targets aims to meet the

needs of children in vulnerable groups including migrant children, refugees and other displaced people that are often excluded from the education system due to language or socio-economic barriers. In addition, SDG 4.2 emphasizes the need to include them in a quality early childhood education, which is necessary to prepare migrant children for primary school.

Furthermore, contents focusing on socio-emotional learning, education on human rights and citizenship in school curricula, followed by promoting a culture of peace and non-violence (SDG 4, Target 4.7) are aimed at developing intercultural education. It applies equally to all actors of current forced migrations produced by wars as well as to those in migratory flows caused by globalization processes in the economy, or as a consequence of climate change. In the context of the perspective of migrants, the importance of eliminating all discrimination in education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities (SDG 4, Target 4.5) must not be overlooked. Due to the pronounced attempt to eliminate child labor, exploitation and child trafficking, financial support is planned for families to boost education for migrant children by freeing them to receive the education that they would not otherwise be able to have (SDG 16, Target 16.2). The intent relating to the potential reduction of forced economic migration is highlighted in SDG 4, Target 4.b, where it is recommended to significantly expand the number of available scholarships to developing countries, especially for the least developed, then small island states and African countries.

When education and migration are problematized, there are several key links, which join the general global effort to build a better migration-related understanding, trust and cooperation [3]. These refer to already adopted educational policies that insist on the wide availability of education. Thus, the importance of education for economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and good governance is emphasized, and it is argued that education is a bridging factor for all dimensions of sustainable development [9]. It is estimated that improving access to education for migrants will affect the achievement of a number of global sustainable development goals. In the spirit of these goals, which unite the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, the issue of migration also arises through the need to protect the rights of migrant workers, especially women (SDG 16 and SDG 8). Also, migration targets are necessarily linked to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, the rule of law at national and international levels by ensuring equal access to justice for all (SDG 16), and the reduction of social exclusion and poverty (SDG 1). This, of course, applies equally to the domicile population and to migrants, ie to the contribution to the creation of inclusive and sustainable communities that imply wide chances of access to education. The last goal of the Agenda (SDG 17) combines all of the above with a commitment to ensuring a certain, peaceful, prosperous and fair life on Earth for all now and later.

### Education as an “enabling right”

A study by Bengtsson et al on the relationship between education and other key sectors in the context of new global goals of sustainable development puts forward the thesis of the education potential, which is characterized as an “enabling right” [10]. In addition, it should not be overlooked that, although it is held that education is a “borderline practice” and that institutionalized education systems are inevitably linked to the interests of the nation state, these are at the same time spaces and places essentially characterized by bringing people together [11].

At the international and national levels, legal aspects have been developed for decades that regulate and support migration in the direction of security and protection of migrants, ie the improvement of their legal status. This applies in particular to the prevention of risks arising from situations that link migrants to the informal economy, ie working in the gray zone or engaging in illegal activities. The latter is actualized in education, for example, when encountering a problem of conditions and challenges regarding the education of adult migrants or their inclusion in lifelong learning. This relates to a necessary acquisition of skills and training required for decent jobs for which recommendations are also given under the SDG 4 Agenda and is particularly emphasized in SDG4, target 4.4, as mentioned in the previous chapter. In addition, this problem is highlighted in the supporting UNESCO document related to adult learning and education [12], which gives structural, enabling and central role in promoting the implementation of the overall Agenda” [13].

Globalization, on the one hand, drives people and the world economy, and in terms of educational opportunities, it primarily refers to cases of economic migration when young professionals are encouraged to emigrate through prepared programs for further training of receiving countries. However, one can also speak of the paradoxes of “mobility capital” and “unequal mobility” or questionable “equity within mobility”, which in the case of ongoing problematic migrations and refugee crises is linked to questions about how to “reduce inequalities” in these processes [14]. These assumptions present key challenges for linking new migration and education. Therefore, universal concepts for resolving a possible migrant crisis are accompanied by those on the importance of connection with the characteristics of the local, which is especially emphasized in the perspective of education for sustainable development. In addition, education systems are among the first social institutions to respond to changing social and political structures, therefore the implementation of education is important for the formation of political and cultural identities [6] (Horvath, 2018: 237). This relates primarily to the key integration challenge posed by migration processes, whether they involve migrant workers or refugees.

Namely, SDG 4 and its targets primarily place education as a common good and move it away from its often prominent utilitarian function in economic

development. In this sense, education refers not only to the possibility of acquiring skills to provide a livelihood, but above all to the values of respect for life and human dignity, which harmonizes the community by accepting diversity. Such steps towards more balanced social relations are also the basis for respecting nature, ie for moving towards sustainability. Education and the educational subsystem thus occupy the expected place within the social system and gain the importance of the main tool for achieving sustainable societies. However, its transformative approach is also affirmed, which refers to the importance of developing a person's potential, ie the emancipatory character of education which sees the role of education primarily in the development of critical thinking and responsibility. This approach supports the development and education of global citizenship that promotes critical citizenship with the ability to reflect on challenges such as inequalities, human rights, peace and sustainability, both locally and globally, and contributing to a proactive attitude towards a more peaceful, tolerant, secure and sustainable world [7].

