



# Education – a key to multicultural society



This project is financed  
by the European Union



---

This edition of policy papers is developed to assist the civil society and citizens, in general, engage in an informed debate and have access to expert knowledge, views and opinions on topics of importance for EU integrations. Areas in which the Republic of North Macedonia will lead its EU accession negotiations are both complex and diverse, while reforms that need to be implemented will open many dilemmas that necessitate an expert debate. For more contents produced under the project “CSO Dialogue – Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integrations”, visit the website: **[www.dijalogkoneu.mk](http://www.dijalogkoneu.mk)**

Author: prof. Margarita Matlievska, PhD

This edition is available only in electronic format:

---

# CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Multiculturalism – a lifestyle	5
Minorities and multiculturalism	7
Minorities and multiculturalism – theoretical background	7
Minorities and multiculturalism – Macedonian Model of Partnership	8
Education and multiculturalism	9
Multiculturalism and education – theoretical background	9
Multiculturalism and education – Macedonian model of diversity	15
Final conclusions	19
Recommendations	20

## INTRODUCTION

“Keep your language. Love its sounds, its modulation, its rhythm. But try to march together with men of different languages, remote from your own, who wish like you for a more just and human world”.[1]

The education system is the cornerstone of any society. Therefore, any change should start in this area. In an environment of a society divided and parallel on many grounds, such as ours, where the emphasis is placed on binationalism and ethnocentrism, and not on multiculturalism and interculturalism, and on the existence of various communities, it is necessary to go beyond declarations and use the education and upbringing system to work on an integrative approach also for the communities that comprise less than 20% of the total population in RNM. In RNM, the communities are named as Vlachs, Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks, Roma and others. A ground for separation is the ethnic affiliation, as well as the language used in the education process.

RNM as a multicultural society needs to work towards multiculturalism/interculturalism as a direction; not as a situation where ethnicities live next to one another, but rather to take a step forward, more substantially, towards living with each other, through communication and cooperation: and instead of a divided one, to promote a society that makes citizens equal and equitable.

The tendency towards multicultural living is indicated by many international organizations, but also the European Union. Every member-state, or a country aspiring for European Union membership is facing the same problem – how to implement in practice the international legal obligations undertaken in the area of ethnic rights, and to establish in that way a balance between the real and practical demands of members of minorities, and the capacities of national institutions and mechanisms for their application and enforcement.

Therefore, this document places its main focus on multicultural education and the right to education of members of communities amounting to under 20% of the population in RNM. In that sense, this document is presenting the international documents dealing with those issues. In addition to this, presented is also the national legislation from this area, not only from the aspect of incorporation of provisions on the right to education in their mother tongue, but also to create curricula and teaching programmes aiming at multicultural education. This document particularly emphasizes the understanding of multicultural education in a broader sense, and its understanding by teachers teaching all study classes, so they could have adequate reactions and minimize the resistance towards multiculturalism.

The document completes the circle of the issues reviewed by providing a number of recommendations and final conclusions.

[1] Helder Camara, Spiral Of Violence (1971).

## MULTICULTURALISM – A LIFESTYLE

In circumstances of continuous approximation of its legislation to the European acquis, the Republic of North Macedonia is making efforts to create the prerequisites for economic growth, protection of rights of the individual, respecting and advancing the right of members of communities, etc. This is a challenge and an obligation for every institution and an individual in the country.

The right of every individual to belong to some community is the right based on the heritage, on the need of belonging and identification with someone who is close in a relevant way. It is a choice to belong to an ethnic community, religious community, linguistic community, etc.

Every modern society is founded upon diversities in societal life. Respect for diversity is a potential for development of any modern society. Respect for diversity leads to growth and development of the individual and the community, but, on the other hand, also to their downfall when they are not respected.

The definition of the term diversity, viewed from every aspect, stresses the shared objective – that multiculturalism is based on equality, recognition of differences and tolerance between individuals. Emphasis is placed on the right to culture, avoiding and eradicating stereotypes, as well as stressing the need to recognize the authentic identity.

The acceptance for multiculturalism in everyday life provides conditions for safe and stable development of a healthy society, and diversity is based on tolerance of all members in society.

**International legal framework for human and minority rights.** Protection of minority rights has the aim of preventing conflicts. The Copenhagen Document of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe – CSCE of 1990 reads: “They [member states] further reaffirm that respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as part of universally recognized human rights is an essential factor for peace, justice, stability and democracy in the participating States”.

The preamble to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) of the Council of Europe indicates that: “at the turning points in history of Europe, it was shown that protection of national minorities is crucial for the stability, democratic security and peace of this continent”.

The instruments of the Council of Europe are the only ones that are legally binding, while others have a declaratory nature and they offer guidelines and recommendations to the participating states.

Within the UN Declaration on the rights of individuals – members of national or ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities (1992), the following provisions are of particular importance:

**Article 1** – invites the states to safeguard the existence of national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities of minorities living on their territory and to stimulate favorable conditions to promote such identity;

**Article 2** - regulates the right of national minorities to enjoy their own culture, to practice their own religion, and to use their own language. To participate effectively in the cultural, religious, societal, economic and public life. To participate in the state's process of decision-making on national or regional level, in relation to issues of direct concern for them. To establish and maintain their associations and to have free access and contacts with members of other minorities, including from the cross-border countries;

**Article 3** – pertains to nondiscrimination of individuals on the basis of their affiliation with a particular national minority;

**Article 4** – inter alia, establishes the obligation of states to create possibilities for the national minorities to be able to learn their mother tongue or to have the possibility to receive education in their mother tongue;

**Article 5** - invites the states to take care that their national policies and programmes are planned and implemented with due concern towards the interest of the individual – members of minorities.

The remaining articles of the Declaration pertain to the regulation of relations of cooperation between the states, on issues related to national minorities.

The Council of Europe<sup>1</sup> Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) (FCNM) was ratified by the Republic of Macedonia and it constitutes a part of the national legislation[2]. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities applies a general and a special approach when it comes to regulation of minority rights.

The general approach is developed, inter alia, through: preserving and protecting the identity (Article 3,5), real equality, nondiscrimination (Article 4) and dialogue between cultures (Article 5).

A special group of rights comprises the: linguistic rights (Article 9-11), the right to education (Article 12-14) and the right to participation (Article 15).

