

ICEST 2021**II International Conference on Economic and Social Trends for Sustainability of Modern Society****EUROPEAN STRATEGY "EDUCATION WITHOUT EXCLUSION:
INCLUSION - INTEGRATION" OF THE REGION-UNIVERSITY
SYSTEM**

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Abstract

The joint systemic activity of regions and universities forms new practices of inclusion and integration of the "learning region - learning community" systems. The UN Agenda on Sustainable Development till 2030 defines the Sustainable Development Goals, including regional, inclusive, and integrative educational and social practices and the importance of the "region-university" system for the preservation of human and social capital. New practices of inclusion and integration began to define new socio-technological communications between regions and universities. The COVID pandemic, and the resulting changes in the economic and social environment of cities and regions, have shown that the SDG, including in the field of educational university systems and practices, are not resistant to the global crisis. New reformed management and economic practices of regional and urban educational systems of inclusion and integration can contribute to solving problems. National associations of universities and cities and regions play a leading role in this process in Europe. The "region-university" system is interested in changes in educational policy in favour of the sustainability of inclusive and integration practices. The implementation of the changes can be realized only in the case of strengthening the capacities of local governments of cities and regions in the field of education and integration with regional universities.

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1. Introduction

Social and economic trends in the context of modern technological development of Europe dictate their requirements for collaboration to the "region-university" system (Ryabov & Merzon, 2020). Systemic cooperation of this type has also defined new common goals for European regions and universities, at which consensus is reached in the design of a new educational regional environment "education without exceptions: inclusion and integration." In many respects, European regional practices of inclusion and integration are based on the preservation of human resources and their assessment in the sustainable development of European regions and "open" systems "learning region - learning community".

2. Problem Statement

The problem statement concerns the contradictions that have developed between the declared principles of the implementation of sustainable development goals in Europe and the unpredictable trends of the Covid pandemic that intervened in the implementation process, which caused turbulence in the sustainability of the European project "Education without Limits: Inclusion and Integration". The need for regional synergy for sustainable development is fostered by holistic and transformative education. Which affects the content and results of interaction in the "region-university" system.

3. Research Questions

In Europe, the region-forming universities deliver the centrality and qualitative properties of a sustainable education environment. In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational level, 2020; Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, 2020). This Agenda is a blueprint for people, planet and prosperity, presents 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 169 goals (Figure 1) as a means of driving action by 2030 in areas of critical importance to humankind.

Figure 1 shows the most important SDG for society, which, according to European UN experts, should be focused on to reach maximum progress, including regional inclusive and integrative educational and social practices in the "region-university" system.

The role of human capital in the realization of the concept of sustainable development in modern European inclusive regional communities was especially noted (Transforming our world: the 2030 the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, 2020; Urban Agenda of the EU, European Commission, 2017).



Figure 1. The most important SDG for society to focus on for maximum progress (% of experts)

4. Purpose of the Study

Bearing in mind the new views on European inclusive education, many pedagogical higher schools are implementing new trend teaching practices in the “digital university - digital region” system to develop the human and social capital of the territories. It would be fair to note the fact that some universities were involved in this even before the Covid pandemic. Still, most universities paid attention to the sustainability of the "region-university" system only in a situation of pandemic distortions that affected the economy and integration policy. European trends "Education without exception (Figure 2): practices of inclusion and integration", in fact, began to define new socio-technological communications among regions and universities in new formats of interaction. The “digital region - digital university” system preserves the main European indicators of democracy.



Figure 2. Education without exceptions: inclusion and integration in the system digital region - digital university

The system is capable of growing and developing integration educational programs, gender equality as a socio-cultural university norm, new educational integration policies, legal aspects of human resource management in a specific region, political democratic culture and civic engagement of student-aged youth, the labour market, methods of state and market regulation, socio-economic and environmental aspects of the development and digital transformation of urban management.

The region-university system also emphasizes the need to localize the SDG by means of upwards action for demonstration differences between regions and university communities. Thus, local and regional European authorities are considered as important partners in localization and specific cases of inclusion and integration. The UN urged to support local and regional authorities to play their role in localizing the SDG, contributing to the development and availability of indicators and tools for educational evolution and measurement of the forward movement in the development of universities (El Massah & Mohieldin, 2020; Griggs et al., 2017).

The declaration “Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments Need to Know” describe how each of the 17 SDG connected to the day-to-day activities of local and regional governments. It also lists the most important objectives of each goal for local governments and high points the interrelation between the goals and other international programs. In addition, “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” recognizes the importance of sustainable urban development. Goal 11 (SDG) includes the following statement: “to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, viable and sustainable”. Thus, the implementation of the SDG initially determines the elements of trend projects in the regions and at universities (Nilsson et al., 2018; Sean et al., 2019).

It is also recognized that urban issues affect a number of other Sustainable Education Goals, including SDG 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15 and 17, among others. This is indicated in the final document of the "Complementary New Urban Agenda for UN-Habitat" of the 2016 Habitat III Conference.

