

## Towards a learning society

**T**HE set of contributions by external associates of IIEP constitutes a panoramic presentation of the education challenges seen from different perspectives and regions. We are delighted by the optimistic and strong 'tone' of the messages on Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America, and the Russian Federation. We feel that the reflections deserve wide dissemination and hope that some of the recommendations made by the authors will be taken seriously by people in positions of responsibility.

IIEP colleagues have produced their articles in the form of comments on various parts of the programme highlighting their relevance for the education agenda at the different levels in the coming years. Whether we refer to educational quality, to issues of management and supervision, the demand for secondary education, the various dilemmas facing higher education, or to the challenges to be faced by education authorities due to the growing number of disadvantaged youth and adults, we are referring to major concerns for the education sector in most parts of the world.

Insofar as I am concerned, as we are about to enter the year 2000, I would like to express the hope that the societies of the 21st Century will gradually become *learning societies*. This is not wishful thinking.

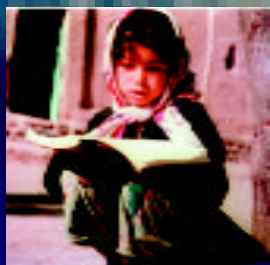
During the past three/four decades, we have experienced an extraordinary expansion of education systems worldwide. This can be seen by the statistics on enrolment at each level of

*To celebrate the forthcoming millennium, the editorial team of the IIEP Newsletter decided to produce a special issue. Five outside associates and four IIEP staff members were invited to give us their views of the challenges which lie ahead for education in different parts of the world and for different levels of education. Mr Jacques Hallak, outgoing Director of IIEP, hopes that these contributions will be of interest to readers and gives his views on the future role of education as we move into a new era.*

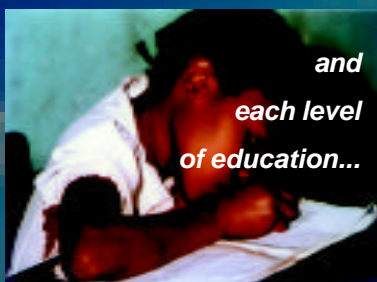
education. At the same time, in spite of a large number of drawbacks, more attention is being paid to the demand for higher quality, efficient management and relevance to the needs of

society. Today, the space given by the mass media to education testifies the importance attached by various social protagonists to education and *de facto* a movement toward more empower-

### Inside



The challenges facing  
each continent...



and  
each level  
of education...

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#### Africa

Will the bell toll for Africa in the 21st Century?

#### Asia

Raising the quality of equality

#### Latin America

Putting Latin America on the 'write' track

#### Europe and North America

Through a glass darkly

#### Russian Federation

Laying the foundations for change

#### Basic education

The challenges for the school of the future

#### Secondary education

Providing secondary education for all

#### Higher education

Reflections on higher education in 21st Century

#### Disadvantaged groups

Giving a second chance to those forgotten by the school system

on the eve of the 21st Century.



ment and ownership. The fantastic opportunities offered by information and communication technologies have already contributed not only to innovative approaches in the delivery and organization of education services whose scope and magnitude are unique, even seen from a long historical perspective of several centuries, but also to putting human development at the heart of development strategies of different countries. In this respect, those who observe the United States of America's economy, will note that the main factor of development, and whose significance has grown considerably over recent years, is education, rather than basic resources, energy and capital. Most importantly, the escalating progress of new information and communication technologies are changing our styles of living and consuming as well as globalizing our world; as a result, the 'education

agenda' also becomes global.

Not surprisingly, all World Conferences – on *Environment* in Rio, on *Population* in Cairo, on *Women* in Beijing, on *Social Development* in Copenhagen, and on *Human Settlement* in Istanbul – have attached particular importance to the issues, challenges and potentials of education in addressing world global problems. Nearly ten years ago, in Jomtien, Thailand, a World Declaration on 'Education for All' was adopted by government representatives of the education sector, NGOs and members of the most prominent co-operation agencies. More recently, the UNESCO Commission for Education in the 21st Century proposed four major principles for education which will gradually influence and inspire most education systems worldwide, namely: learning to be, learning to do, learning to learn, and learning to live together.