The European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages (1992) of the Council of Europe was signed, but not ratified by RNM, and therefore it cannot be applied as part of the national legislation.[3] Still, it is of interest to present it. The Charter regulates the use of languages of minorities in the area of education (Article 8), before the judicial authorities (Article 9), in contact with administrative authorities and public services (Article 10), in relations with the media (Article 11), in cultural activities and contacts with cultural institutions (Article 12) and for the purposes of economic and social life (Article 13). The country plans to ratify the Charter soon.[4]

In addition to this, there is a special institution within OSCE – High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM), established in 1992, as an instrument for conflict prevention by early warning, and at the same time it is used to identify and find rapid solutions for ethnic tensions that could jeopardize the peace, stability and friendly relations between the OSCE - participating states. Its main principle is “Integration with Respect for Differences”. Its mandate clearly indicates that “The High Commissioner will provide early warning” and, as needed, “early response” in the earliest possible stage of the tensions that comprise issues related to national minorities and which have not reached further than the stage of early warning, but for which the High Commissioner believes that they have a potential to escalate into a conflict on the territory of OSCE, threatening the peace, stability or relations between the participating states, and requiring attention and action by the Council or the Committee of High Representatives “[Mandate of the HCNM, Chapter II, paragraph 3, 1993].

[2] See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=signatures-by-treaty&treatynum=157>

[3] See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=signatures-by-treaty&treatynum=148>

[4] In keeping with the National Programme for Adoption of Acquis Communautaire (2014-2016), available at: <https://www.sep.gov.mk/post/?id=13>

The High Commissioner acts through delivery of, inter alia, thematic recommendations. Of particular importance are:

- » (1996) The Hague Recommendations regarding the education rights of national minorities;
- » (1998) Oslo Recommendations on linguistic rights of national minorities;
- » (1999) The Lund recommendations on the effective participation of national minorities in the public life;
- » (2003) Guidelines on the use of minority languages in broadcast media;
- » (2006) Recommendations on policing in multiethnic societies;
- » (2008) Recommendations on national minorities in inter-state relations, officially commenced in Bolzano in October 2008;
- » (2012) Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies.

## MINORITIES AND MULTICULTURALISM

### Minorities and multiculturalism – theoretical background

Although there is an evident increase in the scope of international legal acts and other documents that deal with the issue of protection of minorities, in full or in part, there is no unified approach regarding the notion itself. There is no generally accepted definition of the term minority. There are several criteria to define this notion, as follows:

Objective criteria – the minorities differ from the majority, i.e., they have their specific features compared to the majority, which are usually characterized by a different national or ethnic affiliation, i.e., origin, religious affiliation, linguistic and cultural difference, etc. The members of minority communities are outnumbered by the majority population.

Subjective criteria – members of minority groups have the intention and wish to preserve the specificities distinguishing them from the majority, through active expression of their national or ethnic affiliation, practicing their own religion, using their mother tongue, etc.

Other criteria – considered are temporal criteria to establish the notion of minority, i.e., a long-term or traditional presence of members of a minority community at a certain territory (state). This criterion makes a difference between the traditional minority and new or newly emerged minority groups which usually mean refugees and migrants. The members of new minorities do not enjoy the same rights as the members of traditional minorities.

Most commonly used definition is the one according to which “A minority is a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the state – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language”<sup>[5]</sup>

The need for special minority rights stems from the subordinate position the minority has with regards to the majority. That subordination can be seen not only in its smaller numbers compared to the majority population, but also in the smaller economic, cultural and other influence. Minority groups and their members are often experiencing misunderstanding, marginalization, discrimination, etc.

[5] Author of the definition is Francesco Capotorti.

Special measures taken, and the exercise of specific minority rights, aim towards ensuring necessary prerequisites for survival of minority groups and their integration in the broader community, by preserving the own identity and preventing involuntary assimilation.

Special measures create equal opportunities for all individuals to exercise their rights, regardless of the existing differences.

### Minorities and multiculturalism – Macedonian Model of Partnership

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the term “community” is in use, instead of “minority”, and that stems from the constitutional amendments introduced in 2001. This change introduces a move from the model of dominance to the model of partnership.

According to the official data from the population census carried out in 2002, below is a table with a representation of all communities in RNM.

Ethnic Affiliation	Number of residents	%
Macedonians	1.297.981	64,18
Albanians	509.083	25,17
Turks	77.959	3,85
Serbs	35.939	1,78
Vlach	9.695	0,48
Bosniaks	17.018	0,84
Roma	53.879	2,66
Other	20.993	1,04
Total:	2.022.547	100

Laws containing provisions pertaining to rights of communities are: Law on the Rights of Communities Amounting to Less than 20 % of the Population in the Republic of Macedonia (“Official Gazette of RNM” No. 18/2020, Law on culture (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 59/03), Law on Primary Education (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 161/019, 6p.229/20), Law on Secondary Education (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 52/02), Law on Higher Education (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 64/2000), Law on Local Self-government (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 5/2002), Law on the Use of Language (“Official Gazette of RNM”, No. 7/2019), Law on Civil Servants (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 59/2000), Law on Use of Flags of Communities in the Republic of Macedonia (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 58/05) and Law on Holidays in the Republic of Macedonia (“Official Gazette of RM” No. 21/90).

## EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

### Multiculturalism and education – theoretical background

When it comes to multiculturalism, and particularly multiculturalism in education, different researchers define the term multiculturalism differently. Some believe that a change is needed to the curriculum itself, while others believe that multiculturalism needs to be required in the classroom and the climate within it. Still, despite the large number of different opinions and definitions, multiculturalism makes a certain kind of transformation to the overall pedagogical practice. “Multiculturalism in its broadest sense recognizes a broad spectrum of dimensions about race, ethnic affiliation, language, sex, sexual orientation, age, class, status, education, spiritual and religious orientation and other cultural dimensions. All of them are critical aspects of the ethnic and racial identity of the individual”.[6]

If all these aspects would be correlated in the area of education, they would give priority to the main subject, i.e., the student, who should have the same treatment, in every sense, as all the others from the minority. Everyone who is a part of multiculturalism needs to know how to participate in the society where they live. The education process itself needs to be focused on the students and on their prior experiences, to develop understanding and to achieve empathy regarding the everyday problems that the students are facing.

Many publications develop different views related to multicultural education. Namely, it is called a “progressive approach towards education transformation that holistically criticizes and resolves current deficiencies, failures, and discriminatory practices in education”.[7]

All of this points to the need of complete transformation, primarily in the entire society, and then also in all institutions. The aim is to achieve a civic change, and then a change in the education process. Where pedagogy has the leading role is there the initial steps are made. Only in this way will the students be in the focus of attention, i.e., at the forefront, which will achieve critical, creative thinking, skill, and developing high social consciousness.

Literature on this theme contains many definitions, some of which define the term multiculturalism specifically and decidedly, while others extensively present its significance.

Generally speaking, multiculturalism is a term that presupposes diversity of culture, which should not be declaratory only, but it should also be applied in practice.

More precisely, there are two interpretations for multiculturalism: political and cultural. The first one strives towards acceptance of political rights and recognition of identity, while the other interpretation pertains to groups that are not politically- or socially - based.

