

Network of Education Policy Centers

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EDITORIAL

On the Education Change—“Paradigm Shift” and “Change Cycles”: the Romanian Case Alexandru Crișan, Ph.D.

Executive President

Education 2000+ Group (Bucharest - Romania)

During the last 17 years, Romania has gone through significant changes in education¹. However, the field has not been subject to a necessary *system-wide paradigm shift*. Such a process would have been the only one that could solve the chronic dysfunctions of the system, breaking out from the (still) industrial/post-industrial thought matrix *about* education and determine a clear shift towards education understood as a main factor in *generating and multiplying knowledge*. The essence of the above-mentioned *paradigm shift in education* would be in fact the *pre-eminence and central place of learning*, as well as of the *typical approaches that produce knowledge by learning*. Such a shift would actually be a *sine qua non* prerequisite for Romania's accelerated evolution towards a knowledge-based society.

Change in education, now and not later, is facilitated by three processes: an increasingly evident *globalization* of societies and economies, and, more gradually, of cultural practices, including the educational ones; the advance towards a *knowledge-based society*; the key position of *life-long education* as the underlying philosophy of any learning process. Last but not least, add to all these challenges, Romania's *accession* but not yet a *true integration* into the European Union. None of the above issue has been discussed seriously until now from a perspective of the possible implications for the Romanian educational system. The consequences of such processes have not been sufficiently integrated into the thinking – as much as it was – about *educational change*. It is time to do all this *now and properly*, so that the expected paradigm shift leads to the changes looked for by a generation that needs access to a different type of knowledge management than the one used until now.

In order to facilitate the reflection on such a *shift*, I would like to propose hereby a debate on *two concepts of educational policies* that I have launched in these last years. They offer, on the one hand, a theoretical framework for the understanding of the current state of art in our education (*Where are we?*); on the other hand, they can give an idea about the appropriate approaches for the future (*How can we move forward?*). Beyond their value as *theoretical constructs*, these concepts are covered by the current realities of the Romanian education. Just one more clarification: these reflections come from a series of discussions generated by the Romanian *Primary and Secondary education (grades 1 to 12)* and, therefore, refer exclusively to this area of education in Romania. Thus, we have:

- The concept of *comprehensive change cycle in education* and:
- The concept of *“two-way change”*.

1. Comprehensive Change Cycles

A careful look at educational changes during the last 20 to 30 years shows that system-wide changes occur – usually – under a number of more or less *comprehensive change cycles*. The length of these cycles usually ranges from five to seven or nine years. By this *comprehensive change cycle in education* I understand a complex and lengthy process, fully covering at least the following steps of changes in an educational system: analysing the current state and the future needs of the education system; identifying those issues that require serious intervention, and prioritising the sequences in which they are addressed; planning, designing and developing – preferably in a participative manner – of global and sector-wide change models; organizing structured public debate of such models; refining the models; then, going through the difficult process of public and official “processing” of the proposed changes, gradual implementation, continuous monitoring, correcting dysfunctions that may occur, evaluating, reviewing and remodelling some of the processes in terms of mechanisms and products, until the need to start a new cycle is identified². Obviously, this rather precise separation of the cycles into time sequences is done here only for the sake of this presentation. In reality, cycles form a continuum, the lines and moves become blurred, and the processes overlap in their dynamics. What matters is a certain *dominant* feature marking the *change process* and giving *individuality* to one or another period, offering them – at a certain point in time – the consistency of a *cycle*.

¹There presentation cannot be covered in this brief intervention; for references to this matter, see: D. Georgescu, E. Palade, *Reshaping Education for an Open Society in Romania 1990-2000: Case Studies in Large-Scale Education Reform*, Country Studies. Education Reform and management Publications Series, Vol. II, No.3, December 2003, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.; Al. Crișan, *Noile provocări ale sistemului românesc de învățământ* (“New Challenges of the Romanian Education System”), in Al. Crișan (Ed.), *Patru exerciții de politică educațională în România* (“Four Exercises of Education Policy in Romania”), București, Editura Educația 2000+. Humanitas Educațional, București, 2006; Al. Crisan, *Das rumänischen Schulwesen: Neue Herausforderungen*, in Th. Kahl, M. Metzeltin, M.R. Ungureanu (Hg.), *Rumanien: Raum und Bevölkerung, Geschichte und Geshichtsbilder, Kultur, Gesellschaft und Politik heute, Wirtschaft, Recht und Verfassung, Historische Regionen*, Lit Verlag, Wien, Berlin, 2006, 553-567.

²Al.Crișan, *15 Years of Curriculum Reform in Romania*, in P. Sahlberg, *Curriculum Reforms*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., Istanbul, Sabanci University Press, 2006.

