

Partnerships between Albanian Educational Institutions and European Countries in 1927-1939

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Abstract

This paper " Institutional Partnerships with European countries and beyond during the period 1927-1939 " undertakes to analyse real and professional ties that existed between the Albanian Ministry of Education , School " Normal " in Elbasan and the European institutions especially with the International Bureau of Education in Geneva (IBE) Some of the results of this collaboration is worth highlighting: Firstly, support from the IBE regarding the design of a solid legal basis for the Albanian education, which led to the drafting of a comprehensive legislative package during the Education Minister Ivanaj. The process is considered very professional since it analyzed the situation of Albanian education system and was based on the European laws that were made available by IBE. Secondly, this collaboration with IBE - enabled access to European publications of the time, through periodic bulletins that focused on education reform, teaching models and pedagogy reforms, issues of child psychology, and many different themes that helped in the development of better education system. Thirdly, it supported the building of appropriate data systems at the national level. Systems and methods that helped in collecting education related data which were necessary to inform policy and practice. The model used at the time served to create a similar system of statistics in all European countries, and it formed the basis for the future of the Albanian education. Fourthly, it is worth mentioning that the abundant theoretical, scientific, and practical information on the active pedagogy model and its elements, which was treated in publications that IBE found application mainly in school practice in the " Normal School " of Elbasan. The second part of the presentation will present the collaborations with other educational institutions in Austria, Germany, England, Netherlands, Belgium, United States of America, and even Japan and India. Methodology: Research in the archives of the Albanian State. This study is based on qualitative research.

Keywords: *partnerships, cooperation, collaborations, education*

1. Cooperation with the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva, Switzerland and with Other European Educational Institutions

During the period 1927-1938 there was a fruitful collaboration between the Ministry of Education of Albania and the International Bureau of Education in Geneva. International Bureau of Education in Geneva was an organization with international status, working in the field of education. This institution promotes education updates, especially elements of active pedagogy during the research period for this paper.

Its status was accepted by most countries of Central and Western Europe and the USA. It was considered a highly rated professional body in that period and because of its director, Jean Piazhé, a global leader in the field of psychology and pedagogy.

Even today this institution, called the IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization), is operating within UNESCO coordinating interstate cooperation's.

This was a great opportunity and an open window to follow closely the developments and wider European education, which naturally affected the Albanian educational environment.

Links to this organisation were continuously carried out by the Albanian Ministry of Education, where there exist a series of correspondence letters with the European Ministers of Education, during the period 1928-1935. There was regular direct contact with the International Bureau of Education and Mr. Piazhé Jean, who was one of the most famous psychologists of the time. One of the famous field of his study was the global cognitive psychology in childhood, and his psychological theories continue to be studied in every European and American university today.

There were regular contacts as well between this organisation and "Normal" schools of Manchester, which became a member of the Bureau in 1928. It's important to mention the contributions of Alexander Xhuvani in his role as director of Normal School, but also in other important positions in the Ministry of Education or other ministries of the

government of King Zog, who kept constant connection with this organisation that was quite well known in Europe and beyond.

2. The Advantages of the Cooperation

From this collaboration is worth highlighting:

At First: Supporting the IBE expertise regarding the design of a solid legal basis for the Albanian education. Therefore based on the correspondence and materials sent in 1932 by IEB, the Albanian Ministry of Education was asked to draft a report, provide suggestions and recommendations for the education laws of other European countries. The full legislative package developed during Minister Ivanaj remain very professional, because for their drafting and preparation was done an assessment of the education system in Albania at the time and build on the existing European laws made available by IEB . This experience of drafting legal documentation created the foundation for the outline and the design of many other bylaws dealing with school practice regulations, code of conducts for the school directors, etc. All these legal materials that were drafted were impacted by the cooperation IBE.

Secondly, the collaboration with IEB - enabled flow of European publications of the time, through periodic bulletins that were focusing on the teaching reform, teaching models and formats, issues of child psychological, and many different interesting themes in education field, which had been demonstrated in the teaching practice in some educational institutions in Albania. They are widespread and included throughout the primary and secondary schools in Albania, but in particular at the " Normal " school in Elbasan , the Institute of "Harry Fultz " in Korca, and the gymnasiums in Shkodra , Tirana and Gjirokastra. The main theme published was the "active pedagogy" and forms of its manifestation in the class. Being part of the Albanian education institutions, these materials were a great help for teachers and education stakeholders. During these times there were key well known publications in the field of pedagogy and learning psychology that were widely read and studied by educationalists in Albania such as : "The Psychology of the Mind " from Clapardes, " What's New Education " from Abel, " Child Thinking " from Piazhes, " Self-doing as a higher Principle of Learning " from Charrier.