Multiculturalism is closely related to other notions, as well. Specifically, multiculturalism is related to interculturalism, which is a “cultural policy that makes equitable exchanges between all cultures that are in contact within one society”[8]

This presupposes shared understanding, respect for the individual, tolerance, as well as knowledge about the different culture. Practice leads to a conclusion that problems occur when ones do not have sufficient knowledge about the differences and similarities with the others. However, when all differences are taken into account and when participants observe them, it could be understood that what is happening is intercultural communication, which broadens the horizons to multiculturalism.

[6] Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists, American Psychological Association, p.380, Retrieved September 19, 2013 from: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language>

[7] Прирачник за социјална правда (2009), Скопје: Фондација Институт отворено општество, page. 70

[8] Fabrykant M. (2012). Beloruski drzavni univerzitet, Minsk, Belorusija. Nacionalni istrazivacki univerzitet. Sankt Petersburk, Rusija. Retrieved from:[https://www.academia.edu/3368493/Kulturni\\_identitet\\_interkulturalizam\\_multikulturalizam\\_-\\_istarska\\_iskustva](https://www.academia.edu/3368493/Kulturni_identitet_interkulturalizam_multikulturalizam_-_istarska_iskustva)

Another term related to multiculturalism is acculturation, which is well known as a “cultural contact and interaction between cultures”[9], which brings about changes in cultural values and behavior of individuals within a group, while later the behavior of the entire group changes, as well. The most general and best accepted term, closely related to multiculturalism, is globalization.

Multiethnicity, multiculturalism and interculturalism are different real situations in most societies. “While the notion of multiculturalism pertains to plurality of cultures in the same space (plurality culture), to the societal mosaic in which the groups and communities have different languages and cultures, and where over time they get used to living next to each other, the notion of interculturalism stresses the relation between cultures and the necessity of their interaction.”[10]

Both terms are of outstanding importance for the education, and it demonstrates their role in the curricula and various formal and informal objectives to improve the relations in the education system. Multiculturalism is also reflected in the classroom, where students become increasingly diverse, and where traditional contents of the curriculum becomes richer by studying cultures and multiculture. It depends on the teacher how will they make education be “real” education, regardless of their affiliation to a certain community.

Multicultural education is a reform movement the purpose of which is transformation of the school where students from different genders and from different cultural, linguistic, and ethnic groups will have equal opportunities to achieve success, in the school and in the community. Within this idea, all students, regardless of the groups to which they belong, and are connected to gender, ethnic affiliation, language, religion, race, culture, social class or particularity, need to have educational equality in schools.

Multicultural education perceives the school as a social system composed of strongly connected segments and variables. Therefore, in order to transform the school and to achieve educational equality, all major components of the school need to undergo substantial changes. The focus on just one of the variables in the school, such as the formalized (prescribed) curriculum, does not provide for implementation of multicultural education, which is an ongoing process, since the stated and idealized objectives (such as educational equality/equity and eradication of all forms of discrimination) could never be fully achieved in a human society. The main objective of multicultural education is to help the students to advance their knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to function within their own microcultures, in the macroculture, with other micro-cultures and with the global community based on democratic principles.

When teachers think about multicultural education, many of them think only, or primarily, about contents related to ethnic, racial and cultural groups.[11] Such understanding of multicultural education is problematic for several reasons. Teachers who cannot easily see the connection of their contents with cultural issues find it easy to reject multicultural education, using the argument that it is not relevant for the subject they teach. This often happens to mathematics or natural sciences teachers, who often say: „Multicultural education is great for teacher is social sciences and literature, but has nothing to do with me. Mathematics and science are the same, regardless of the cultural affiliation of the children “.[12] It is precisely that argument “irrelevant for the content” that can become a legitimized form of resistance against multicultural education when it is understood primarily as contents.

---

[9] Jelic J., Akulturacija. page 127. Retrieved June 21, 2013

[10] Kostovic S. Djermanov J., Izazovi interkulturalizma i škola. Novi Sad. Retrieved on August 23, 2013

[11] Banks, J. A. & Cherry A. McGee Banks, Multicultural Education: Issues And Perspectives, John Wiley & Sons, USA, 2007, in the chapter entitled “Changing the traditional ways of teaching”, page 20.

[12] Ibidem.

Multicultural education needs to be defined and understood more broadly by all teachers in all subjects, so they could react appropriately and in order to minimize the resistance towards it.

The term pedagogy does not pertain only to techniques of teaching, but also to the entire production of knowledge in the classroom. Pedagogy comprises different relations between teaching materials, teachers and students (didactic triangle). Such extended understanding of pedagogy is a challenge regarding the usual assumptions about the teacher as a “disinterested” expert on teaching contents as “objective” by nature and about the method of teaching as irrelevant for the message. In order to educate the students about the complex, multicultural world in which we all live together, we need to include the perspectives and opinions of those who had not been included traditionally – women from all layers of society, people with different ethnic and religious origin, with different sexual orientation, skin color, as well as everyone who believes that the education does not respond to their needs. The anthropologist Renato Rosaldo (1994) formulated the way in which diverse classrooms contribute to the new structures in knowledge and change the relations between teachers and students: “The question before us now is ... how to teach more effectively in changed classroom environments. The new classrooms are not like the old ones... In diverse classrooms, the issue of “The Other” begins to dissolve. Who gets to be the we and who gets to be the other rotates from one day to the next, depending on the topic of discussion. And before long, the stable us/them dividing line evaporates into a bigger mix of differences and solidarity .”[13]

Despite the large number of different definitions and concepts on multicultural education, only few of them provide a detailed and clear basis to understand it.

In addition to emphasizing the individual differences between students, if they are seen as a group, it will be observed that all of them have their roots and operate according to them in all spheres of life. And in addition to the exceptional importance of knowing and applying multicultural education, it is primarily necessary to know what is its practical application and what is the working definition of multicultural education. „Multicultural education is a progressive approach to transform education, which provides holistic critique and resolves the ongoing deficiencies, failures and discriminatory practices in education“.[14] According to the aforementioned definition, multicultural education is essential for the schools as educational centers, the aim of which is precisely to be the location where the overall transformation of students begins and is carried out, and this transforms the habits that a society had acquired.