OSI related professional and regional education networks

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To illustrate the idea of “change cycles” (which has nothing to do with the “theory of cycles” in sciences related to education), let’s take the example of some of the former Communist countries (especially Hungary, Slovenia and the Baltic countries, in this very order, and to a lesser extent Poland and the Czech Republic). In their case, somehow avoiding the long and difficult “buffer periods of unlimited transition”, *the first educational change cycle* started as early as 1990-1991 and lasted until 1997-1998. This is why they are now at the outset of a third change cycle.

Compared to this, in Romania, the *first comprehensive change cycle* started in 1995, with the *so-called Romania Education Project*, promoted by the Romanian Government and the World Bank. This was the first attempt at a deep system-wide reform in one of the most rigid social sectors in Romania. It followed a period of *graceful waste of time*, sometimes referred to as a “time of search” (1990-1995)³. This 5-year delay in starting this type of change explains in a way the fact that Romania is lagging behind as compared to the above-mentioned countries by exactly one cycle (5 to 7 years).

Analysed in its essence, *the first change cycle* in Romanian education started in 1995. It led to significant changes – sometimes declared explicitly, other times just “happening”, without real awareness from the main actors or the public. Changes occurred in educational policies, curriculum, textbooks, teaching and learning style, educational relation, evaluation, teaching staff training, management and many others. At certain times – to be honest, rather few – they occurred in a systematic manner; in other cases, chance played an essential role.

As we have shown before, cycles have a series of *dominant features* that give them a certain ‘identity’. To this end, international experience shows that in most of the above-mentioned transition countries, *the first change cycle in education after 1990* was focused on preparing and developing – in a centralised, top-down way – relatively clear *sector-wide changes*, sometimes even solid and with the chance to withstand the test of time. Romania, despite its late start, was no exception to this rule. In other words, for each of the above sub-sectors (curriculum, textbooks, evaluation, etc.), Romania had, in the late 90s: (a) a relatively consistent conceptual basis for the change; (b) a series of institutional arrangements capable to implement it, and (c) short-, medium- and long-term development strategies able to deal with such changes.

At this moment, according to our evaluation, Romania is *on the threshold of a second cycle* – i.e. one cycle late compared to the “good examples” mentioned above. The developments here are again not too different from what happened in these countries 5 to 7 years ago.

Thus, after a first change cycle – essentially centralised - the second and the following change cycles clearly shift the focus to a *bottom-up approach*. Thus, they go down *towards* and *become stable* at the basic layers of the education system, i.e. the school and their local support systems. In that case, the focus is on the implementation processes and the concrete quality assurance mechanisms at school and class level – i.e. school improvement, staff development, professional development, technical support and assistance for teachers to improve class activities, teaching and learning aids, assessment of students’ performances, school-based curriculum, school and community relationship etc.

To sum it up, the change process in the forthcoming cycle is transferred from the *centre* to the *basic levels* of the system which are, actually, the most important and relevant ones for the educational change. There is evidence according to which – if on the first change cycle – the ratio between the design, on the one hand, and the implementation, on the other hand, were of about 75-80% to 20-25%, on the second and the following change cycles, the ratio reverses in the favor of the implementation processes.

For all these reasons, the change model for the following years should be in Romania that of *school-based change model*, having as a background the principles and mechanisms of sustainable community development. Education, from what it is now, i.e. state education must become *public education*, “owned” by the communities and its true beneficiaries. Obviously, all this should happen in a national (central and solid) system for management support and quality monitoring.

2. “Two-way Change”

At this point one can have a legitimate question: having reached this type of development, how could the system solve the subtle play between *top-down* and *bottom-up* initiatives. I tend to believe in an ‘interactive’ or ‘transactional’ model, in which both directions are equally important and act at the same time, in a flexible play and with parity. The balance between them, their confluence and simultaneous action - with different proportions according to the context – are essential. The concept developed to show this *interactive course* is that of *two-way change*. This means a harmonious and dynamic combination of the educational change approaches of the *top-down* and *bottom-up* types. Ideally, on the one hand, with such an approach, the ‘centre’ provides a coherent framework for the participatory design and implementation of the educational change and the functioning of the whole process, ensuring its management and monitoring; on the other hand, the basic sectors acquire essential empowerment, as they become ‘change forces’ that could *fuel* the process of generating the national policies from within practice. More precisely, the quality improvement processes and practices at grass roots level, the local initiative, the developments adapted to a multitude of needs can become the best source for improving and developing some realistic and sustainable education policies at the national level.

This approach also has an important methodological value: the obsolete model of fully centralised decision would be replaced by the model of interactive decision making and policy formation and, last but not least, *policy development* would become *policy learning*.

For more on this topic please contact Alexandru Crisan, PhD. acrisan@cedu.ro

³This came after a rather extensive “reparatory” period. These 5 “slow” years – when in fact nothing happened, explain in fact Romania’s delay compared to the set of countries that joined the EU before us.

