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Global Private Education

The transfer of knowledge to young students, is a key strategic factor in contemporary society. At an international level, we accept that knowledge has become an essential product in providing the solutions to human needs and desires.

In the knowledge-based society and in the era of globalization, education becomes increasingly important; it plays a central role in constructing the society's economy and culture. High levels of education are necessary in order to make a country's economy dynamic. Education that addresses the international needs of a country, or society, is now also characterized by institutions that must themselves continually update, in order to adapt to new realities. Professors must continually utilize new teaching methods and update lecture content, universities must update facilities, and students bring ever-new perspectives and demands into the university setting. All of this has been acknowledged internationally by universities and colleges. Certainly also business leaders and government officials (in many countries) acknowledge the importance of the educational system.

Thus an educational system with a global perspective, is an educational system that acknowledges countries other than the country of campus location. Such an educational system will strive to be able of reacting quickly to the continuously changing international realities. Development of cultures, technologies, and societies is occurring upon a global scale – responding to the global reality in fact exposes the educational institution to risk. Managing and responding to the changes means working in an uncertain environment.

Countries wanting to compete in the global society, must have educational institutions which can also act globally. A dynamic educational institution is an integral expression of the on-going positive process of globalization.

Action is therefore preferred to reaction. The educational institutions, addressing the global market, must be able to promptly react to new needs. Also, and foremost, they have to promptly identify, or better, to anticipate trends in future required knowledge and skills.

Ideally, educational institutions, must also strive to meet high standards, if they are to compete in the global market, for extended periods of time. The transfer of knowledge is effective, when the players and institutions are able to invent, innovate, and integrate new ideas into existing structures. Therefore, in reality this means that educational institutions and faculty must implement new pedagogic methods, technologies, evaluation and assessment systems, and the certifications and accreditations, which are important at the international level.

Such an educational system must also be based on merit. The system should use merit to generate and achieve recognition, merit that is recognized in the society at an international level. A merit-based educational environment, (rather than for example an educational system based on clientelism) creates a progressive learning environment. This environment is more easily open to new ideas, new experiences, and the future.

Europe and Italy are ideally situated to host educational institutions that are global in perspective: the campuses can be in easy range of the international student market. An international faculty body can be relatively easily recruited. Such a teaching institution could be called a global college. A college operating from Europe and Italy within the global education context could offer a unique environment of learning, experience, and opportunity to many international students. Such a college would also be the expression of ambitious stakeholders armed with precise mission, agenda, and aspiring to play a role in the context of global education.

The small size of a global institution is an obvious and necessary feature. Such a small and nimble educational campus would contrast with a state university system. Size is although less relevant than vision and mission. The mission of a vast state university system is not the one of a small educational institution with a global perspective. These two educational styles now in Europe serve different needs and have different purposes in the European society. They are not in competition because they are serving different segments of the global student market.

The state university system is narrowly limited to the Italian national market, ignoring competition and merit. Its accreditation and certification is based on the self-assessing "legal value" of its degree. Many European state university systems continue to follow a post medieval principle that gives bureaucratic value to a piece of paper, which is only necessary for the diminishing number of public sector jobs. The state university system now aims only to survive, and it tends to exercise its monopoly privileges; it uses its political leverage to prevent and obstruct the existence of alternative educational institutions. But the reality is that private global colleges do not target the same student market as that of the state university system.

For example, Rome is a highly desirable place (because of its central location in the expanding Europe, its good climate, and its historically diver-

se cultural heritages) to teach students from developing countries, about preservation and management of their own country's culture and art. This of course, in addition to visiting the Coliseum! Such a program might work, and it might even be innovative, if it is created to serve the needs of not just the Italians, but also the needs of students from other European and Mediterranean countries, and even beyond. The development of such programs involves identifying the future stakeholders in the sector (from banking institutions to artists to government officials). Professors must teach in English supplemented with other foreign languages, practical knowledge coming from outside the home country should be introduced.

The very concept of global programs transcends national context. It avoids educational monopoly; it negates the importance of national bureaucratic qualifications, and escapes from abstract intellectualism built up over centuries of isolation. Education with a global perspective operates in an open scenario, acts in a dynamic arena, searches for concreteness, promotes competition, pursues utilitarian outcomes, deals with real knowledge, and relies on merit.