The contact hypothesis of Allport (1954) contains useful guidelines to support the students in building positive interethnic and interracial attitudes in situations that enable contacts. He asserts that “contacts between groups improve the intergroup relations, when the following conditions are met: 1) equal status, 2) cooperation, and not competition, 3) sanctions by authorized individuals (in our setting: teachers, the principal and the support services) and 4) interpersonal interactions through which the students learn about each other’s personalities “.[15]

**Impartiality Pedagogy.** Teachers of every subject need to analyze their actions and teaching styles and establish the degree in which they reflect the multicultural issues and problems. Pedagogy of impartiality exists when teachers modify their instructions by facilitating academic achievements of students from different ethnic, gender, racial, cultural and societal class groups. This encompasses the use of different teaching styles and approaches harmonized with the broad spectrum of learning styles in different cultural and ethnic groups, when students are expected to use personalized ways and cooperative techniques of learning mathematics and natural sciences, in order to improve the academic achievements of students from microcultures.[16]

[13] See: Banks, J. A. & Cherry A. McGee Banks, Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives, John Wiley & Sons, USA, 2007, page 181

[14] Прирачник за социјална правда (2009), Скопје: Фондација Институт отворено општество. page 70

[15] Ibidem

[16] Ibidem 22

**Improving the school culture.** The culture and organization of the school need to be re-examined by the entire staff, with everyone's joint participation in its reconstruction. Important variables that need to be examined with a view to creating a school culture for students of various genders, ethnic and racial groups are: practices of grouping and labelling, participation in sports activities, (dis)proportionality between the achievements and involvement of special educational programmes for gifted children, as well as the interaction of the staff and students along gender and ethnic lines.

According to Banks, for multicultural education to be implemented successfully, “the school needs to be represented as a social system where all major variables are closely interlinked ”.[17] This presupposes formulating and initiating a change strategy which will reform the overall school environment, in order to implement multicultural education (picture 1).[18] Reforming any of the variables represented, such as the prescribed curriculum or the teaching materials, is necessary, but not sufficient. Multicultural and sensitized teaching materials have no effect in the hands of teachers who have a negative attitude towards different gender, ethnic, racial and cultural groups. They would use the multicultural materials only rarely, or would probably use them in harmful ways. Therefore, the support to teachers and the professional services in the schools so they would acquire knowledge about the different groups and the democratic attitudes and values are of decisive importance when implementing multicultural programmes.

#### Integration of contents

Integration of contents deals with the degree to which the teachers use examples and contents from various cultures in the teaching.

#### Building knowledge

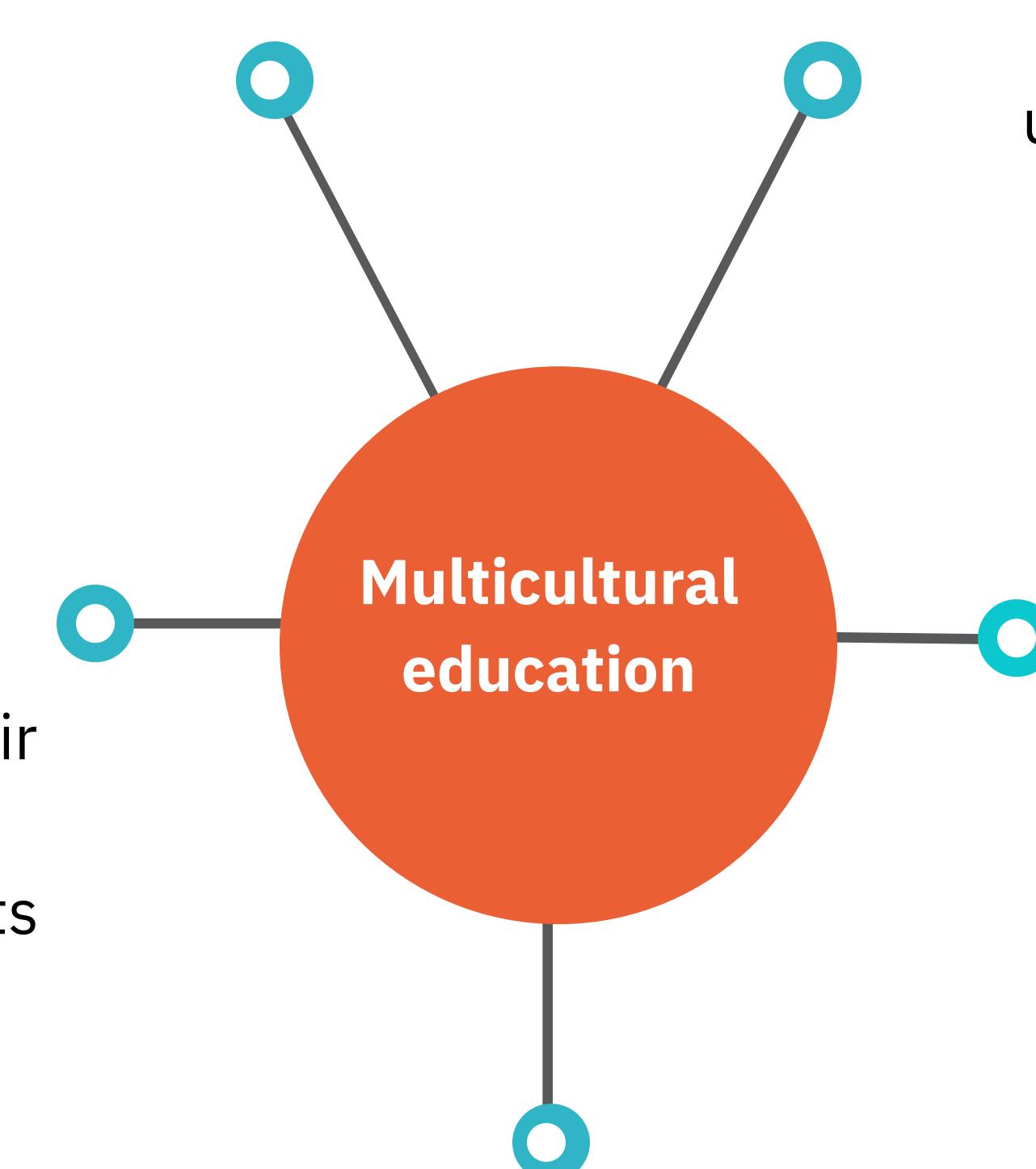
Teachers need to help students understand, examine and decide how the implicit cultural presumptions, criteria, perspective and prejudice in any discipline influence the way in which knowledge is built.

#### Pedagogy of impartiality

It exists when teachers modify their teaching in a way that facilitates academic achievements of students from different cultural, gender and societal – class groups.

#### Reducing prejudices

This dimension is focused on the characteristics of gender, ethnic and racial attitudes of students, and ways to modify them through the teaching methods and materials.



#### Improving the school culture

It is necessary to examine the practices of grouping and labelling, participation in sports activities, disproportionality in academic achievements and interaction between staff and students along ethnic and gender lines in order to create a school culture that strengthens students who belong to different gender, ethnic and racial groups.