OSI Related Foundations

Grantee Develops Diagnostic Tools to Improve Children's Reading Skills

The [Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center](#), a RE:FINE grantee, developed reading assessment instruments in Bulgarian, Croatian, Romanian, Slovakian, and Slovenian in the fall 2006. Seven local teams of master teachers from partner countries started to train primary school teachers in how to use the reading assessment instruments and develop remedial strategies to help children to improve their reading skills. By March 2007, a total of 118 teachers received an average 20 hours of training, and 746 children were assessed for their reading skills from 26 participating countries.

All children who were assessed were tutored with the suggested teaching methods. After reassessment, they scored significantly higher than on the pre-test. A case study conducted on a first grader in Romania indicates that after an 8-week tutoring program (240 minutes), the student scored over 50% higher than before.

Based on the achievements of the project, the grantee plans to take the following steps:

- to disseminate the assessment instruments and teaching methods developed through the project to a wider audience in each country;
- to develop culturally inclusive teaching materials to make it easier to teach and learn reading;
- to develop comprehensive programs for teaching for emergent literacy and beginning reading in kindergarten and first grade, complete with materials, lesson plans, and activities for learning centers.

To start a similar project, or to get further information, please contact Maria Kovacs at maria_rwct_ro@yahoo.com.

School Field Seminar

Public vs. Private in Higher Education: the Case of the Greece

Among its activities CEPS organizes meetings which gather colleagues working in different problems of education and who are willing to discuss cross-cutting professional issues and questions of educational policy. "School Field Seminar" is composed of thematic evenings of invited Slovenian and international researchers. It was launched in spring 2001. Thus, CEPS wishes to contribute to the culture of professional dialogue and to open continuously registered problems in profession and educational policy.

In April 2007, a guest lecturer was Dr. Dionyssi Kladis, a Professor in Higher Education Policy and the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Educational Policy at the University of the Peloponnese in Corinth, Greece. The topic of his lecture was "Public Versus Private in Higher Education: the Case of the Greece" in light of current discussions in Greece related to change of Constitution which does not allow private universities.

To download the presentation [click here](#)

European Commission

'Without autonomy universities can't modernise'

Universities need to be able to manage their own budget, develop their own strategies and decide with whom they wish to collaborate, otherwise they will never change, argues the European University Association (EUA).

"Give us the autonomy to manage our own funds and we'll be accountable for them. If we can't decide ourselves what we use the money on we are never going to be able to change and modernise and develop our own missions," says Lesley Wilson, the secretary-general of the European University Association (EUA) in an interview with EurActiv.com.

The EUA thinks that giving universities more autonomy is crucial: "This is one of the issues that we keep on coming back to in different ways." Another important issue is funding - the association would like to see universities to be allowed to diversify their sources of income, as this is currently impossible in many member states.

According to Wilson, increased autonomy is the answer to fragmentation of the European system - she argues that if the universities had stronger governance, they would be less fragmented. Facilities making their own decisions and developing strategies would lead to the much-wanted diversification of universities, as they would opt for different missions.

More autonomy would eventually also boost the university-business knowledge-transfer and attract more private funding. With regard to the Bologna Process, the aim of which is the establishment, by 2010, of a European higher-education area, Wilson says that the structures and basic tools for creating such an area have been put in place but that "quite a lot of work is still needed to ensure that they work properly".

The next bi-annual Bologna ministerial conference, taking place in London in May, will be an important stocktaking exercise as 2010 approaches.

To read the full article, [click here](#).

New Funds, Better Rules: Overview of new financial rules and funding opportunities 2007-2013

An information pack from the European Commission

In 2007 the European Union is launching a new set of funding programs that will make funding easier to access, more transparent, and better accounted for than in the past. The new rules will provide better, simpler and more practical solutions for all those working with EU funds, while ensuring effective control over public spending.

The New Funds, Better Rules information pack offers:

- tips on how to get started with funding,
- a brief look at different forms of EU funding,
- practical examples for selected groups of EU funds beneficiaries,
- examples of the main practical improvements to make access to EU funding easier,
- a brief overview of key transparency standards and control requirements, and
- a list of new funding programs.

[Download here the information pack](#)

UNESCO

IIEP 2007 Summer School

Paris, 6–15 June 2007

Transparency, accountability and anti-corruption measures in education

Rigged calls for tender, embezzlement, illegal registration fees, academic fraud – there is ample evidence of the prevalence of corruption in education. Recent surveys suggest that leakage of funds from education ministries to schools can represent up to 80 per cent of the total sum allocated (non-salary expenditures) in some countries. Bribes and payoffs in teacher recruitment and promotion tend to lower the quality of teachers; and illegal payments for school entrance and other hidden costs contribute to low enrolment and high drop-out rates.

