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European Education

Abstract

The article by Anna Szkolak and Dani Padrón de los Riscos, Isabel Paz Rodriguez *European Education* includes problems of effective organization of education in Europe. Authors present another models of European education, change in the traditional objectives of education systems, common problems in schools, differences in the political and administrative organization of education in some countries. At the end of the article there is statement that the education must be accompanied with Vocation and the Heart.

Key-words: models of European educations, organization of educations

Słowa kluczowe: modele edukacji europejskiej, organizacja edukacji

Introduction

For decades European education has been undergoing constant transformations that seek to overcome the mismatches caused by both internal and external. The universalization of education has been a radical change in the traditional objectives of education systems, most of them created and configured during the nineteenth century, are in the early industrial societies and the emergence of liberal regimes.

Another factor that has been rendered obsolete many of the traditional approaches to education, based on the predominant role of the school in transmitting values and knowledge, are the social, cultural and technological changes that extend to the gradual setting of post-industrial society, information, communication or knowledge, according to the different denominations are today.

European educational systems live, for these reasons, among others common problems. In fact the European Union¹ countries are a mosaic in the ways of organizing education, finance systems, procedures in teacher education in the academic, etc. However, they all share the same goals: to ensure universal education up to the age of 16 (in some countries up to 18), and equal opportunities. Fundamental goals are trying to get their separate ways.

Wide range of educational models

In Europe there are large differences in the political and administrative organization of education: in some countries, as in France, there is a strong centralization so that major decisions affecting the schools are taken by the Ministry of Education. This model is also found in other states, especially in those with communist regimes. In other countries education is under the jurisdiction of regional governments. Germany has so many educational systems as *Länder*, in Belgium you can talk about three very different systems with authorities and different political administrations, although very basic ordering agreements and pension systems for teachers. In the Nordic countries municipalities, counties, or supra-local level administrations are those with skills in almost all aspects of educational management. In Spain there is a system of shared powers between the state government and the governments of the autonomous communities, even though the management is fully decentralized.

Currently there are processes of internal reorganization in almost every state. While decentralized countries tend to seek ways of unifying or harmonizing, in centralist tradition are trying, in some cases, decentralize management, and in others — decentralize. In most countries the weight of the public sector in education is key, but there are countries, such as the Netherlands, in which the private sector, funded by the state, has the largest share of the responsibility, but always meeting the requirements and demands that the government determines.

In states such as Belgium and Spain the responsibility is shared almost fifty percent among private schools, which arrange with the service administration, and public centers that depend on the regional administrations. In the former communist countries the process of education mostly takes place in public schools in the state, though in recent years emerging private centers are donated by student fees.

¹ The European Union is a political community of law regime established in international organization, its generis, created to encourage and accommodate the integration and joint governance of the states and peoples of Europe.

The model and management of school educational system is not homogeneous in the European Union. There are educational systems that maintain different offers for students, in some cases from 12 years, and at the end of each of these different terminal degrees are reached. Generally these systems, which some call competitive scholarships, have very effective policies that allow students to continue, at least in theory, post-compulsory education, including higher education. Other states have adopted so called comprehensive school where all students study with the same goals, in the same classrooms, and with the same degree at the end of compulsory education (which generally ends at age of 16).

Educational systems of the European Union. Diversity of paths, common objectives

Comprehensive model centers were launched in the late fifties by British Labour governments, and have spread more or less in most countries where lower secondary education sections. Probably the most enthusiastic country to design its educational system, according to this model, was Spain from the application of the GLSES (1990).² The reason sometimes given to defend the comprehensive school is: to ensure equal opportunities and allow the whole population to reach the adequate levels of education. However, this is true up to the point.

We found differences in many other features and indicators in Spain, which are considered of great importance to define the quality of the education system. For example, there are differences in the number of teaching hours per year for each stage, very different in the different systems we can find school years, at the same level, with a difference of two hundred hours a year, at the start of the actual age schooling (Finland and Germany the start usually at five or six years, in Spain three), in teacher salaries — Spain is located in the upper area, public spending per student is engaged, in countries like Denmark devote more resources to countries with better school performance, such as the Netherlands and Finland. There are also significant differences in the systems of initial teacher training and the duration of these studies etc.