Picture 1 Dimensions of multicultural education

To implement multicultural education in schools, Banks suggests "...to reform the relations of power, verbal interaction between teachers and students, the school culture, curriculum, extracurricular activities, attitudes towards language of minorities (Beykent, 2000), the programme for testing and practices of grouping ".[19]

[17] Ibidem

[18] Ibidem, page 23

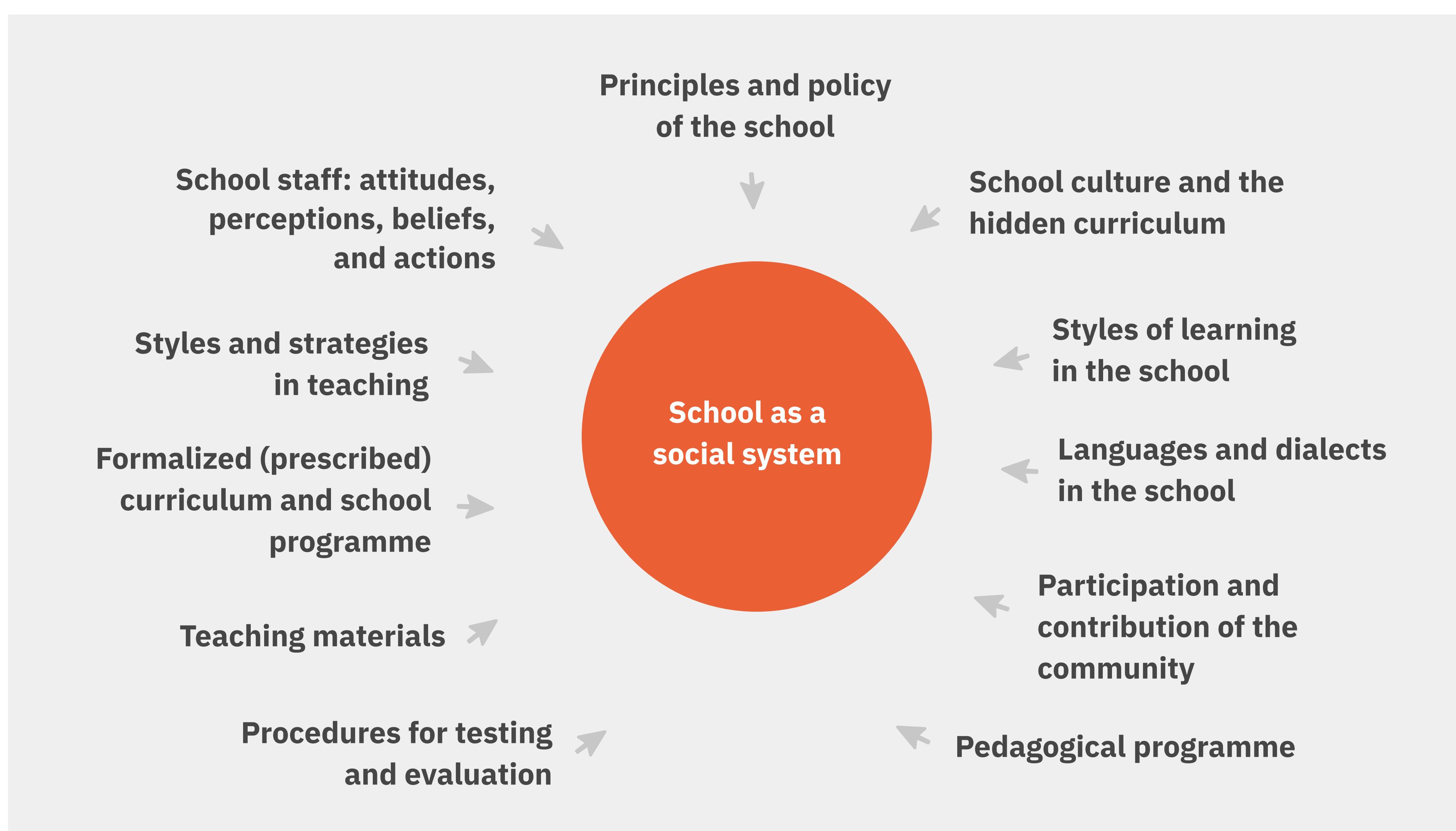
[19] Ibidem

Namely, when such changes or reforms are made, what needs to be considered primarily are the changes inflicted to students, changes the students are facing, and changes in which students participate. It is said that change needs to be applied to ourselves first, and then, if there is a positive impact, it could be applied to others, as well.

The educators, i.e., teachers must continue to practice teaching which will include the application of multiculturalism. It is not allowed, under any circumstances, to question the possibility and capability of our schools to achieve a high level of developing awareness in students, but it also does not preclude the possibility that within every education institution there might be a certain group of students who are deprived of their rights.

Institutional norms, social structures, statements related to reasons and beliefs, values and aims of the school need to be transformed and reconstructed. Huge attention needs to be paid particularly to the latent curriculum of the school, as well as to its implicit norms and values. The obvious curriculum consists of the following factors: guidelines, textbooks, bulletin boards and curricula. Such aspects of the school environment are important and must be reformed in order to create a school culture that promotes positive attitudes to various cultural groups and helps students from such groups to achieve academic success.

When reviewing the school as a social system, it consists of several main variables and factors: school culture, principles and policies of the school, prescribed curriculum and the programme of the school. [20] Each of these factors could be the focus of the initial school reform, but in each of them change needs to happen in order to create and to sustain an efficient multicultural school environment. When formulating plans for multicultural education, educators need to develop a concept for the school as a micro-culture that has its plans, norms, values, statuses and goals, educators need to produce a concept of the school as a micro-culture that has its plans, norms, values, statuses and objectives, as do other societal systems. The school has a dominant culture, but it also contains various microcultures, and in some ways it is a societal system (picture 2).[21]



Picture 2 The school as a social system

[20] Ibidem, page 13

[21] Ibidem, page 13

Multicultural education brings about the need of change in the schools, which presupposes transformation in the education system and necessity of critical thinking of all aspects of the process of education and socialization, that are vehicles that need to emphasize the needs of a multicultural school.

The school needs to be a cultured environment, a place for a dynamical interaction through which teachers and students in their interrelation harmonize some of the views, perspectives and ethos. Through this process, teachers and students enrich their knowledge, and the academic success of students from different groups improves, since their perspectives become legitimate in the school. Both teachers and students acquire benefits from this process of cultural exchange and interaction, which results in establishing a sustainable path of cohabitation through understanding, respect and dialogue between members from different cultural groups.

