

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract:

In a modern society, education plays an important role, it became increasingly a major source of competitiveness in the markets. Qualifications that educational institutions provide them directly and essentially depends on the value of their products, which will result in future generations of specialists that will benefit society. Worldwide currently exist prerequisite that education systems must begin, continue and support transformations and social progress, providing quality education, preparing the individual for the future and at the same time developing its capabilities to adapt to change technical and scientific and to create the new. Ultimately, educational institutions not only transmit knowledge but also often produce or apply new technologies. Today, when knowledge is the most important commodity, and the school is an institution of knowledge implication is obvious.

Strengthening and supporting a union of Member States, the objective necessity to dynamism and competitiveness of the United States, but also the participation of Asian countries in the gaming arena of economic, forced the governments of the member countries of the European Union to build political and social systems beneficial for education the latter being considered an important pillar in the economic development of a country in the long term. This was established from the following perspectives: the first focused on integration and identification of models able to be compatible with European systems of education and training, and, second, on individuality and ensuring that all geographic region or country to adapt general principles to specific needs, depending on the ideological factors and social, economic and technological development differences and particularities of human capital.

Key words: education systems, training, European Union, educational objectives

JEL classification: I2, I25, I21, I28

1. INTRODUCTION

The close relationship between society and education determines the fact that any form or variation of the "social" brings about a review of "education as a system." Examination, in advance of all system components and their interdependence prevents hasty and unilateral reforms and also ignores other education systems, which may act from the distance on the person concerned. This kind of critical and global examination helps society to realize the difficulties and to develop measures suitable to social ideal, which follows to be achieved.

The educational system represents the aggregate of all organizations and institutions that directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, meet pedagogical functions, of activation and influence of the training-development process of human personality. This perspective seen from a pedagogical point of view, makes the entire society accountable, which is mostly conceived at the level of a truly "educational stronghold"; it does not exclude the special role that school holds, achievable at the level of the system and of the educational process. From a systemic analysis point of view, the investigation of the educational system requires designation by two characteristics:

2. GENERAL: INPUTS, OUTPUTS, FUNCTIONS, STRUCTURE

The inputs of educational system are represented by the multitude of sizes (stimuli signals) that influence the educated and are more or less controlled by the teacher.

The outputs of the educational system are the changes that occur to the trainee's personality and to that of the teacher: new knowledge, new attitudes and new performances.

The purpose of educational system is that of enlightening the needs of self-development through creation and building the capacities and the availability necessary for permanent assimilation, both rational and critical and valuably selective of shaping influences that come from inside or outside.

Structural elements of the education system consist of educational partners. It can be observed that at this level of approaching the subject of education phenomena, the educated and the educator are seen as cooperating partners and co-evolve through participation in educational activity.

3. SPECIFIC: STABILITY, ADAPTABILITY, AND RELIABILITY

The stability of the educational system concerns its ability to achieve its function in terms of adjustments in its structure and functioning. In this context, "the continuous progress of the need of knowledge and the action in case of successful educational accomplishment is a sign of stability of the system, while limiting the aspirations (...) are signs of instability." The adaptability of the educational system enables it to achieve its function in terms of changes occurring in the external environment, contextually, an adaptable educational system diverted from fulfilling its major role of changes in rather widely limits of the legislative norms or of some internal guidelines of the institution, of social, economic, political context, the events of general interest

Educational system reliability enables it to achieve its function within the efficiency limits it was created for.

4. THE RESEARCH METODOLOGY

Taking into account the technological progress, especially that the evolution of society imposes new demands upon educational systems, within the papers of the Fourth Conference of Ministers of Education from European countries, which took place in 1988, the participants stressed out the need to develop people's ability to adapt to changes in particularly those necessary on the labor market, with its unemployment problems, the ability to foresee changes and to prepare in this new perspective.

Table no. 1. Strategic goals and specific objectives of educational systems within the European Union

Strategic goal I: Improvement of quality and efficiency of educational system	Strategic goal II: Making everyone access to educational system easier	Strategic goal III: Opening the educational systems and worldwide training
Specific objectives		
Improving education and training for teachers and instructors (trainers); Skills development for the knowledge society; Ensuring everyone's access to ITC; Increasing the share of students from both scientific and ethnic education; Best use of resources (financial, material, human).	An environment opened to learning; A more attractive learning; Support for citizenship active training, equal opportunities, social, territorial and local cohesion.	Reinforcing the link between Education - the world of work - research and society; Development of Entrepreneurship spirit; Improvement of learning foreign languages; Increased mobility (of pupils, students teachers, labor); Strengthening of European cooperation between educational system and training.