Since 2001, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has been conducting a research project on 'Ethics and corruption in education' with the aim of assessing the nature and extent of the problem, and identifying good practices and solutions. It has focused on the financing of schools, teacher management and behaviour, public contracts, production and distribution of textbooks, organization of examinations, accreditation of higher education institutions, private tutoring, and more.

The project has included the organisation of a large number of policy seminars, training workshops, study tours and courses in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The IIEP is now ready to launch its first international course which will be based on the numerous activities carried out within the framework of the project.

IIEP's 2007 Summer School on Transparency, accountability and anti-corruption measures in education will be held from 6 to 15 June 2007 in Paris. The IIEP will collaborate with the World Bank Institute (WBI) and the Open Society Institute (OSI) for its preparation and organisation. Transparency International (TI) and the Utstein Anti-corruption Resource Centre (U4) will also be associated with this initiative.

For more info on this topic please [click here](#)

The 2007 Policy Forum - will gather renowned academics, a wide range of education practitioners (ministry officials, planners, etc.), as well as other stakeholders such as market providers.

The aim will be to identify best practices and propose proactive policy options to supplementary private tutoring as a means for the education sector to effectively respond to the phenomenon.

Indeed, private supplementary tutoring has an impact on many aspects and levels of the education system: on management and financing, classroom teaching-learning processes, academic achievement, social equity and equal opportunities.

The phenomenon is not new but the stakes lie today in the scale that private tutoring is reaching and in the amplification it is getting from the use of modern technologies. From crammers where dozens of children sit for tutorial to distance education solutions provided in India for American or British students, a whole competitive market has emerged which calls for regulation and monitoring.

The forum will map the different models of provision (settings, providers, forms of provision) to identify patterns, commonalities and variations across countries and regions. The discussions between policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders will be reflected in an analytical book available in the first quarter of 2008. Regular updates on this event will be available from IIEP's website.

All the debates will take place in English.

For more info on this topic please [click here](#)

New Global Alliance to Catalyse Education Reform Announced

Brussels, Belgium, 2 May 2007 – The private sector, governments, international organizations and donors have joined forces in an unprecedented partnership to accelerate progress towards Education for All (EFA). The new [Partnerships for Education](#) (PfE) was announced by the World Economic Forum and UNESCO at today's "Keeping Our Promises on Education" conference in Brussels.

Key organizations driving the Partnership include leading World Economic Forum member companies – [AMD, Cisco, Intel Corporation and Microsoft](#); the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI); UNESCO as global lead UN agency in EFA; and the World Economic Forum, through its [Global Education Initiative](#) (GEI).

Partnerships for Education builds on the best practices and lessons learned from existing multistakeholder partnership models, including the World Economic Forum GEI country initiatives launched in Jordan, Rajasthan and Egypt in recent years. "These initiatives of our member companies have demonstrated the synergy and win-win possibilities of using coordinated multistakeholder partnerships to make more effective use of the resources available in a country to strengthen its education reform process," said Rick Samans, Managing Director, World Economic Forum.

In bringing together this diverse set of stakeholders, each member of the Partnership will contribute their unique core competencies that will result in a combined pool of the skills and resources to help implement the EFA objectives in countries around the world. Specifically, over the next few months, the Partnership will begin exploring opportunities to work directly with countries to help them implement their education reform plans, in particular by mobilizing a range of relevant private sector capabilities from domestic and multinational firms. The first countries selected to receive this support will be announced in January 2008.

Representing the Fast Track Initiative, a global partnership between donors and developing countries to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goal and EFA goal of universal primary education by 2015, Desmond Bermingham, Head of the EFA-FTI Secretariat said: "We look forward to working together with the members of this Partnership to help achieve and catalyse the implementation of the EFA-FTI objectives. Working through the FTI framework will maximize impact and ensure consistency with ongoing programmes for education in developing countries."

"Achieving Education for All requires the participation of all," said UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura. "Partnerships for Education is a giant step in this direction and we have great expectations for it."

In a joint statement from the private sector participants of the Partnerships for Education, Hector Ruiz (CEO, AMD), John Chambers (CEO, Cisco), Craig Barrett (Chairman, Intel Corporation), and Bill Gates (Chairman, Microsoft Corporation) said: "We all realize the importance of education and the urgent need for increased collaboration to help provide the education that will allow all citizens of all ages the opportunity to realize their potential and their dreams. The time for action is now. We look forward to working with our counterparts and providing the skills and resources that will result in developing innovative and creative solutions to help catalyse the education reform process." Contributions from the private sector will take the form of providing specific expertise in education subject matter, seconding programme management resources, and collaborating with the country's local industry to develop and implement solutions that meet the country's education requirements.