Neither of the mentioned indicators, nor the organization and the administrative models explain, by themselves, the degree of educational effectiveness or the degree of equity in education systems. A situation does seem to be clear,

² According to the General Law of the Educational System (GLSES) of October 3, 1990 (published in the "Official Gazette" of October 4) Spanish education law was enacted by the government of the PSOE and replaced the Education Act from 1970. It was repealed by the Act on Education (LOE) in 2006.

go to the formula to import models from other places not usually work. It is important to know and study the measures, standards and policies adopted by the countries in which the educational system works better, but not to copy we should to learn from them and try to find the right solutions. Solutions must always consider the social reality, history and tradition of each education system and teachers' professional culture.

We have argued that despite the diversity of ways in organizing education, problems of all European systems are quite similar. However they are manifested with different intensity. There is agreement among experts as for as major educational problems are concerned. The first are is that of the poor results in compulsory secondary stage, especially in the lower cycles (ESO in Spain).³ And within this deficit, the worst aspect is school failure too broad a sector of students in these stages This is the unfinished business that few countries have overcome, only Finland seems to have overcome this challenge. Even such regions as Flemish Belgium or Holland, with an overall performance very high in these stages, have a very high failure sector.

Countries	Score	Significatividad OCDE
Finland	544	↑
Netherlands	538	↑
Liechtenstein	536	↑
Belgium	529	↑
Switzerland	527	↑
Czech Rep.	516	↑
Iceland	515	↑
Denmark	514	↑
France	511	↑
Sweden	509	↑
United Kingdom	508*	
Austria	506	=
Germany	503	=
Ireland	503	=
Media de la OCDE	500	
Rep. of Slovakia	498	=
Norway	495	↓
Luxembourg	493	↓
Poland	490	↓
Hungary	490	↓
Spain	485	↓
Latvia	483	↓
Russian Federation	468	↓
Portugal	466	↓

³ Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) is the Spanish educational system of secondary education which has worked since 1996. Its aim is to prepare students between 12 and 16 years for their future studies and/or the workplace.

Italy	466	↓
Greece	445	↓
Serbia	437	↓
Turkey	423	↓

(↑) Score significantly higher than the average OECD

(↓) Score significantly lower than the average OECD

(=) Score similar to the average OECD

(*) The UK data are not approved by the OECD

Average rating for mathematical competence outcomes according to PISA 2003

The theme of the results has obsessed European governments in the last decade. Feedback as that undertaken by the OECD, called PISA,⁴ (see box) have served to turn the alarm of many education systems, investing significant resources in education seen as the effectiveness of the eastern countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and other excess, according to these measurements, the classic and prestigious European educational systems.

In the Spanish case the main problem of education is low average scores of the compulsory secondary stage, especially by 25% of students not outgrow. This obvious failure also affects countries of great educational tradition. In Spain the Achilles heel is compounded by the high impact of dropouts from upper secondary education, which is more than thirty percent of 16 year olds.

Even those who start high school or VET many leave school without finishing. In these respects Spain is a lousy place in relation to other countries. Distribution by level of mathematical competency outcomes according to PISA 2003. The high percentage of students score very low levels in countries like Germany, Italy, Spain, Norway, Portugal.

In the same situation they are countries like Sweden, Poland, Luxembourg and others.

	Belgium	Netherlands	Finland	Norway	Italy	Germany	France	Portugal	Spain
High (5 + 6)	26	25	24	10	11	16	15	5	8
Medium (3 + 4)	41	45	54	24	48	44	48	37	45
Low (2)	15	18	16	24	25	19	20	27	25
Very Low (1, -1)	17	11	6	21	32	21	16	30	23

⁴ *Program for International Student Assessment* is based on student performance analysis from a global tests which are conducted every three years and are aimed at international assessment of students. This report is carried out by OECD (*Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*), which is responsible for standardized testing for students 15 years.

The second common problem is the weak link between the education system and the production system. The common denominator of the reforms that are being developed is in line to step up and achieve greater business relationship with educational institutions in easing the functioning of the training processes, the increased use of new technologies in the formation processes and, finally, diversification and adaptation of qualifications to a production system changing.

The third concern in almost all countries there are the difficulties caused by the massive influx of immigrants in the school system. Interculturalism and multiculturalism are issues discussed trying to establish the degree of acculturation-relative to the dominant culture of the host country. The core problems of this situation are the processes of integration and incorporation normalized on the different stages of the education system.

