

„Stars of Riga”: Multiethnic Higher Education in Latvia

(Abstract)

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This case study is based on a fieldwork in Stockholm School of Economics in Riga. The research was conducted with a view to obtain information about minority and multiethnic higher education of Latvia. This case study can serve as a basis for comparative research.

Riga is the capital of the Republic of Latvia. The number of the local residents of the town is 750 thousand, and this is the largest educational centre of Latvia. 229,6 thousand students attend 176 comprehensive schools, 150 pre-school establishments, 45 vocational schools, 5 colleges and 27 higher educational establishments in Riga. It is said that in this town there are so many public and private colleges and universities like stars upon the sky. This case study would like to refer to the Latvian higher educational system with presenting one special institution: the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga.

This school was founded in 1993 with the objective of assisting in creating sustainable economic development in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The goal of Stockholm School of Economics in Riga is to advance education of excellence in business and economics, and to strengthen cultural and social capital in the Baltic countries. Citizens and permanent residents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are eligible to apply. Studies are in English, and the yearly enrolment has risen to 115 students. Third year students are given a chance to take specialization courses in Economics and Finance, Management Consulting, Entrepreneurship and Strategy, or Information Technology. The academic staff consist of professors recruited from different universities worldwide. Most (60%) are well known professors from the Stockholm School of Economics and other Swedish universities. There are also professors from Finland, the UK, the USA, and Ireland, as well as from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Analysing this institution from different points of view touches on inquiry of multicultural and multiethnic education, cultural adaptivity which is mediated by the educational system. Baltic countries can be characterized with geographical unity, but not with common cultural features. The similarity between the Baltic countries is the same difference from the other European countries. They recognized that keeping up the competitive economic and further development can be the result of a cross-countries collaboration. The problem of region in connection with the Baltic States is reflected in Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, because the students are from all three of Baltic States, and in the centre of their studies and interests there are regional and global economic questions.

This research tries to reveal the problems rooted in cultural diversity inside the school, and tries to show the local solutions.