If one considers the modern teaching, which constantly favors the student, i.e., puts them at the forefront before anything else, it is clear that what is discussed here is pedagogy as a science, that chooses as an object of its research the main subject in the education system. Since multiculturalism in education requires mutual respect, understanding and learning about each other, the experiences that students have need to be at the forefront in the teaching. This way will not only make the students active, but the teaching itself could be called interactive and successful. And when on top of it all it is known that the changes or transformations are made at the very beginning, in the curricula and teaching programmes, it is clear that what is present here is a will and persistence to overcome prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. The change must not encompass only the education system, curricula and the teaching programme, but changes must also be implemented regarding the teaching class and modalities for grading (evaluation).

### **Multiculturalism and education – Macedonian model of diversity**

Republic of North Macedonia is a state striving towards Euro-Atlantic integrations, a country that aims to show to the world that it deserves its “place under the sun”, and multiculturalism is a field that it sees as a challenge, in terms of respect for human rights. RNM is dealing with the challenge of internal reorganization and action and external promotion of the respect for human rights. This section presents the process of transposition of multicultural values into legislative provisions in the Republic of North Macedonia, and legislative provisions on multicultural living in Macedonia and practical solutions regarding multicultural education.

Human rights are based on recognition, accepting the human individual in all their diversity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (UN)[22] was adopted as a result of the need of UN member-states to declare the faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and value of human personality, and to stimulate the societal progress and advancing the prerequisites for more freedom, through learning and upbringing/socialization.

The principle that all human beings are equal and that they have equal rights is at the core of the concept of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but it is also its constant aim and challenge. This principle is a cornerstone of the philosophical and legal thought upon which to build the concept that people were not treated equally in the past, nor has this been achieved in the present times. The principle of nondiscrimination is interwoven as a constant throughout the whole of international regulations. In theory, the broadest understanding of the term discrimination is present when the

[22] Adopted and promulgated in the Resolution of the UN General Assembly 217 (III) of 10 December 1948: 48 countries voted **for**, a none voted against, while 8 countries were undecided (amongst them Yugoslavia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and USSR). It presents principles that still have a strong impact around the world. Although the Declaration in itself is not obligatory, many lawyers would present the argument that it has become legally obligatory through the international customs and practice, through the application in constitutions and jurisprudence of many countries.

authorities, institutions or individuals treat people differently on the basis of some of their personal characteristics, which is for the most part due to stereotypes and prejudices. Stereotypes and prejudices are the most common reason for non-acceptance of the “otherness” and for the rejection or denying of its value systems, and therefore the reaction manifested through rejection on the basis of stereotypes and prejudices is often called “prejudice in action”, which results in discrimination, through its many manifestations - xenophobia, racism, sexism and related kinds of intolerance.[23]

The European dimension of education is based on the need of youth to learn about the shared spiritual heritage and historic relations of culture of European nations, to develop tolerance to differences and solidarity with others in the spirit of togetherness and unity of nations through the European Union (EU). Particularly due to the fact that several countries in Europe are characterized by cultural diversity, multilingualism, ethnic and confessional affiliation of the population, i.e., there is almost no country that is linguistically and ethnically homogenous. Globalization and democratization of societies impose the need of reconciling the universality of human rights with the diversity of cultures. Therefore, modern multicultural societies are forced to resolve the problems of cultural homogenization and integration of different cultural groups in the society. The sphere that makes a significant contribution to such integration is the education, which needs to provide for ongoing awareness raising of citizens about their belonging to the broader community. It needs to enable members of different cultural groups, i.e., members of different ethnicity, gender, race, religion, to nurture and develop culture, language and identity as a feature that distinguishes them from other cultural groups.

After establishing diplomatic relations with the EU in December 1995, the Republic of North Macedonia became a legitimate partner and true ally of the EU. Reforms in education area, and following the process of European integration in education and science, activities related to harmonization of laws and secondary legislation in the sphere of education and science to the EU acquis, fulfilment of obligations enshrined in the Ohrid Framework Agreement, are eloquent evidence that the Republic of North Macedonia has the objective of adopting criteria and standards in order to become a full-fledged member of EU.

In circumstances when RNM is on the quest to create and practice modalities of applicable and sustainable policy of cultural diversity, the issue of treatment of “otherness” and “diversity” emerges as one of the priorities. Living in the times of ongoing changes and reforms, the education system in RNM shares the same destiny on that path. When abandoning the old and adapting to the new, some of the values and achievements are neglected and forgotten at the expense of new and fresh approaches and solutions. Most probably the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in Macedonian society provides a rich context for the children and youth, through substantial curriculum with a broad multicultural aspect acquire multicultural understanding and skills to function effectively on all levels: in local communities, at the national level, and globally in the world.

One of the main roles of education is to enable children and youth to develop intellectual, social and practical skills, to understand and apply methods to build democracy and to participate in democratic processes as future professionals and citizens. Progress in democratic processes also means equal inclusion of cultures of different groups in all segments and at all levels of education in the society.

The individual, their cognition and awareness of the cultural identity are formed during the period of primary education by receiving information and knowledge, acquiring skills, shaping attitudes and establishing interaction in the process of socialization within and outside of the school. Within the school, attitudes are built also regarding the modalities of treatment of societal norms and relations.

[23] See: Прирачник за отстранување на дискриминацијата врз основа на етничка припадност, Фондација Институт отворено општество – Македонија, Здружение на граѓани за поддршка на меѓуетничкиот дијалог and развој на заедницата „Заеднички вредности“, 2009. (Manual on Removing Ethnically Based Discrimination, Open Society Institute – Macedonia, Association of Citizens in Support of Multiethnic Dialogue and Community Development “Shared Values”

Under the influence of the overall school ethos, the psycho-social identity of genders is shaped, so that students, members of different gender and cultural group are given tasks and expectations the fulfilment and acceptance of which leads to a different psycho-social adaptation and responsibility. The educational process, particularly primary education, plays a key role in shaping the attitudes of students, from the perspective of belonging to various cultural groups.

The provision of teaching contents, textbooks and materials that exhibit cultural sensitivity in respect of language, illustrations, examples they contain or show through the explicit and implicit messages they send, attitudes and status symbols have a significant impact on the quality of education and relations during the class and in the entire education process. Therefore, advancing multicultural education is not limited to changing the curriculum only (Banks & Banks, 2004), but it also presupposes changes in the overall school ethos and the entire educational environment.

Considering that multiculturalism in Republic of North Macedonia, and also generally in the world, does not pertain only to differences between the groups, but to the aspects contained within a culture, and primarily the lifestyle, beliefs and habits, a group of people understanding itself and the world according to their own needs. This is precisely why the battle has one clear objective, to achieve acceptance of various ethnic groups, religions, language and identity. If the situation with multiculturalism in our country would be analyzed, it would show that it has certain specificities that depend on the ethnic communities that live precisely within the borders of the state. Specifically, multiculturalism within a society has decisive importance for tolerance and it gives incentive for multiculturalism in the education system, i.e., in the education institutions.