Furthermore, a private global college does not have to focus on a national mission. Using its location, it can project itself into the international student market. On the one hand, this allows the institution to capitalize on local assets such as good location, climate, a secure setting, and high quality-of-life. On the other hand, there are increased risks with direct exposure to the world's dynamics. Nevertheless, such a college and campus has a good chance to survive and prosper for the simple reason that it is useful. It is needed for the product which it offers - that is students who can navigate internationally and faculty and administrators who can understand more than one culture.

Education with a global perspective, operating from Italy or Poland, can be done by institutions which are small, private, and possess the following basic features: a light bureaucratic structure, small campus headquarters, a multi-campus network, advanced technology, articulated pedagogy (hybrid teaching and virtual teaching), and utilizing English for instruction.

The global college also offers a well-defined personality. Niche programs, which adapt quickly to the changing international environment, are part of its personality. Again, the much larger state university system can rarely react quickly, and its personality is usually vague. But developing a distinct personality is crucial to a teaching and professional college. One or more master's programs can also be considered.

Personality signifies offering high profile programs with experience-based education, exposure to the disciplinary sectors (diplomacy, security, arts), the offering of internships, and the very important building of future professional networks.

Innovative programs can be designed in response to trends or to anticipate the trends themselves. Let's consider programs in management. For example a program in management of fashion might be more than opportune to be offered in Italy. A program or a course that could be called "total fashion." It will cover the subject vertically by sector from design, to production, to logistics; and horizontally by products from hats, to ties, to accessories. And it will be aimed at students that come from countries where the fashion sector is being developed.

The program will be carried out through direct experience with the sector's companies. This means the business companies will be directly part of the program and not merely a provider of internships. How many international students interested in fashion would be attracted by an educational experience like this? How many parents of such international students would take the opportunity to visit them during their experience in Gucci design labs or Prada production facilities? Not to mention the companies' outlets. A program of this kind realizes two fundamental strategic elements: 1. Capitalizes on local values, 2. Offers an answer to an international demand. A program of this kind offers uniqueness and added values, and confers personality to the college that does it.

Global, private education can offer strategic advantages and crucial intangible assets in several sectors and disciplines. We can just mention a few of them: diplomacy, security, integration, intelligence, and arts. The principle here is to enhance local values for the local community's benefit and then communicating these values to the international community for the global benefit.

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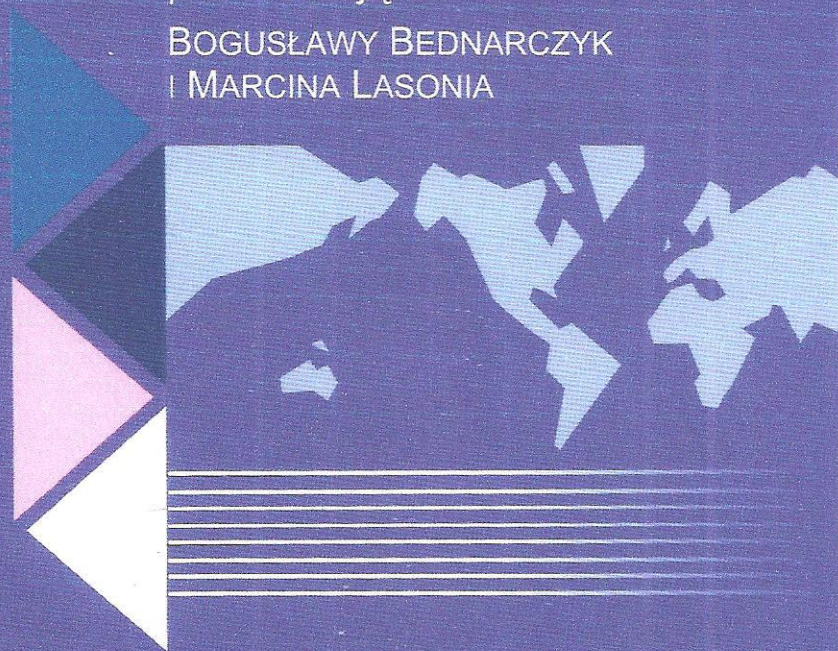
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