For more on this topic please [click here](#)

DONORS, FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC) 2007-2008

The EILCs, a scheme supported by the European Commission, are specialised courses in the less widely used and less taught European Union languages and the languages of other countries participating in Erasmus. The EILCs give Erasmus students (studies and placements) the opportunity to study the language of the host country for up to 6 weeks, in the host country.

[General information](#)
[Important dates for students and institutions](#) (pdf format)

Application forms

Erasmus students : [Word format](#) - [PDF format](#)

Erasmus student should contact their home institution, the EILC organising institution or [National Agency](#) for further information

Comenius Assistants : [Word format](#) - [PDF format](#)

Comenius Assistants should contact [National Agency](#) in the home country or EILC organising institution for further information

Organising institutions and course descriptions

[Summer/Autumn 2007](#)
[Winter 2008](#)

DONORS, FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Public open tender EAC/10/2007 - Three studies to support School Policy Development

Deadline: 11 June 2007

Lot 1 - Cross-curricular key competences and teacher education

Lot 2 - Teacher education curricula in the EU

Lot 3 - Strategies for supporting schools and teachers in order to foster social inclusion

This invitation to tender is open to Tenderers from the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, as well as states covered by the Public Procurement Agreement concluded within the World Trade Organisation, in accordance with the principle of reciprocity.

For more on this topic please [click here](#)

Grant by European Commission: Support of civil society in the Member States which acceded to the EU on 1st May 2004 - Deadline 15 May 2007

The 2006 General Budget of the European Union allocates €1 million¹ to finance, for the third year, preparatory actions for those EU Member States which acceded to the European Union on 1st May 2004 to support local NGO activities in support of civil society. This call for proposals aims at selecting high quality projects of NGOs active in the field of fundamental rights that will be co-funded by the European Union in order to support civil society in the new EU Member States.

The proposals submitted should address one of the following objectives:

- a) To raise the awareness of the public in the ten Member States of the important role of monitoring and information activities, by means of sustainable and effective mechanisms.
- b) To raise awareness of the necessity for public and private bodies to play an active role in support of civil society.
- c) To enhance the capacity of civil society to influence policy developments at regional, national and European Union level, as well as to raise their capacity to assist the victims of fundamental rights' violations.
- d) To facilitate cooperation and coalition building among NGOs throughout the European Union and to set up links and partnerships between NGOs in all the Member States.

Recipients of co-funding must be NGOs working in one or several of the ten Member States in the following areas:

- Clear separation of powers,
- Regular and fair elections,
- Exercise of legislative power fully respectful of fundamental rights,
- An independent judiciary with effective and easily accessible judicial remedies ensuring equality before the law,
- A prison system respectful of human dignity,
- A police force respectful of fundamental rights,
- Transparency,
- Media pluralism, Anti-corruption.

[Click here to download the call for proposal](#)

NEW TACTICS Partnership Grant Information and Application

The maximum grant amount is USD 7,500.

These funds have been made possible from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) as a result of the successful New Tactics proposal: Promoting Tactical Innovation and Strategic Thinking in the Global Human Rights Movement. These funds are intended to enable human rights activists to access and utilize practical information on a wide range of tactical ideas and options in order to improve strategies to advance human rights. Human rights organizations and practitioners will have an opportunity to benefit from New Tactics materials, tools and resources on tactical and strategic thinking to both apply and share experiences of using strategic thinking and innovative tactics for advancing their efforts.

Partnership grantees will be able to share their experiences with other grantees and the broader network, through both traditional and new technology methods. (NOTE: Eligible costs for such dissemination include staff, communication costs, translation, printing/photocopying, and other relevant project expenses.)

Deadline- May 22, 2007. Please note that all activities must be completed by March 15, 2008. You will be notified if you are chosen to receive a grant by June 15, 2007.

For more info please [click here](#)

DONORS, FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

EU-Canada Call for Proposals 2007 - Transatlantic Exchange Partnerships (TEP)

This Action provides support for consortia of EU and Canadian higher education institutions and vocational education and training institutions to promote and develop joint study and/or training programmes and to implement student/faculty mobility.

The European Commission will provide funding for the direct use of the EU partners, and Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) will provide funding for the direct use of the Canadian partner. It is anticipated that approximately seven (7) transatlantic Joint Study Programmes are selected for implementation from 2007 on.

