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The issue of Albanian migration in the curriculum of pre-university and university education



The issue of emigration of Albanians has constantly been part of discussions in the academic, television and Such discussions extend throughout the background of the development of Albanian state, but especially after the fall of the communist system in Albania in 1990 and until today this phenomenon has been accompanied by a series of problems in the economic, social and especially educational spheres.

Various crises in Europe have forced Albanian emigrants living and working abroad to return home due to difficulties in their residence countries. But their return is not as simple as it seems, because they would have to start over again from the beginning. The scope of this work is to provide a general overview of the state of the Albanian education system on the situation of migration flow of Albanians and problems faced by migrants upon returning home in order to offer recommendations to make their integration easier. Does the integration system work for them? Does the school curriculum meet the needs of these children today? where and how can we intervene to improve the situation? How to deal with this phenomenon in the training of future teachers? Are educational programs in universities adapted to economic and social developments and the needs of the time?

- The mass departure of the Albanian population in 1990, otherwise known as the "great exodus" or the "phenomenon of embassies", in the direction of Greece, Italy, Germany and other countries, constitutes the first generation of immigrants. These immigrants faced a series of difficulties, starting from the lack of proper education, language, degree of recognition of the culture of other countries, etc.
- World economic crisis and other personal reasons have forced Albanian emigrants working and living abroad to return home. This return seems to have a lot of problems regarding re-integration at school and society of the emigrant children. They need to enroll their children in various levels of Albanian education system (OECD, 2018).

- Leaving alone or together with their families put the Albanian immigrants in a different position. In addition to the difficulties to obtain the permission to settle in an EU country, the challenge has been and remains the integration of their children in the education system. These immigrant children come with different educational backgrounds, they want to adapt to the local education system and achieve academic performance. The return of these families to Albania and the access of children of this category to school are of great importance here.
- In Albania, this remains a serious problem, because it is not reflected in long-term educational strategies. I refer here to the need for curricular changes in the pre-university and university education system.

➤ According to 2019-2022 National Strategy for Migration and National Action Plan, in particular, it is necessary to have a redefinition of the purpose of support for reintegration, as well as adaptation criteria that could determine shape and content of national government programs for return and reintegration of migrants for employment services. According to data from Gallup World Poll for 2010-2015, Albania ranks sixth in the world regarding percentage of adults planning to migrate. (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2018).

Data of INSTAT on migrations

Year	Immigrants	Emmigrants	Net migrations
2016	23,060	32,533	-9,473
2017	25,003	39,905	-14,902
2018	23,673	38,703	-15,030
2019	20,753	43,835	-23,082
2020	7,7170	23,854	-16,684

- Return during 2016-2018 period is mainly related to return of asylum seekers from Germany and some other EU countries. According to data from European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in the course of 2013-2017 period, about 147,000 Albanian citizens asked for asylum in EU countries (mostly in Germany, France, etc) and majority of them returned in the successive years. During 2015-2016, according to available data, Albania ranks first in the world for the number of citizens returned from EU countries (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2018).
- Irrespective of the legal status, children of emigrants enjoy the right for education and the Albanian legislation guarantees the right for education in the Republic of Albania with the help of dedicated integration program. The disadvantaged situation of migrant students and their educational outcomes can be improved with the right educational initiatives and wider integration policies.

Challenges of migrant children education

According to the data provided by Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Institute of Statistics, thousands of children returned from emigration are attending different cycles of studies in Albanian educational institutions. Their major difficulty is Albanian language and adaptation with new environment, teachers and classmates. Beside the emigrants returning home are also those who have been refused asylum and other reasons. Return and social economic reintegration consist of an important part of the migration cycle.

Recognition of diplomas and other qualifications obtained abroad are a decisive factor for a successful return and reintegration in Albania “Returnees” shall be considered all those persons who have returned to their place of origin following an emigration into another state. The returnees may have done a permanent or interim return, who have decided to return upon their wish or forced by other factors or unforeseen circumstances.

- Migrant children are in a disadvantaged position due to social-economic barriers, social isolation and difficulties in understanding Albanian language. In this framework, parents hire private teachers to give their children additional lessons, but in majority of cases this is not a solution to the problem. Likewise, this concern can cause problems also regarding physical capacities of schools, mainly in areas where these returns are considerable.
- According to data from MoES, a big number of returned children, who will attend pre- university and university education, face a number of issues. Children also have important needs in education. About 30 migrant children were registered in one elementary school in Tirana only.

Number of migrant children registered in various education levels

	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Basic education	838	1,021	1,794	961	2,389
Elementary education	470	611	956	581	1,336
Lower middle education	368	410	838	380	1,053
Higher middle education	198	288	333	255	341
High school	156	200	224	181	270
Oriented high schools	8	31	36	40	54
Vocational schools	34	57	73	34	17
Total	1,036	1,309	2,127	1,216	2,730

Stakeholders included in this inter-action are the Teachers, Students, Parents, Society, Government, while problems faced by these children can be grouped as following:

- **Language difficulties**
- **Study programs**
- **Progress in learning**

Conclusion- Recommendations

Potential **recommendations** that this work can highlight are as following:

government shall favor mixed classes to encourage social inclusion; teachers training to handle cultural diversity regarding needs of migrant children and increase of teaching capacities to be capable of meeting the demands of these students; intervention at early age to improve basic skills; encouragement of parents' engagement; mentoring schemes; smaller classes that could favor individual support for migrant children;

Municipal initiatives and schools to offer supporting extracurricular activities in the afterschool and leisure time.

Likewise, it is recommended the drafting of a data base and establishment of a commission for admission of students returning from emigration with data on education that students have attended before, during emigration or in the course of a period they might have stayed home.

Migrant children offer a rich cultural and diverse environment in the classroom and introduce various methods of understanding the world to teachers and students. At the same time, these children encourage teachers to develop new strategies that require multiple communication forms, enabling them to think beyond Albanian curricula.

Thanks!

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