5. Research Methods

Due to the global crisis and changes in the economic and social environment, strategies of the cities and regions development can no longer be successful, they need to be methodically reformed. We should talk about the development of improved regional and urban policies for sustainable development of inclusion and integration, with a much broader perspective and time frames. The method of benchmarking intelligent integrations has become the most developed in this context in Europe. It is used in the system of the quality assessment of the effectiveness of the dual system “digital region-digital university” (Sibgatullina-Denis et al., 2020). Besides, the benchmarking method established itself as a quality tool for internal audits of university alliances "included" in one region.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that the SDG, in their current form, turned out to be not sustainable to the global crisis including educational university systems and practices. Progress towards the SDG had been slow even before COVID-19. It is now even more likely that many of the 169 goals will not be reached by 2030. Moreover, some can even be counterproductive. Two-thirds of the 169 targets are either at risk from the COVID-19 pandemic or, unfortunately, unable to mitigate it. In addition, WHO and UN experts already point out that ten percent of the SDG targets could aggravate the consequences of current and future pandemics. In these conditions people of all generations take exceptional "sufferings".

What to do? Of course, an improved strategy of sustainable development of inclusion and integration should use complex, coordinated development actions to regain the momentum for solving health problems, rehabilitation (Vančová et al., 2019). This can only be facilitated by new practices in the management and economics of educational systems, ensuring sustainable economic growth, strengthening the foundations of social welfare and democracy, supporting the coexistence of various cultures and showing due attention to the environment and humans.

Cities and regional communities are at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic and its long-term consequences. The role of universities in this policy is secondary globally, but primary for supporting educational trend digital and non-digital development projects in their regions. The UN is working with national and local governments to help them recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and through this impact, universities receive support from home regions. The UN Response Plan has the following objectives:

- Support local government and community driven solutions in informal settlements;
- Provide city and regional data, fact-based mapping for informed decision making;
- Reduce economic consequences and start recovery.

The UN Policy and Programs Framework in respect to COVID-19 contains guidance for action at the global, regional and national levels.

Recovery from the coronavirus crisis is a chance to rebuild a sustainable, inclusive economy, revitalize industry, conserve vital biodiversity systems and tackle climate change. Readiness for the changes brought about by this crisis can help universities acquire new formats for engaging with regional business and human capital management strategies.

The response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic are already fundamentally different from previous pandemics in history, in terms of the availability, integrity and quality of information, access to technology and its rapid introduction, the participation and empowerment of local and regional governments in cities and regions, both within their jurisdiction and within the framework of their joint efforts. Universities also show a significant difference in the market. Success or failure on the path to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will depend on whether local and regional governments use progressive collaboration with the university community.

Throughout the pandemic, regions and cities realized the benefits of enlarged solidarity among universities, university cross-border alliances, and the benefits of collaboration between university structures and regional enterprises.

Examples of progressive measures on the side of local and regional authorities involved the rapid switching of their administrations to crisis management (Sang & Trimi, 2018), including inclusive systems, investment in public services, rapid digitalization of services, the deployment of solidarity programs, the intensive exchange of information through networks. Universities have shown an active position in this community, if the region has already developed a system of reliance on the university resource (Riabov & Merzon, 2019). European cities and regions are at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis: it is they who manage blockages every day, coordinate medical services, provide waste collection, find solutions for the

daily needs of European citizens, including those who need to continue their education and provide them with educational inclusive services. With the help of universities, many local and regional governments collaborated and learned from each other, especially through decentralized cooperation.

National associations of universities and European cities and regions play a key role in this in Europe: they collect and disseminate best practices, organize webinars to exchange experiences and advice, coordinate their activities with national governments and regional institutions (Christian & Clemens, 2020; O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2018).

The pandemic demonstrates the universality of the Sustainable Development Agenda for an inclusive and inclusive society. Incorporating of the “Education Without Exceptions: Inclusion and Integration” Agenda for the period up to 2030 into local and regional plans and policies is the key to developing a new regional governance structure for education systems that cities and regions can adopt as their own.

The fourth SDG Localization Report was presented in 2020. The Report is based on prior knowledge of the localization situation and is adapted to new social and economic living conditions, noting the direct involvement of local and regional governments to both the SDG and the COVID-19 crisis overcoming.

This document examined the variety and breadth of local initiatives taken by cities and regions to improve human well-being through the protection of human rights, public services and adequate housing. Initiatives to reduce gender inequality and protect cultural and educational diversity are noted. Many local innovations to combat climate change and protect the environment are highlighted. The report also highlights the role that local and regional governments are playing at the forefront of the COVID-19 response by keeping people safe and providing basic health and education services. University laboratories have been assigned new tasks of topical research and scientific experiments for the benefit of health and rehabilitation of human health. In general, the "region-university" system is interested in an operational strategic breakthrough in favour of the sustainability of inclusive and integration practices. The European sustainability strategy also contains some important recommendations for further actions, including:

- Expansion rights and opportunities of local and regional governments to create change and thus achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. With appropriate empowerment, innovative policies can be integrated into continuously strategies that facilitating the SDG.
- Don't stop doing activities measures to for consolidation efforts to localize the SDG in cities and regions. This containment effort should continue, in a pandemic and during recovery, so that the new content stimulates innovation policy, driving innovation from university laboratories to manufacturing.
- Defend for powerful national SDG localization strategies which include convincing course of localization and support city, local and regional governments.
- Create a conducive favourable background for localization and provide appropriate financial flows to support localization, which is especially relevant to ensure the ability of city, local and regional governments and all parties concerned to act in the interests of the SDG.
- Attract in teamwork of government, civil society and other stakeholders, including universities, as a significant step to reinforce the SDG governance and localization process. Sustainable

partnerships and participation in local government in cities and regions, civil society, the private sector, social partners and university academics in national SDG coordination mechanisms and in defining, tracking and monitoring is essential to achieving of the SDGs goals.