Transatlantic Exchange Partnerships are based on the development of a multilateral consortium of at least four higher education institutions (a minimum of two institutions from Europe and two from Canada) or vocational training organisations (or both, depending on the project) from at least two of the Member States of the European Union and at least 2 provinces and/or territories of Canada. For the purpose of this action:

- "higher education institution" means any establishment according to the applicable laws or practices which offers qualifications or diplomas at higher education level, whatever such establishment may be called;
- "training institution" means any type of public, semi public or private body, which, irrespective of the designation given to it, in accordance with the applicable laws and practices, designs or undertakes vocational education or training, further vocational training, refresher vocational training or retraining contributing to qualifications recognised by the competent authorities;
- "students" means all those persons following learning or training courses or programmes which are run by higher education or training institutions as defined above, and which are recognised or financially supported by the competent authorities.

Applications should be sent no later than **31 May 2007**. For further information [click here](#)

NEW PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

IDP and refugee children issues in Caucasus Region

Lika Glonti

This article is an excerpt of the survey conducted under the framework of ESP/OSI project "Education provision for children at risk: needs assessment for Caucasian region". The full version of the survey provides a detailed overview of the available data on IDPs and refugees in three countries – Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, reviews main problems related to IDP and refugee education and is aiming to serve as a background information for planning OSI project to address education needs of children at risk in the Caucasus region.

Military conflicts accompanying the collapse of the USSR have caused displacement of millions of people in the Caucasus region. Today up to 250 000 children in all three countries of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) still have IDP (internally displaced person) and refugee status. Their situation requires urgent attention by international community.

Country	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia
Child population (total)	819 000	2 736 000	1 080 000
IDP children	N.A.	202 623 (7.4%)	45 000 (4%)
Refugee children	100 (0.01%)	1 387 (0.05%)	245 (0.02%)

Poverty, poor schooling conditions, including low qualification of teachers, state of health, inappropriate housing, incomplete legal framework, hamper children's performance in school and often school attendance. The scale of problems is substantial in Azerbaijan and Georgia while in Armenia it does not present a major concern – according to the official statement of the Government of Armenia the problem of refugees has been already solved.

But despite the specific situation in each country, problems that hamper children's access to quality education seem to be shared by all groups of at risk children:

- Poverty – IDPs/refugees have a lower monthly household income, on average, than the general population. Direct and indirect costs of schooling can not be covered by majority of families.
- Facilities – schools and kindergartens are often in old buildings, which do not meet elementary safety standards. Lack of appropriate schooling environment is a common problem.
- Teachers – IDP teachers have to work in even worse conditions with children with special needs. Parents have low involvement in school process. Teachers have no access to training courses, since they are not free. They are not involved and even not informed about the ongoing reform process in secondary education. Many of currently working teachers have no pedagogical education at all.
- State of health – problem of nutrition is acute. Because of bad living conditions epidemics of infectious diseases are very often and wide spread.
- Psychological state – IDP/refugee children show signs of depression and stress. There is a need for psychological assistance programs. IDP teachers name parent's difficult social and psychological conditions as one of the main obstacles for IDP children in receiving high quality education.
- Segregation – is one of the main problems in Georgia and Azerbaijan. It hampers integration of IDP/refugee children into local communities and in the long run, jeopardizes their future.

Accordingly, specific approaches must be considered in order to ensure access to quality education, improve school attendance and decrease dropouts.

“IDP integration through education” – local grassroots initiative in Georgia

Tamuna Bregvadze, EPPM.

From February 2007 the International Institute for Education Policy Planning and Management (Georgia) implements a project “ IDP integration through education” with the support of the European Commission. The project addresses education needs of IDPs from Abkhazia (one of the conflict regions in Georgia). Despite the high priority attached to both education and IDP issues in Georgia, neither the clear vision of the strategy with regard to IDP access to quality education nor up-to-date data on IDP education status is currently available in Georgia.

“IDP education profile review, 2004” prepared in the frames of IDP assistance initiative by Anna Matiashvili, employee of the EPPM is the latest available study on the issue in the country. It lists many problems related to IDP education status. Although significant changes have taken place in the education system since then, most of the problems listed in the study remain acute for IDP population, including reflection of IDP needs in school financing formula and the issue of segregated IDP schools.

Only recently the government of Georgia initiated the work on the State strategy on IDPs, which was adopted in February, 2007 and includes several sentences related to education. The strategy is hoped to be developed further in the detailed action plan. However, having consulted with the Ministry of Education of Abkhazia in exile and with the Ministry of Education of Georgia it became clear, that there is a noteworthy scarcity of major education-related statistics for the IDP population and a process of planning of the education component of the state strategy on IDPs was not preceded by reliable analysis of IDP education needs. IDP population on its turn is poorly mobilized and represented in the dialogue with policy makers on strategic issues related to education on the both central and local levels.

As the state strategy includes many sensitive issues it is extremely important to ensure wider representation of IDP community (IDP NGOs, IDP schools) in policy dialogue.

The specific objective of the project is to translate the education component of the State strategy on IDPs into an action plan “ IDP access to quality education and integration in society” through active participation of various stakeholders and increase readiness and capacity to monitor and support implementation of the action plan on a grassroots’ level.

