

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INTERNATIONALISATION: TRANSNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Eurasian
Research
Journal
January 2019
Vol. 1, No. 1

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Neera Handa, *Education for Sustainability through Internationalisation: Transnational Knowledge Exchange and Global Citizenship* (Palgrave Studies in Global Citizenship Education and Democracy) Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 245 pp.

The goal of sustainable higher education is to prepare responsible global citizens with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in the 21st century.

This is the starting point from which Neera Handa, an Adjunct Fellow for Learning Transformations at Western Sydney University, Australia, begins her research on finding an alternative solution to existing forms of education, the current quality of which she considers inadequate to the social, environmental and ethical problems of the modern world. It is in the process of educational internationalization that the author of the book sees a guarantee of sustainability.

According to the author, the internationalization of learning and the study of sustainability can lead the flow of knowledge across national, cultural, linguistic boundaries. The main message of this book is the opposition of the non-Western humanistic tradition of altruism, goodness, compassion as the main goal of transformative knowledge and education to education system focused on values, consumer culture, the spirit of competition and individualism of the Western world. Most modern research in the field of sustainable education focuses on the need to change behaviors or tools and approaches, but few people think about alternatives and transcultural exchange as a way of opening new perspectives and differing worldviews.

The book includes eight chapters, and almost each of them contains elements of non-Western theory or concepts from classical or religious texts. The chapters are followed by References and Index.

However, the author claims that she does not have the goal of identifying contradictions or the dominance of Western values. She is much more worried about the lack of participation of other actors - passive consumers of "alien" knowledge. In these conditions, the process of transformative, transnational and transcultural exchange is an argument in favor of internationalization, while the coexistence of Western and non-Western traditions of knowledge is quite possible. By internationalization, the scholar means the exchange of theories, models, and methods for academic and practical purposes

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between countries.

Chapter 1 "One Dark Night of the Full Moon" reveals the richness of cultural and philosophical traditions corresponding to the balanced sustainable interaction of knowledge and the environment that exist outside of Western knowledge systems. The author criticizes colonial utilitarian attitude to nature, the distance between nature and man through the plot of a famous Australian film about insurmountable contradictions between local residents, whose harmonious coexistence and understanding of nature are not recognized and rejected, and representatives of Western civilization. This example is obviously intended to prove the need for intercultural dialogue and the opportunity to hear the voice of those who are usually silent in global discourse of western capitalist pattern. The term "sustainability" in this chapter receives an additional interpretation - changing the choice of how to live, how to consume, how to relate to each other, and changing the worldview as a whole. The reader comes to the key thought of this chapter, and the book as a whole, that we need a different type of education, built on transformative knowledge and spiritual development.

In the following chapter, "Om and Connectedness," the author allows herself to delve into a personal narrative, which naturally leads to a predominance of I-ness and My-ness that looks somewhat inappropriate. However, this non-academic style gives her the opportunity to raise the most important philosophical questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? What is the purpose of our life?

Dr. Handa is looking for answers to these questions in Indian "tri-vid," concept of the which constructs the notion of transformative knowledge, not the passive consumption of someone's truth, but rather the act of creation. This approach, the author believes, radically changes priorities and brings the person closer to self-development, social justice, and harmony.

Chapter 3 "Truth is Many in One" is devoted to the presentation of this idea. It looks like the text is oversaturated with notes, quotations, quotations inside the notes, links (about 100 notes and 85 references for one chapter), but first of all by ideas, sometimes original, but often common, about practical knowledge, about truth, about the role of education in society. The thought of education, which questions rather than offers answers and represents a path leading to transformation, evokes clear associations with the classical doctrines of Eastern religious and philosophical traditions.

Building on the texts of the Upanishads in Chapter 4, which is titled "Da Da Da: The Educational Imperative of Self-Control, Generosity and Compassion," Neera Handa once again underlines the transformative goal of higher education - the achievement of higher and universal good, which is not determined by economic and market parameters, that create an atmosphere of tough competition, destruction of the environmental, class, religious and natural disasters. The pathos of this chapter consists in asserting the incompatibility of the materialist approaches and values of the current education model (competitiveness, secularism, a reference to labor markets, accreditations, standards, tests, accountability) with the great goal of education - to make the world a better place.

Another ancient Indian cultural image gave the name to the next chapter, "Sangam: A Confluence of Streams and Ideas," explaining the synergistic relationship between internationalization and sustainability as global approaches to higher education. The author continues to delve into the definition and disclosure of the terms "internationalization", "sustainability",

and “globalization” and their distorted use in the field of higher education. This makes it possible to once again revise the concept of education for sustainability, shift the focus on behavioral change, minimizing the impact on the environment, respecting the needs of future generations, avoiding competitive individualism, a unilateral flow of theoretical knowledge from West to East in favor of a bilateral flow of transcultural knowledge exchange. In this way, as Nira Handa believes, global citizenship should develop.

Chapter 6 “Karam YoGi: And the Highest Good” offers another concept expressing selfless action for the fulfillment of moral duty, drawn from the great Indian epic “Mahabharata”. A global citizen, and every student should become such a citizen in the process of internationalization, has a big mission - to change society and the world for the better. The researcher considers the specific pedagogical approaches and methodology in the next chapter “Sarvadoya in an Internationalized Education for Sustainability” based on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi as a means of involving teachers and students in the formation of transformative knowledge. It is assumed that his concept, based on truth, non-violence, self-determination, and equality, challenges the neoliberal discourse of domination and inequality. Thus, the path to a sustainable future in terms of social, economic and environmental sustainability lies through a change in the attitudes and behaviors of today’s global society. The parallels between Gandhi’s Sarvadoya and sustainability, as well as between Arjuna and global citizen look very “Indian”, although the author does not hide her reliance on the intellectual heritage of her native country, moreover, she strongly emphasizes this in every way in the search for development alternatives.

The final chapter “Punhaarambh and the New Global Citizen”, while not avoiding the gloomy assessments of the present, still calls for reinterpreting and rewriting the concept of higher education, embracing internationalization as a product of transnational and transcultural knowledge exchange.

Not a rhetorical question “Who will save the world?” Nira Handa answers herself. Only people can solve all the problems they have created. But it requires a new way of thinking and acting, new meanings of old terms; another way to another world is needed. The global society needs transformation, she believes, from consumerism to social justice, from competition to cooperation and social responsibility, from materialistic values to spiritual values - sympathy, morality, generosity, harmony. Such a transformation can occur through teaching and learning.

In conclusion, the discussion of the differences between current education and the proposed alternatives is impressive. The author expands the vision of educational space and its system of values and attitudes on a global scale due to original intellectual theories and concepts that are drawn from the beliefs and practices of the peoples of the East, which were not considered before as a potential development option.

The scholar has a lot to share with readers. Maybe even too much. It is sometimes difficult to isolate the author’s thought from the abundance of cited thoughts and ideas of sources used, pathos and ethos are not just present in the text, but overwhelm it. Nevertheless, the text is read and perceived easily, but still requires some preliminary reading in the field of Eastern philosophical and religious dogma. The book contains many interesting proposals and independent judgments about the fate of higher education of the 21st century on a global scale, one of the most pressing areas of concern to humanity today.