Ultimately, all these challenges are part of the discourse of education for sustainable development and sustainability directed toward values, very much needed to build attitudes and behaviors that imply respect for others and for diversity as well as a sense of justice, willingness to dialogue and responsible action achieved by its transformative approach. In pondering the essence of education or answering the question of what is expected of it, the well-known theses of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and John Dewey's critical theory of education are reaffirmed. The most distinctive feature of this approach relates to the perception of education as a process that is not limited to schooling [8]. Unlike the dominant transmissive approach, which focuses on social reproduction, that is, on the production of labor force needed by the economy, the transformative approach suggests a paradigmatic shift in education. In other words, education is expected to change in the direction of creating the conditions for the transformation of the individuals involved which includes taking responsibility for oneself and for community. In addition to the orientation towards the non-selective provision of opportunities for education and educational achievements, the previously highlighted goals of the Agenda are shown in the context of migration and opportunities for migrants as a range of expanding opportunities and rights for active participation in the community and in its construction. In a true sense it can therefore be interpreted that the Agenda SDG 4 call for equal quality education for all presents an “enabling right” which helps the fulfillments of other rights thanks to the empowering impact of education on society [10]. It also appears as a necessity for living in a contemporary knowledge society driven by a knowledge economy, supported by the power of togetherness, solidarity, responsibility and respect for life on Earth.

## CONCLUSION

Given the generally accepted thesis that unhindered access to educational resources requires the construction of a system that enables the implementation

of education for all, necessary to realize the potential of individuals, current as well as previous migrant situations are very inspiring to connect education and migration. Although the issue of migration extends through several goals of the Agenda, the key opportunity of affirming the perspective of the status of migrants through education has been recognized for several reasons. First of all, education is chosen as an important field because of its inevitable connection with solving the key challenge of modern societies related to social inequalities, the reduction of which is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable societies and communities.

If we analyze the Agenda and ask what access to education enables for migrants, we can generally conclude that it, in fact, mobilizes individuals and societies as a mechanism for forming new solidarity and practices dealing with human connection with the environment, through local and global [11]. These social perspectives are inseparable from the goals of education, and are promoted with other goals of the Agenda, especially if read not only through direct but also cross-links between migration and sustainable development goals [2]. In addition to the goals regarding the issue of migration and opportunities for migrants, education generally presents an “enabling right” to equal opportunities for educational attainment, the main capital of the knowledge society. The goals of the Agenda are aimed at creating opportunities to acquire this capital by using the unquestionable right to education, as a commitment of world politics to provide a basic tool for achieving sustainability. This affirms another attempt to approach the original meaning of the word education because, we should not forget, its root is *educere* which means “to draw out”, and what needs to be drawn out is “affinity for life” [15]. Therefore, it can be said that the goals of education highlighted in the Agenda encourage a rethinking of the process and substance of education at all levels and in the new challenging contexts of world society, which certainly include the current growing migration processes.

## REFERENCES

[1] General Assembly of the United Nations, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United States of America, 2015.

[2] Foresti Martha & Hagen-Zanker, *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, International Organization for Migration, Switzerland, 2018.

[3] Solomon Michele Klein & Sheldon Suzanne, *The Global Compact for Migration: From the Sustainable Development Goals to a Comprehensive Agreement on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, *International Journal of Refugee Law*, vol. 30/issue 4, 2018, pp 584–590.

[4] Castles Stephen, *Understanding Global Migration: A Social Transformation Perspective*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 36/issue 10, 2010. pp 1565-1586. DOI:

[5] OECD/ILO (2018), *How Immigrants Contribute to Developing Countries' Economies*, France, 2018.

[6] Horvath Kenneth, *Fixed Narratives and Entangled Categorizations: Educational Problematizations in Times of Politicized and Stratified Migration*. *Cogitatio*, vol. 6/ issue 3, 2018, pp 237-247.

[7] Agirreazkuenaga Leire (2020). *Education for Agenda 2030: What Direction do We Want to Take Going Forward?*, *Sustainability*, 2020, vol. 12/ issue 5, pp 1-13.

[8] Mayo Peter, *A Rationale for a Transformative Approach to Education*, *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2030, vol. 1/ issue 1, pp 38-57.

[9] Kirbassov Galymzhan, *Education as a Bridging Factor of All Dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals*, *Journalists and Writers Foundation and Peace Islands Institute*, 2014, pp. 12.

[10] Bengtsson E. L. Stephanie, Barakat Bilal, Muttarak, Raya, with Kebele Enadele Birhanu and Foreword by Lutz Wolfgang. *The Role of Education in Enabling the Sustainable Development Agenda*. Great Britain & United States of America, 2018.

[11] Gerrard Jessica & Sriprakash Arathi, *Migration and the borders of education*. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, editorial, vol. 27/ issue 2-3, 2018, pp. 107-110.

[12] *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE)*, France, 2016, p16.

[13] Milana Marcella, Holford John, Hodge Steven, Waller Richard & Webb Sue, *Adult education and learning: endorsing its contribution to the 2030 Agenda*. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 3/ issue 6, 2018, pp 625-628.

[14] Hackl Andreas, *Mobility equity in a globalized world. Reducing inequalities in the sustainable development agenda*, *World Development*, issue112, 2018, pp 150–162.

[15] Orr W. David. *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*, United States of America, 1994.