The project overall objectives are:

- To help IDP population understand a strategy of the education reform and improve their capacity (with regard to specific IDP-related context) to support implementation of the reform;
- To protect IDP students’ right for quality education, increase availability of benefits of the current reform to IDP students and ensure better integration of IDP students in society;
- To provide IDP teachers and school administration representatives with knowledge and skills necessary for implementation of the reform and to facilitate better integration on labor market;
- To accumulate capacity and experience of planning, lobbying and monitoring the policy in the education sphere among IDP NGOs and larger IDP groups and mobilize and integrate them in the dialogue with government on strategic issues related to education.

The project will result in:

- The establishment of a functional and flexible structure/network (IDP NGOs and IDP schools, other IDP groups) and its substructures (network steering committee, consultation centers, workgroups) , which is able to quickly mobilize intellectual and technical resources to better represent larger IDP groups in the dialogue with government on strategic issues related to education.
- Enhanced capacity of the network and its substructures for: a) development, analysis and monitoring of implementation of strategic documents on education issues in general; b) Self- development, enrolment and recruiting of new members;
- Enhanced capacity of IDP school teachers and administration for quality teaching and participatory school management.

For more info on this topic please contact Georgi Machabeli, machabeli@eppm.org.ge

Gender-Sensitive Textbooks and Classroom Practice in the Balkan Region

Women’s Action, a [RE-FINE](#) grantee, will hold a regional conference in Budva, Montenegro, May 12-13 2007 on gender-sensitive textbooks and classroom practice in South Eastern Europe. Research results and recommendations on how to develop gender-sensitive textbooks and facilitate gender-sensitive classroom interaction will be presented for textbook authors, teachers (pre- and in-service), educational ministries, and teacher education institutions. Conference participants will develop a common set of indicators for gender-sensitive textbooks that could be used as a tool for those who write and approve textbooks.

Women’s Action won a two-year grant for its project to contribute to ensuring equity in primary education in the region by establishing collaboration between professional organizations. The project aim is to make textbook content become more gender-sensitive and provide a balanced portrayal of men and women and their roles in the public and private spheres of life.

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Education Civil Society Organizations Survey

Author: Daniel Pop

Editors: T.K.Vogel and Natalia Shablya

Executive summary

This survey of education civil society organizations is a cross-country qualitative inquiry designed to generate relevant information and provide insights into the main developments in secondary education policy reform in the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The information presented in this report is exclusively drawn from the responses provided by seventy-eight education leaders from twenty-five countries in the regions under study. The survey was carried out in the fall of 2006.

Despite significant education policy reforms carried out in the countries of the region, the survey findings suggest that there are still a series of important issues that need to be addressed by education stakeholders in order to improve the openness of education. For instance, align CSO activities and emerging policy issues; enhance the quality of the education process; ensure enhanced access of marginalized groups; improve stakeholder involvement in the policy-making process from conception to implementation and evaluation; and improve organizational capacity to deal with changes in the wider societal context.

One of the most important findings of the survey is that in virtually all countries, access to quality education is a major challenge for children with disabilities and special needs and children from economically deprived backgrounds. This seems to be partly explained by the increasing costs of quality education and the limited effectiveness and enforcement of relevant policies. This is of special concern considering the important role that the education quality plays in children's future careers and earning opportunities.

The general findings of the survey are the following:

1. Respondents point out that education policy-making in their countries remains a rather closed process, in which relevant information is often difficult or impossible to obtain.

Nearly half of the respondents (48.7%) believe that the general education policy-making process in their countries is not at all or only to a limited extent open, and a similar number state that information on education policy is difficult or impossible for stakeholders to obtain. This suggests that those CSOs that would like to be engaged in education policy-making face difficulties in obtaining information and thus cannot effectively participate in policy debates.

2. Various stakeholders, such as student and parent associations as well as other CSOs, are not at all or only to a limited extent involved in education decision-making.

The lack of an accessible decision-making process in education policy is emphasized by more than half of the respondents (63.6%), who believe that stakeholders are not at all or only to a limited extent involved in decision-making.

3. There are significant difficulties with access to schooling for disadvantaged youth, especially children with disabilities. More than half of the respondents (62.8%) state that children belonging to vulnerable groups have only limited access to education. An astonishing 89.7% of respondents state that schools are not equipped to accommodate children with special needs.

4. The participation of CSOs in the conception and implementation of education policy is hampered by a range of limitations. The main limiting factors identified by respondents include excessive centralization and politicization of the education system, limited access to information, lack of policy coherence, the rigid nature of decision-making processes, and limited transparency and accountability. Another significant challenge is the limited organizational capacity of many CSOs. Financial constraints, which directly impact human and technological resources, as well as lack of organizational leadership and vision also limit CSOs in actively engaging in education policy changes.