- Raise the value of the opinion of local authorities in voluntary national reporting to achieve qualitative changes in the embodiment of the SDG.
- Recognize, encourage and distribute upwards control and localized indicators supported by detailed data. National and local potential to identify and for data collection detailed and localized data should be part of SDG localization strategies to ensure that planning processes at all levels are realistically justified and that effective implementation can be controlled.
- Enhance universal collaboration with an updated and strengthened multilateral system, including the “region-university” system. Local authorities have shown that they play an essential role in creating links between local communities and global organizations, without, of course, pretending to be internal university consolidation (See Figure 3).

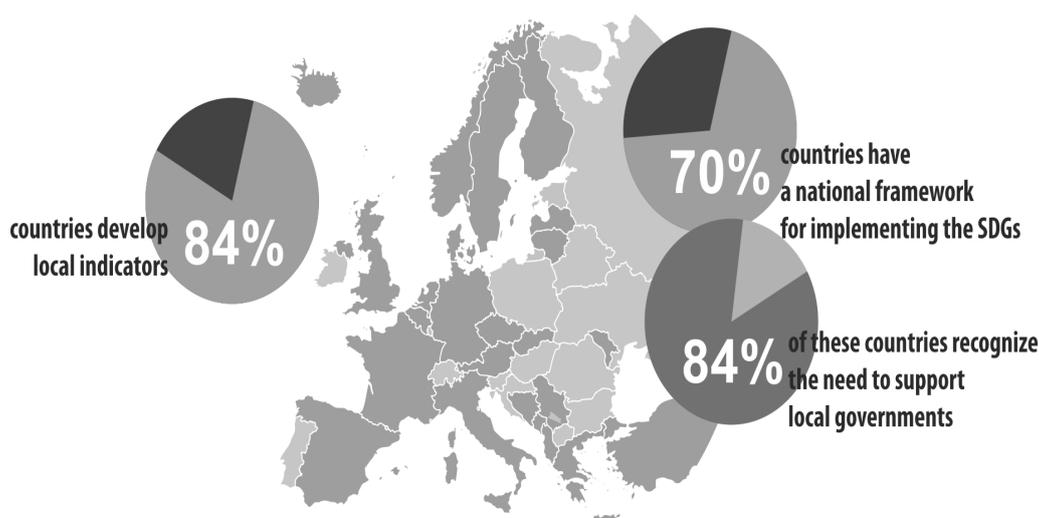


Figure 3. Localization of SDG by EU countries

Local governments of cities and regions, today, can contribute to the sustainable development of the "region-university" system in several ways.

- As a sphere of public administration of education systems that is closest to people; ideal for understanding local educational needs and achieving a goal.
- Regional authorities have a unique legitimacy to unite and balance all educational sectors and educational interests in their communities. They can and should play a leading role in the development and implementation of the common vision of the future education development in the region.

- Local economic development strategies can use and protect local culture, promote the empowerment of women and the inclusion of marginalized groups, reduce carbon emissions and make local economies more sustainable to fluctuations of the global economic and financial systems.
- Local governments in cities and regions can collaborate in a project-based manner with university partners to stimulate the development of a bottom-up collaboration system.
- Local governments act at the local level to solve global issues (climate change mitigation, civil engineering, cooperation for educational development) and manage the impact of global events at the local level (climate change adaptation, migration, mediation of globalizing economic and educational-cultural resources).

Local governments in cities and regions create, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, control planning processes, set local environmental policies and norms, and assist in the implementation of national and subnational environmental policies. Education policy is no exception. Thus, even when the framework is set at a higher level of government, local governments have competence for many sectors such as education, urban and regional planning, governance, transport, water supply, waste disposal, air quality management, public health, promotion of social services, and integration.

6. Findings

The expectations of the European society, in the new conditions of COVID turbulence, in relation to the results of the activities of universities in the regions, seriously changed, and gave rise to new questions for researches. Let us note, as a conclusion, that all levels of government, from local to global, should be vertically interconnected, combining sometimes fragmented and overlapping mechanisms for managing educational systems in the sector of inclusion and integration.

7. Conclusion

Strategies and policies of education sustainable development in general and inclusion, in particular, at the local level are integrated into subnational and national plans, and into the processes of sustainable development of regions. But the implementation of sustainable development can only be ensured if the capabilities of local governments of cities and regions are significantly strengthened in the administration sector of the project "Education without Limits: Inclusion and Integration" through internal orderly formats of interaction with regional universities.

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