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Multicultural and Multiethnic Tolerance Determined by School Culture and Behavior

Extended summary

The intense changes that occured at the beginning of the 21st century in education and in other areas of social life, gave rise to a series of questions, such as why, instead of improving the integration and globalisation, they unfortunately led to a more pronounced tendency towards divisions on cultural and ethnic grounds among the young generation.

It remains unclear why, after gaining independence as multiethnic and multicultural environments, the countries in the Western Balkans did not do enough to integrate and overcome religious, ethnic and cultural differences. The question now arises as to why the Western Balkan countries, which resolved most of these issues quite successfully within the former federation, have to tackle the same issues of mutual tolerance and cohabitation all over again.

The purpose of this paper is to provide answers to at least some of these questions, especially regarding the role of the education system in all these processes, and then to offer appropriate solutions for overcoming the identified shortcomings. The results of our research show that the failure of education policy deepened the differences among the young generations, instead of integrating them at a higher level. In some of these countries, as the case is with the Republic of Macedonia, there are multiethnic environments where, in order to avoid conflict situations, students from different communities attend classes separately and sometimes even in different school shifts.

For this reason, the paper offers recommendations for an appropriate organisation and functioning of the school system, which is a prerequisite for the successful realisation of its role in creating school culture and behaviour, two important factors in the education of young generations for tolerance and coexistence.

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These efforts represent a challenge, especially in terms of using the scientific knowledge for determining the appropriate goals of the future educational policies.

Keywords: school culture, multicultural, multiethnic, cohabitation, tolerance.

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