The existing constellations in our country point to the need to reexamine the goals, tasks and contents of the curriculum (teaching plans and programmes) in education.

Components of the curriculum are the teaching plan and programme, the teaching methods and practices in the school, teaching materials, additional study materials, evaluation of students' achievements and legislative provisions.

Education is one of the key forms through which members of communities learn about their specificities, culture and language, while it is also a mechanism providing integration of the individual in the society. The importance of education for members of communities amounting to less than 20% of population of RNM can be seen through several parameters, and the key issue is access of members of these communities to quality education, while utilizing the possibility to use their mother tongue.

RNM has the obligation to ensure, through education, that various ethnic groups develop the feeling of belonging to their communities, involvement and inclusion of communities in the society via the education process, and at the same time, to use it to educate the majority and to strengthen the awareness amongst citizens about the diversity and multiculturality of our society. The education is one of the key factors to introduce the members of communities to their specificities, culture and language, and at the same time It is also and primarily the only mechanism that ensures integration of the individual in the society.

In the RNM, depending on the degree and type of education process, communities exercise their right at different levels, such as: right to education and to receive education in their mother tongue, the right to learn and study their mother tongue, and the right to take classes in the elective course - Learning the language and culture of the community.

R North Macedonia is one of the many countries in the world where several languages are spoken. Five languages are languages of instruction, i.e., teaching is carried out in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Serbian and Bosnian language of instruction in the primary education (that lasts for nine years) and teaching in Macedonia, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian language of instruction in the secondary education, which is compulsory in duration of three or four years, and it is free of charge in the public secondary schools.

**Preschool socialization and education.** Care and education for children of pre-school age is provided through kindergartens. Pursuant to national law, a municipal kindergarten is established by the municipality, or a municipality within the city of Skopje, while a private childcare institution could be established by a country-based legal or natural person, on the basis of a permit issued by the Government.[24] The activities in a kindergarten are conducted in Macedonian language and the Cyrillic alphabet, and for the children of members of other communities, in the language of the respective community.[25] The individual employed in a childcare institution, included in the groups where educational and upbringing activities are conducted in the language of members of communities needs to have proficiency in the language and alphabet on which the activity is taking place.

**Primary education.** Primary education in RNM takes 9 years and is compulsory and free of charge. Pursuant to the Concept of nine-years primary education, multiculturalism in Macedonian society requires that primary school promotes the notion of students developing the values of cohabitation, respecting differences between people and their culture, language and traditions. Pursuant to the Constitution of RNM, members of communities have the right to receive instruction in their own language in primary education, and in schools where another language is the language of instruction, Macedonian language is studied as well.[26]

There are five languages of instruction - Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Serbian and Bosnian.

Bosnian language was introduced as experimental teaching in the school year 2009/2010, and it became regular teaching in 2018/2019. The instruction in Bosnian language follows a bilingual model of teaching, where part of the instructions is carried out in Macedonian language, and part in Bosnian language, which is due to the shortage of teaching staff.

Vlach and Roma do not have regular classes in their mother tongue, and they and the Roma do not have regular teaching in their mother tongue and they are studying it through the elective course - Language and culture of the community, from the third to the ninth grade, with two classes weekly. Although both communities have the constitutional right to have regular education, the state did not provide that thus far, and provided is just the elective course. In 2019/2020, the Serbian and the Turkish community, in addition to the regular teaching, receive the right to study the elective course Language and Culture of the Community.

**Secondary education.** Secondary education is compulsory for every citizen, and it is free-of-charge in public secondary schools. The RNM allows establishing of municipal, state and private secondary schools. Pursuant to the Constitution of RNM, members of communities have the right to receive teaching in their own language in the secondary school, and in school with another language of instruction, Macedonian language is studied as well. Teaching is received in four languages of instruction - Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian.

**Higher education.** Higher education institutions may be public, private – public non-profit institutions, private (profit-making or not-profit) institutions. Pursuant to the national legislation, the language of instruction in institutions of higher education is Macedonian. Still, members of communities, in order to express, nurture and develop their identity, have the right to teaching in public education institutions, in certain relevant study programmes and contents, in the language of the community, in line with the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the higher education institution. The state provides funding for the higher education also for the language spoken by at least 20% of the population in RNM, i.e., it is limited to the education in Albanian language only, and not any of the languages of the smaller communities. The teaching in the public higher education institutions for teachers' development can be delivered also in the languages of the members of other communities that are not a majority in RNM.

[24] Ibid, art. 76 and 77

[25] Ibid, чл. 47 ст. 1 and 2

[26] Амандман VIII на Уставот на РНМ, 2001

At the Faculty for Teacher Education “St. Clement of Ohrid”, the teaching for the study groups for grades 1 - 5 and preschool education is delivered in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish languages of instruction. At the State University – Tetovo, that consists of 11 faculties, the language of instruction is Albanian. With regards to the study of languages of smaller communities, at the Faculty of Philology in Skopje for many years there are special departments of Turkish language and of Serbian language and literature. In the academic year 2010/11, the Roma language is introduced for the first time as an elective course at the Faculty of Philology. There is a possibility to study the Vlach language at the Faculty for Teacher Education in Shtip, as an elective course within two study programmes – preschool education and teaching for grades 1 - 5.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Multiculturalism in Macedonia is given a special emphasis, especially in the area of education. Namely, certain communities follow regular teaching in their mother tongue, and other communities, although they have that right, do not have that opportunity, other than taking an elective course. On the other hand, this leads to certain contradiction, expressed as communities closing within themselves.

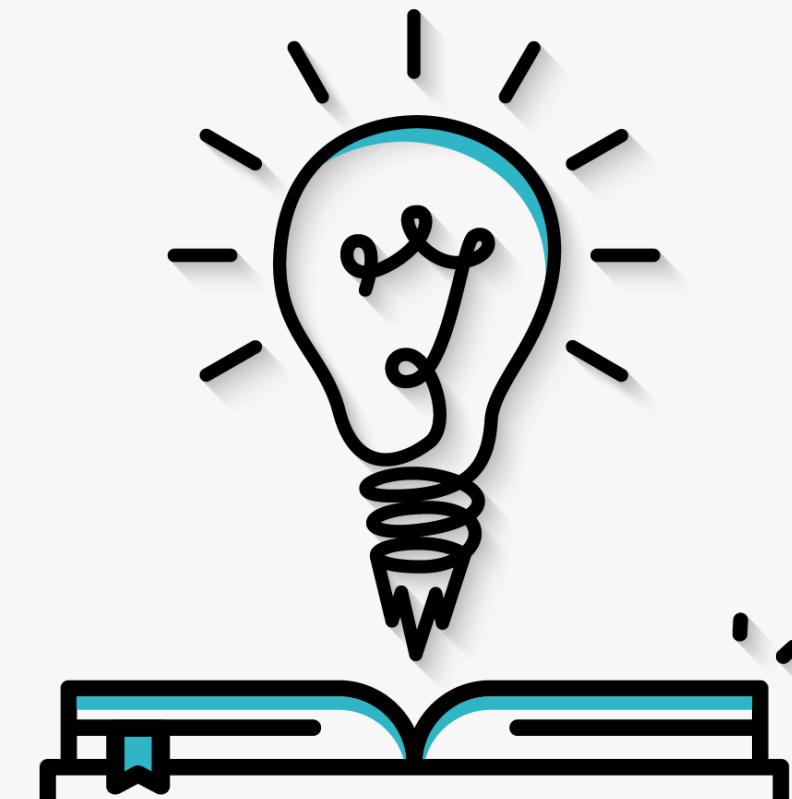
Despite the existence of an excellent legislative framework in RNM regarding the promotion and protection of the rights of minorities, the practice registers a certain degree of lack of will to improve the situation.