5. There seems to be a gap between the urgency of various education-related needs and the activities carried out by education CSOs. Even though the vast majority of respondents identify access to quality education as the most urgent education policy issue in their country, curriculum development still takes first place among the activities undertaken by their organizations.

6. CSOs need to cope with decreasing funding from private foundations. Nevertheless, a promising development is the increasing interest of individuals and companies in contributing directly to CSOs, as well as the increase in public funding. Almost half of the respondents state that public funding has increased (44.9% with regards to local government and 43.6% with regards to national government funding). A similar number of respondents indicate that private businesses, especially those operating countrywide, have also increased their donations (38.5%). By contrast, private foundations are seen to have decreased their support—38.5% in the case of local foundations and 50% in the case of international foundations. A positive trend can be seen with personal donations: 29.5% of respondents state that this form of funding has increased.

Recommendations

The urgent issues identified by education leaders in the region suggest that for the coming period, the ESP grant-making program should maintain its focus on accessibility and equity in education in target countries.

The report identifies the following recommendations that are intended to help ESP's grant program in adapting its strategy for the coming years: ESP should support the openness and accessibility of education policy-making; enhance the capacities of stakeholders to effectively engage in education policy-making; and facilitate lesson learning and the sharing of best practices.

The report also suggests that ESP should consider the following approaches to enhance its grant-making program:

- Engage directly in strategic planning of larger-scale, regional projects that would ensure the quality and relevance of the supported activities.
- Coordinate the grant program's funding with opportunities provided by other like-minded donor programs as well as public initiatives—without imposing rigid co-funding requirements that might lead to applicants being driven by donor priorities.

Seek to identify gaps in funding in order to understand the existing disincentives that prevent stakeholders from undertaking policy-relevant activities in the field of education.

For more info on this topic please [click here](#)

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Looking out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting. On the "External Dimension" of the Bologna Process.
by Pavel Zgaga , March 2007

The Bologna ministers stated in the Bergen Communiqué in 2005 that the European Higher Education Area should be open and attractive to other parts of the world. In order to share experiences with non-European countries within a satisfactory framework, they asked the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) to develop a strategy on the so-called "external dimension" of the Bologna Process. A BFUG Working Group with representatives from 11 Bologna states and 8 organisations was set up to prepare a strategy document to the BFUG. The BFUG Working Group is chaired by Norway.

The report is written by the Working Group reporter, Professor Pavel Zgaga from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. The report is based on the Working Group discussion and the three official Bologna seminars arranged to give input to the strategy document.

Professor Zgaga analyses and reflections upon the strategy work, as well as the significant historical background for the Bologna Process will most certainly be of great help for all involved in international higher education.

Please [click here](#) to download the book

Performance indicators for public spending efficiency in primary and secondary education
by Douglas Sutherland, Robert Price, Isabelle Joumard and Chantal Nicq
OECD

This paper assesses the potential to raise public spending efficiency in the primary and secondary education sector. Resource availability per pupil has increased significantly over the past decade in a number of countries; often in attempting to exploit the link between educational attainment and growth.

However, available evidence reveals only a weak correlation between increased resource availability and pupil performance. In order to draw cross-country comparisons of the efficiency in the provision of education, the paper develops a set of comparable indicators which reflect international differences in the levels of efficiency in the primary and secondary education sector both within and among countries. The paper identifies significant scope to improve efficiency by moving towards best practice.

These results are robust to a variety of approaches and are most certain when the potential gain from eliminating inefficiency is larger.

To download the paper please [click here](#)

Qualifications Systems: Bridges to Lifelong Learning
OECD- Education & Training Policy

In the quest for more and better lifelong learning, there is a growing awareness that qualifications systems must play a part. Some countries have started to realize that isolated developments in qualifications standards lead to uncoordinated, piecemeal systems.

Countries are now interested in developing broad systemic approaches to qualifications. These broad national approaches and their positive consequences are examined in this book. After reviewing the policies and practice in fifteen countries, the authors present nine broad policy responses to the lifelong learning agenda that countries have adopted and that relate directly to their national qualifications system. They also identify twenty mechanisms, or concrete linkages, between national qualifications systems and lifelong learning goals. The overall aim of this book is to provide these mechanisms as a tool for governments to use in reviewing their policy responses to lifelong learning.

Evidence suggests that some mechanisms, such as those linked to credit transfer, recognition of prior learning, qualifications frameworks and stakeholder involvement, are especially powerful in promoting lifelong learning.

This book will take the reader into new territory in the understanding of the influence of qualifications systems on lifelong learning

For more info please [click here](#)

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of the Newsletter is based on the information submitted by the Network of Education Policy Centers.

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