Source: Personal elaboration

The ministers recommended focusing their efforts to increase the level of general culture and raising basic job skills for all members of society.

In what concerns the policies regarding education and professional training, decisions are taken in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, educational and professional training policies shall be determined by each Member State of the European Union (EU). The EU therefore has a supporting role. However, there is a number of common challenges for all state members - such as aging societies, the competencies deficit of work force and competition at a global level – in such way that it is a need of common reactions and for countries to work together and to learn one from another.

4.1. THE DATA ANALYSIS

In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union should take into account the requirements concerning the promotion of a high level of education and professional training. Thus, the long-term strategic objectives of EU regarding education and training, as the Council has determined them in 2009, are:

- Implementing the lifelong learning and mobility;
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including that of entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Education policies and training were especially encouraged once with the adoption of the Europe 2020, the fundamental strategy of EU dedicated to economic growth and jobs. If education and training systems are within the competence of the State Members, the EU plays a prominent role in supporting and complementing their efforts to improve and modernize them.

In the Europe 2020 strategy, State's Members are given specific guidance about the priority reforms each year in the form of specific recommendations. In the educational and training field, the objectives, instruments and procedures for cooperation at EU level are outlined in the strategic framework Education and Training (EF) 2020, which is valid until 2020. Through mid term evaluation framework ET 2020 in 2015, the four strategic objectives were confirmed and the work cycle was established once at five years (instead of three years between 2010-2015). The emphasis has been amended to reflect the importance of education and training for the employment market and promotion of fundamental values and active citizenship.

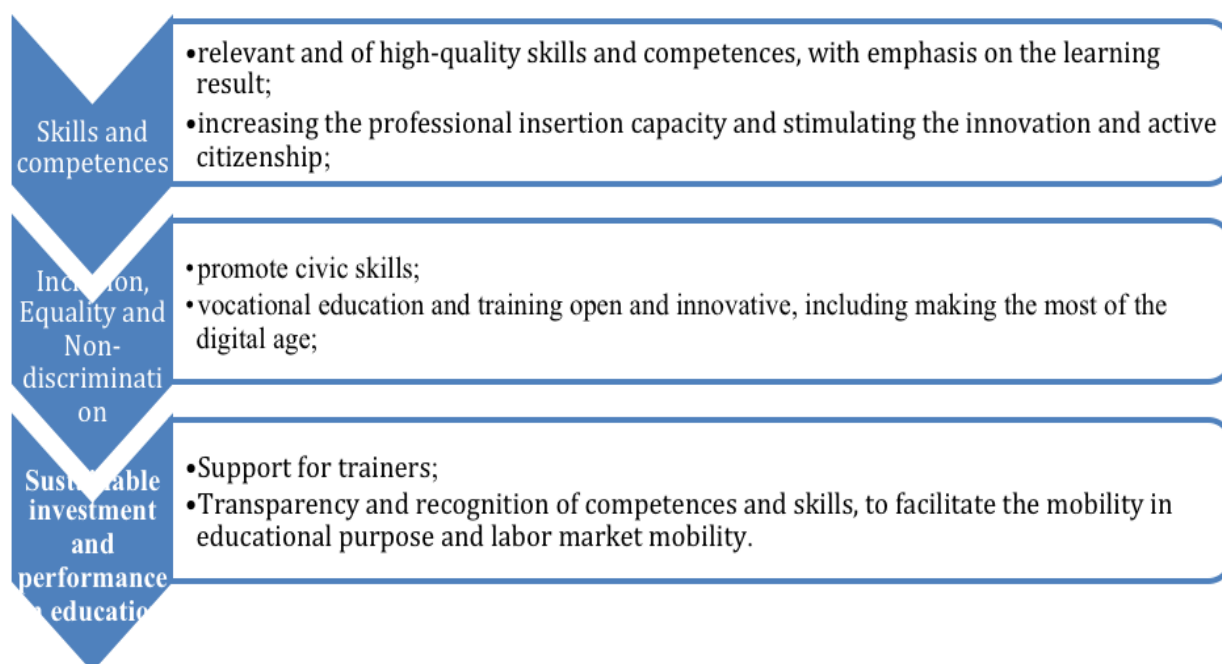


Figure no. 1. Education's priority domains

Source: Personal elaboration

In order to have effective and flexible working methods for European cooperation in the educational and training field, the framework provides a range of duty cycles up to 2020, the first of them covering the period of 2009-2011. For each cycle several priority areas are adopted, based on strategic objectives mentioned above. Cooperation should be developed through mutual learning initiatives, for which should be established clear mandates, deadlines and planned results. The results of cooperation will be widely disseminated among political factors and stakeholders, to enhance the visibility and impact. At the end of each cycle a common report Council-Commission should be written, which will also contribute to establishing the priority domains for the next cycle. Together with Member States, the Commission will monitor the cooperation in educational field and training. The Member States should cooperate using CDM to develop European cooperation in educational field and training based on strategic objectives, principles and working methods mentioned above. At the same time, the Member States should adopt measures at national level to achieve strategic objectives and to contribute to reaching European benchmarks.