Absolute insisting on, and implementing special education in the mother tongue, and a complete separation of students in all stages of education, leads to disintegration and alienation of students, which lead to them living besides each other, completely isolated, and as if everyone lived in their own ghetto. The education system does not promote a form of interaction between the members of communities, but feeds even more the parallelism along ethnic lines and contributes to ethnocentrism. The source of the problem is probably that proficiency in the mother tongue only, and inability to speak the other languages limits the contact between members of the communities, due to the absence of a common (shared) language.

The presented broad picture of the international and national legal framework for the protection of rights of communities, for a special overview of the education and multiculturalism, does not mean that we could speak of a society of equal citizens.

It is not too late to begin undertaking also other relevant measures in several aspects of societal life, in the sense of respecting the culture, the principle of adequate and equitable representation, protection from discrimination, the gender aspect in developing related to the rights of communities, and certainly the inescapable element of information sharing in the mother tongues of communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



---

To provide conditions for instruction in the mother tongue, or to study elective courses in the secondary education, whereby the students – members of communities would continue to develop the awareness of their own culture and affiliation to the community.

---

The Ministry of Education and Science should provide adequate employment and continuous education of the teaching staff delivering instruction in one of the languages of communities or is teaching some of the elective courses about the language and the culture of any of the communities.

---

An integrated system of education is recommended. The aim is to build a tolerant society, by supporting programmes and measures in the education, that will improve the communication among the youth, and the need of intensive intercultural communication.

---

Increased interaction of students from various ethnic communities, or languages in which etching is delivered, through joint extracurricular activities, and through various subjects in schools.

---

Offering to study, as an elective course, the language and the culture of other communities.

---

Improved level of proficiency in Macedonian language for the students that receive teaching in other languages of instruction.

---

Reviewing the textbooks and enriching them with intercultural contents.

---

And lastly, building a multicultural society is a serious challenge. But it wil be easier if measures are introduced first in the sphere of education, since this is the way to set solid foundations upon which to build other processes in the society, in order to achieve the aim – one society for all.

## References

1. Henderson A. (2010). Creating a Multicultural Environment that Values Diversity for Young Children, Oklahoma Child Care Services Oklahoma Department of Human Services Retrieved October 15, 2013
2. Jelic J., Akulturacija. page 127. Retrieved June 21, 2013
3. Kostovic S. Djermanov J., Izazovi interkulturalizma i škola. Novi Sad. Retrieved August 23, 2013
4. Banks A. J. & Banks, A. McGee C., (2007). Multicultural Education: Issues And Perspectives, John Niles & Sons, USA
5. Banks, J. A. (2004). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions, and practices. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), Handbook of research on multicultural education (2nd ed., pp. 3–29). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
6. Banks, J. A., (1979). Shaping the future of multicultural education. *The Journal of Negro Education* 48(Summer)
7. Прирачник за социјална правда (2009), Скопје: Фондација Институт отворено општество. page 70
8. Fabrykant M. (2012 ). Beloruski drzavni univerzitet, Minks, Belorusija. Nacionalni istrazivacki univerzitet. Sankt Petersburk, Rusija. Извадено од:  
[http://www.academia.edu/3368493/Kulturni\\_identitet\\_interkulturalizam\\_multikulturalizam\\_-\\_istariska\\_iskustva](http://www.academia.edu/3368493/Kulturni_identitet_interkulturalizam_multikulturalizam_-_istariska_iskustva)
- 9 . Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists, American Psychological Association, p.380, Retrieved September 19, 2013 from:  
<http://www.apastyle.org/manual/related/guidelines-multicultural-education.pdf>
10. Т. Чарлс., Мултикултурализам: Погледи за политиката на признавање (2004). Чарлс Тejlor, К.Ентони Апаја, Јирген Хабермас, Стивен К. Рокфелер, Мајкл Волзер, Сузан Вулф, Евро- Балкан пресс
11. Ташева М., Ристевска С. и Ангеловска А., (2010). Унапредување на меѓуетничкиот дијалог во општините -Теоретски и практични аспекти, Скопје: МЦГО
12. Анализа на меѓуетничките односи во Република Македонија  
[http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=148&Itemid=39](http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=148&Itemid=39)
13. Атанасов П., (2003). Мултикултурализмот како теорија, политика и практика, Скопје: Евро- Балкан Пресс
14. Закон за државните службеници, „Службен весник на РМ“, бр. 76 од 7.6.2010 година, член 12
15. Закон за изменување на законот за празниците на Република Македонија, „Службен весник на РМ“, бр. 18 од 15.2.2007 година
16. Закон за јавните службеници во „Службен весник на РМ“, бр. 52 од 16.4.2010 година
17. Закон за основното образование, „Службен весник на РМ“, бр. 103/08 (членови: 2, 3, 9, 14, 100, 104, 119).
18. Закон за учебници за основно и средно образование, „Службен весник на Република Македонија“, бр.98/08, член 3.

19. Законот за спречување и заштита од дискриминација, Указ на владата во „Службен весник на РМ“, бр. 50 од 13.4.2010 година
20. Концепција на деветгодишно основно воспитание и образование, (2007). Скопје: Биро за развој на образованието
21. Национална програма за развој на образованието 2005-2015, (2004). Министерство за образование и наука
22. Решение за донесување на основите на програмата за воспитно-образовната работа со деца од предучилишна возраст во јавните детски градинки „Службен весник на РМ“ бр. 125 од 15.10.2007 година
23. Универзална декларација за човекови права на ООН
24. Устав на Република Македонија, (член 48)
25. <https://dejure.mk/zakon/zakon-za-pravata-na-zaednicite-koi-se-pomalku-od-20-od-naselenieto-vorepublika-severna-makedonija>