It was the time when in Albania there were translated books from Herbarti , Pestaloci , Vessioti , Bruneri , Skinneri John Djuj , Montessori, and quite some other contemporary theorists representing the European tradition. These materials were valuable assets for the Albanian education system which was further developed and studied at the time by well known Albanian educationalists such as Aleksandër Xhuvani, Sotir Papahristo, Hilë Mosi, Mirash Ivanaj, Ahmet Gashi, Qamil Guranjaku, Osman Myderrizi and many others.

Was this literature that came to Albania by the International Bureau of Education, which helped not only build the capacity building of teachers in the regular schools of the period 1924-1939 , but led to :

- a. Creating a first generation Albanian education professionals, such as Aleksandër Xhuvanit, Sotir Papahristos, Mirash Ivanajt, Hilë Mosit, who through their works managed to create the first generation of Albanian pedagogical thinking with a thoroughly European spirit .
- b. Formatting, structuring and drafting the Albanian journals in the field of pedagogy, which were published in Albania, similar to the BNE's newsletters!
- c. Newsletters and bulletins that were coming had a lot of information on the "new pedagogy" or new forms of educational systems from around the world, and news for various activities in the field of education dealing with international congresses, conferences, exchange of experiences, study tours. They contained data from scientists and psychologists known in European and the world, which Albanian teachers read with high interest.

Thirdly, cooperation and by being a member of the International Bureau of Education of the Ministry of Education and the existence of the " Normal " school in Elbasan, paved the way and managed to establish a statistical data system in the Albanian education and rich with educational information. The model taken from this organism, have served to create a similar system of statistics in all European countries at the time, but foremost served the consolidation of the future of education in Albania. These data gathering and statistics helped in providing relevant data for teachers, students and schools creating an overview of the needs and enabling the education stakeholders to plan accordingly and supporting better the schools at the time.

Albania's participation in the Cairo Congress , arranged by the IEB with the theme " Same rules for developing education statistics " and their approval in this Congress , in 1928 , was the first step in designing the new Albanian education statistic system, according to European statistical formats.

Many statistical tables presented in this paper, which are identified in the State Archive, as well as in publications

of that time, are the fruit of this cooperation. This influenced the statistical system and introduced a new working system in the Ministry of Education, local inspection offices and schools. For example, it made possible the creation of the state register of teachers for the first time in Albania in 1932, according to European requirements and formats and it can be considered a big milestone for education at that time.

Fourthly, the cooperation with the IBE - is worth mentioning that the information provided through the journals like the theoretical and scientific approaches as well as the practical modelling of active pedagogy and its elements, found concrete application in school practice in " Normal " school in Elbasan and " Practical Institute Harry Fultz " in the branch of teacher training.

School "Normal "of Elbasan, being a member of the IEB, but with a responsibility and commitment to the formation of new teachers, better than anyone other institution in Albania tried to develop methodologies and to address relevant subjects developed for primary schools. This methodology was developed as the result of a collaboration of teachers in "Practice" school, who had studied in professional teaching in Europe with the "Normal School " teachers in Elbasan. That's why teacher training on different methodologies was affirmed not only at school, where pedagogical practices were organised, but at the same time at didactic centres. This implementation in practice enriched the school experience in the fragile Albanian schools compared to the advanced education in Europe.

The cooperation that existed at that time between teachers at " Normal" school, a part of whom were educated in European schools , being a member of the IEB as a school , using the best literature of the time in the field of pedagogy , psychology and didactics , as well as professional and motivated management of the school by A.Xhuvani, definitely made this institution road leading in the field of pedagogy and teaching methods in Albania. This experience not only affected the quality of teacher preparation in this period, but also impacted the future of pedagogy and pedagogical thinking in the Albanian education system. Therefore, this school can be considered a "laboratory " first scientific experiments in the European educational models, such as creating class environments where teachers could practice their professional development.