Education, training and sports field were recognized as key drivers of EU strategy for economic growth for the next decade, to overcome the socio-economic crisis affecting European countries, to boost the economic growth and creating jobs and promoting equity and social inclusion.

In this context, Erasmus + is the EU program in the field of education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020. It is built on older initiatives of the Union promoting exchanges and the development of educational systems and training and labor among youth. Erasmus + is conceived to support the efforts of the countries to effectively use Europe's human and social potential, stating, however, the principle of lifelong learning, by linking support to formal, non-formal and informal areas in the field of education, training and youth. Here are the specific objectives of the Erasmus + program in the field of education and training:

- To improve the level of basic skills and abilities, with a particular emphasis on their relevance for the labor market and their contribution to society cohesion;
- Promote quality growth, excellence in innovation and internationalization in institutions from education and training;
- Strengthen the international dimension of education and training;
- To improve teaching and learning of languages and to promote linguistic diversity of Union and intercultural awareness;

Erasmus + has the ambitious goal to go further than these programs by promoting the synergies and "cross-fertilization" in various sectors of education, training and youth, eliminating artificial barriers between different actions and project formats, promoting new ideas, attracting new players from the professional world and civil society and stimulating new forms of cooperation. In educational field, these objectives are pursued by a number of key actions. Key Action 1 focuses on the mobility of students from higher education and professional and technical schools, the Key Action 2 focuses on partnerships and Key Action 3 supports the reform policies.

In all politic documents, the European Parliament constantly submits that education is essential, not only for creating opportunities for young people, but also for preparing people to become active citizens of complex society.

4.2. AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE - FINLAND'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

The success of the education system in Finland is given by the ability of political factors to pursue reforms in absolutely new ways that conveyed the optimization of the existing policies and practices and went to redefine the paradigms and beliefs that have hovered over the practices and beliefs until the early 60's. A base principle of the new reforms was interrelation expectations regarding the educational outputs with support for the education system that led to assuming the responsibilities of teachers and managers of the outcomes related to each student. This situation is highlighted by the European Innovation Scoreboard, which shows for 2016 the following situation of EU member states:

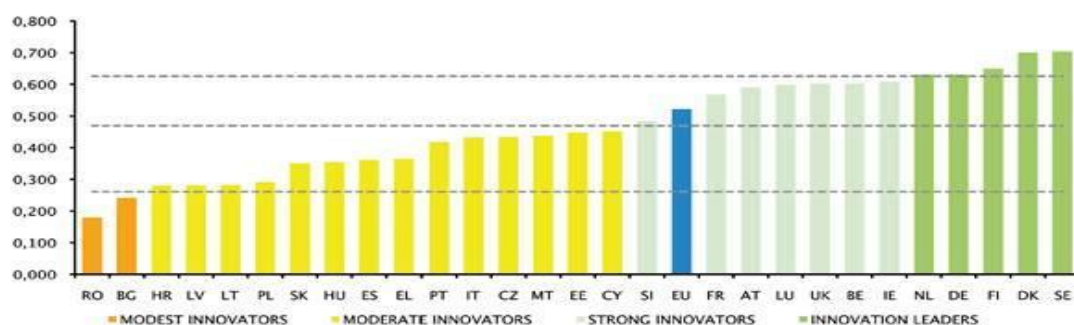


Figure no. 2. European Innovation Scoreboard in 2016 - ranking country (Y axis - Synthetic Innovation Index, X axis - EU countries)

Source: Dutta Soumitra, Reynoso Escalona Rafael, Bernard Alexandra I. (2015). *The Global Innovation Index 2015-Effective Innovation Policies for Development*, Cornell University; Bruno Lanvin, INSEAD; Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, WIPO