There is no consensus among countries about the cases of integration and treatment of various minorities in relation to their cultural, language, etc. There is also no unique solutions for school systems. Even countries with a long tradition in welcoming immigrant populations, such as France or Great Britain, are seeking new solutions to old problems raised by this phenomenon.

Other common problems are: insufficient incorporation of new information technologies to the teaching activities of the faculty, the breakdown of stability and order in schools connected with the outbreaks of violence, the discomfort of large sectors of teachers, especially the compulsory secondary living a clear process of deprofessionalization, etc.

Social changes, normative changes

The biggest concern that manifest all governments is the adaptation of systems to new situations in a changing world. European societies are immersed in the acceleration of the changes that had been made, more zigzag throughout the twentieth century. The greater pluralism, complexity and diversity, involving the disappearance of the ideological certainties of the past, apparently make stronger moral foundations on which education was based, and according to which people built their lives and kept their duties and obligations. As a result, institutional buildings that constituted the European educational systems have reached an institutional crisis and its own objectives.

So in many countries there are constantly occurring new standards. It tries to run with the laws behind the social changes that are taking place at an accelerated pace. Some countries, such as Spain, where each government has changed the basic laws that are the basis of educational system. Others produce

regulations that affect the operation or problematic issues, such as discipline and violence in the classroom. France is a good example of this fever legislator. The policy changes in other countries lead to decentralization. In almost every state you can experience the increasingly apparent mismatch between the education system and the obtained results and the solutions that are considered essential is the regulatory change. Partly these problems have occurred when they have reached a definitive way the universalization of education.

In Europe, for example, where values change and the information flows through many different paths to school organizations, school systems, designed in different historical moment, with central roles in the transmission of values and knowledge, tend to fall back on to the new requirements and, above all, educational methods.

This explains, partly, the crisis in which European education finds itself, especially secondary education. The present crisis demands: to rethink the objectives, to renew the teaching methods and reformulate their own identity. A challenge for European societies. Challenge that must be addressed and overcome, since the future is, in large part, what is education today.

Conclusion

Having analyzed each of the issues presented in this research report, we give our opinion as a group, with respect to the theme of education in modern and contemporary ages, education is an instrument of social ascent was made to achieve growth and development of the person at the individual and social.

The more knowledge and experience you have, the more opportunities to integrate privileged circle will be taken. We always have the loss of identity, often because we cannot without all the technological advances, we have become too dependent on them, we forget most of the time of our origin and ignore or do not help those who are in the same position without we were.

We have made progress thanks to the revolutions which have occurred in history and increased the economy, and at the same time we do not think right you have the least favored class.

It is possible that in the XXI century there are still child exploitation centers as in the nineteenth century, where men and women are given jobs and humiliating for a ridiculous salary, either by 'x' or 'y' reason they could not receive basic education, they have no choice but to settle for the paltry wages or starve with her family.

Currently women are still suffer from discrimination and difficulties not only in education, but also in various fields, sometimes by the clash of ideas is

with men, and most often by the same women who are not supported either by fear of sexism or ideas that are brought by the education received or lived in the home.

The Contemporary Age, i.e. AD, are still obstacles, not only in women's education but education in general. With wars and other conflicts that have taken place in recent years, has braking education in conflict areas and we as third world country, third world or whatever you call we diverted our attention to these phenomena, we still have problems with education.

We as humans, brothers who live on the same island we call earth, do something for the have less than us. But as we are so used to seeing others do what we must to all, just know to say "governments must resolve all, that they chose and placed them in power". Locke said: "politics is a necessary evil."

The politicians are not usually interested in their education and less that of the people of the town. You do not need to be a lawyer to enter politics or government. The less educated people are, the easier it is to manipulate them.

Education should be for all, without exception of race, creed, language, nationality, gender, social or economic status. The main aim of education should be: to spread the wisdom and knowledge and thanks to them — morality and spirituality that many opeople do not posses or just omit. Not of war or treaties can help less fortunate peoples, but taking the same ideal and implement it.

As teachers we must consider this: The education must be accompanied with Vocation and the Heart.

Webgraphy

http://europa.eu/pol/educ/index_es.htm

<http://www.mecd.gob.es/portada-mecd/>

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