3. Cooperations with Other Educational Institutions in Europe and Elsewhere

Albanian professional educational environment during the period 1925-1939, was influenced by other collaborations that helped and encouraged further developments in education, but especially increased the support of teachers, schools, and education specialists.

A close cooperation partner in education during that period was Italy, which was reflected in the media: newspapers, "The Daily Telegraph" or "Le Temps ". But there were other educational activities that were conducted in collaboration with institutions in Austria , Germany , England , Netherlands , Belgium , United States of America , and even Japan and India . I am not talking about the Albanian students who graduated in the majority of universities in these countries, but for the exchanges and scientific research, participation in capacity building activities in the field of education. Italy's state institutions and private collaborations were numerous, especially in the period 1929-1935, when the development of vocational education in Albania was greatly supported. Even the Central Directorate of Vocational Education in the Ministry of Education in Tirana had employed Italian specialists. This strengthened the links between Italian and Albanian vocational schools, and enabled the opening of some types of vocational schools in the main cities of the country, as mentioned earlier in this paper. A form of cooperation with Italy was providing learning and teaching equipments, for creating the learning basis of the vocational schools which were partly free of charge for the students. Another significant fact (especially for the historians) is that during this period were conducted researches in archives of Vienna in Austria about the Albanian History, which indicates an association between the Albanian state and research institutions in Austria. Other key lineages were built with other state and non-state organisations. It is interesting to note, that a team with Albanian students like Shefki Selenica, Perikli Mborja, Kristo Maloku, Eqerem Çabej, Odise Paskali, Stefan Shundi attend the ceremony in honour of well know European education personalities. Or the invitation for participation in an activity of the " World Association for Adults " in London, as well as participation in the World Congress on Education in Tokyo, Japan. Training and participation in various courses of pedagogy and psychology were part of professional development for the education specialists at the time. Albanian educationalists attended similar activities in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, United States of America, etc.

Another form of cooperation , but with special values , which served to present data , analysis and general state of education in Albania in Europe , were the preparation and compilation of articles , information , and reports of our specialists for publications in the various institutions in Europe.

For example presenting data collected from our students in high school, about their thinking around school quality,

their aspirations to study abroad were common cooperation with the International Confederation of Students in London. This was not only a chance to share information about the Albanian students and make contact with the European universities, but also to receive information about school development and Albanians in general.

Another example is the cooperation with the Department of Physical Education in Belgium and the Ministry of Education in Albania, which constantly require data on physical education in Albania, which are mirrored in the "History of Europe for Physical Education" of those years. There were cases that required the cooperation with educational institutions in Albania, such as Dr. Dubash demand in India, which aimed to create a collaboration of different directions affecting artistic life, scientific research, etc., and other collaborations that could not be finalized.

From the above information it can be noted that the Albania at the time was very open to learning from different ideologies and practices from European and other countries in the world, which contributed to a better and rich education system. On the other hand we cannot say that there was any particular plan or strategy for the development of cooperation in the field of education among European countries. But there was a strong motivation, efforts made, financial budgets spent and was a strong willingness to take part in many international educational activities.

4. Conclusion

The key co-operation body at this time remains the International Bureau of Education, playing a key role in sharing, disseminating and exchanging new ideas in education, and this shows the ingenuity, intelligence and the strong professional will that categorised the IBE to bring the vast European and world learning experiences into the Albanian schools.

One should not forget to reflect on the influence of the European media about the changes that happened in Albania at the time. It is precisely these various collaborations and Albanian presence in these international educational activities, which enabled the London daily newspaper "The Speaker", dated June 22, 1929, (written by the famous journalist Rosita Forbes), to write that "Albania today is quite different from yesterday", and "Tirana is the lifting Oriental garb", which reflected changes in education, in the streets of Tirana and in a kind of civilization that had just begun. Albania was at the centre of European media and can be verified easily researching other writings, like the daily newspaper in the German language "Izraelitsohes Wechemblast" in Zurich, Switzerland on 27 written 1930, which writes about positive developments in the Albanian state, but in particular in the education field. This newspaper also cites that: "An extraordinary journalist is in Albania", and refers to Mr. Herman Bernstein a journalist with a great experience in U.S.A and Russia, recently appointed to the American legation in Tirana in 1930.

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