According to the 2016 report, Finland together with Sweden, Denmark and Germany are the leaders of the scoreboard on innovation. If we refer to specific areas of innovation, EU leaders are Sweden - human resources and quality of academic research; Finland - financial framework conditions; Germany - investment in innovation; Belgium - innovation networks and collaboration; and Ireland - innovation in small and medium enterprises. The fastest growing innovators are Latvia, Malta, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the UK and countries there cores moderately innovative regional innovation: Piedmont and Friuli-Venezia Giulia in Italy, Spain and the Basque Country Bratislavský kraj in Slovakia. In the next two years, it is expected that the EU's performance in innovation to improve. Most companies maintain or increase planned investments in innovation in the next year. Businesses in Romania, Malta and Ireland are most likely to increase investment in innovation in the next year. The presence of Finland is felt and outlining four broad groups of countries with features almost common in terms of competitiveness which highlights the problem of competitiveness gaps within the EU and raises questions regarding convergence process (The 2020 Competitiveness Report, 2014): North Europe, Sweden, Finland and Denmark - countries with the best positions for all indicators and sub-indicators calculated.

Traditional educational curricula were replaced by a set of educational objectives targeted, aimed at revealing what should be students able to do, to outline an appropriate space for learning and define educational content optimally to be able to assist students in the best way possible to achieve these goals. Also traditional Finnish school system was reformed by introducing integrated and individualized programs for each school to facilitate student performance in areas where they manifest competence, skills and abilities. Thus, gave up grading and the belief that more of the same would represent a gain. Teachers and educational institutions have learned to effectively solve problems and not to provide them to other people or to find another destination.

The educational system revised meant application by educational institutions of the best universal practices, support teachers in the improvement of their strategies in teaching, individualization of learning in that each student comes with a set of principles and different values, has aspirations, talents and personal skills, and not least, it adopts an innovative educational process. Supporting the development of the interconnection of networks of schools to foster and spread innovation and exceptional communication and collaboration between them, along with the diversification of teaching curricula, invented other essential elements that have driven the success of Finland. Therefore, the excellent school performance of Finland allowed the registration of variations below 5% between the performance of students belonging to different institutions of education and training according to the results of PISA is an obvious effect and also predictability of the projection and effective implementation of education policies innovative and achieving adequate investment in education.

In Finland, its extraordinary performance of the educational system can have as foundation and anticipations made on the labor market since the 70s, making it possible to develop policies and

strategies that were based primarily on two models: the long term labor and anticipatory model of educational needs. What is spectacular to note is that not only countries that are among the most developed world can give us examples of success stories in addressing education and investment in education, but also a number of countries that are under development through their actions and intervention policies, aimed to improve the quality of their education systems, were able to go through important steps in this direction. According to the report, *Un Millennium Project- Toward universal primary education: investments, incentives and institutions*, several countries such as Chile, Ethiopia, Brazil or India can provide real examples of successful approaches of reforms carried out from the top to bottom in the education sector who have mainly focused on improving management, decentralization, legislative decisive changes, rethinking education funding and increase flexibility of the education system as a whole by fostering innovation.

5. CONCLUSION

In recent decades, educational systems and educational policies of European states, have embraced many changes. Guidelines and recommendations of the European Commission and European Parliament, the promotion of new mechanisms and adhering instruments of educational systems at the present society demands have generated some progresses in the educational plan.

The analysis conducted in this paper has revealed a number of positive progresses if we refer to the current state of educational systems in Europe. They refer to increased rates of participation to preschool education, to the number of years of compulsory education and increased percentage of population in the European Union, which chooses to continue their studies beyond compulsory education. Within these trends of increased participation in education, the opportunities that the European Union offers to its citizens to live, study and work in other countries have a major contribution to removing intercultural impediments and international development cooperation. On the other hand, along with these positive aspects some shortcomings on education in Europe persisted during time, and the gaps towards some non-European countries like the US, Japan, Canada and other OECD countries, haven't faded.

European low performance reasons are mostly related to the insufficient level of participation in education of those ready to work. In the same way, social and demographic changes such as falling birth rates or increasing the number of students, have major consequences, indicating the need to rethinking and modernizing both the structure and the manner of functioning of educational systems from the level of the entire European Union. Educational reform is now a priority in many countries and all over the world we are looking for new strategies to attract more investments in this sector, even more so since in the last twenty years, public funding of education faced major constraints. Facing with these difficulties, some countries allocated additional funds for education from public budget, while others have resorted to certain ways to supplement public funds with private funds.

Incidentally, in some countries, there are few schools and private universities, while in others the private education has an expanded dimension, an argument for that last assertion is that although it tends to select their students from more advantageous socio-economically fields, they promote diversity and this way, a competition, required in public institutions, works. No matter the choices regarding the structure and funding of the educational system, almost all Member Countries of European Union invest a sufficient amount of national resources in education.

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