All these trends are convergent and will contribute undoubtedly to the propagation of a learning society. However, for such a society to take shape, there is a need for something else. For a major 'cultural change' concerning the role of education in every person's daily life – whether citizen or producer, artist and creator, or simply a human being with inter-generational responsibilities – learning should become a 'natural need', a way to organize social and human life ... in short, a regular daily activity. This reminds me of an old aramean/hebraic saying: *velamadta velimmadta* – "You will learn and you will teach" (all the time). Let me hope that the conditions for developing learning societies will be sustained and we will observe a generalization of this trend in the coming years.

JACQUES HALLAK

## Message from the Director

**A**FTER having served for more than eleven years as Director of IIEP, I would like to inform readers of the *IIEP Newsletter* that I will complete my assignment at the end of November 1999.

This is an opportunity for me to express my thanks to all IIEP associates: students and alumni, partner institutions, members of the College of Consultant Fellows, Chairman and Members of the IIEP Governing Board, members of the Editorial Board of the series the *Fundamentals of Educational Planning*, officials from national planning offices and universities, representatives of UNESCO Member States including UNESCO National Commissions, members of the education sections/departments of co-operation agencies and, last but not least, the various units of

UNESCO both at Headquarters and in the field, for their continuous support to IIEP programmes. I would like also to pay tribute to my colleagues at the IIEP for their dedication and commitment.

I am very pleased to introduce the new Director of IIEP who will assume office as of 1 December 1999 – Mr Gudmund Hernes from Norway.

Born in 1941, Mr Hernes has a unique experience both in the academic and political world. After several years lecturing experience in both Norway (Bergen University) and the USA (Universities of Stanford and Harvard), Mr Hernes subsequently became Secretary of Economic Affairs, Minister of Health and Minister of Education in his own country. In this latter capacity, he was the 'artisan' of one of the most challenging education reforms in Norway.

On behalf of IIEP staff and on my

behalf, I would like to express to Mr Hernes a warm welcome to IIEP and my own wishes for success in his new assignment.

JACQUES HALLAK



The IIEP Newsletter is published quarterly in English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

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# Will the bell toll for Africa in the 21st Century?



*What are the challenges facing education in Africa on the eve of the 21st Century? Mr Madadou M'Ndoye, Coordinator of the U.N. Special Initiative for Africa (Basic Education), in the Africa Region of the World Bank, highlights the need to redesign the continent's education systems using its endogenous resources more efficiently for a better integration in the global village.*

**A**s part of the progressive marginalization of the continent, this question reflects both a disturbing situation and its ongoing aggravation. However, unlike *Afro-pessimism*, it also expresses the hope, if not the will, to reverse negative trends. This is a result of recent signs of economic recovery believed to be the fruit of rigorous policy measures, the emergence of alternative strategies based on popular initiative, and new political leadership which has come to power through democratization.

Nevertheless, no matter which way one looks at things, the challenges are the same, namely: how to develop human resources to assure lasting

growth, strengthen the intervention of people at the base for a more participatory type of government, eliminate the sources of internal conflict through and in favour of social/national unity, promote behaviour and values which reinforce preventive healthcare (HIV), environmental protection, demographic responsibility and democracy.

Now suddenly, everyone is increasingly looking towards education as the means to achieve these urgently needed social changes.

But are the education systems in Africa today capable of making a significant contribution to meeting the major challenges of the 21st Century?

As things now stand, frankly, no.

Whatever the national context, the existing systems are elitist and ineffective, producing too many illiterate people both within and outside the system. Africa is the only continent where the number of illiterate persons is increasing instead of decreasing. Moreover, despite successive reforms, the systems which are still strongly influenced by a colonial past continue to stifle local cultural talent and actively work against endogenous development. Often, the solutions they provide are out of touch with the need for knowledge, skills and motivating ambitions of the societies they serve, given their current stage of development. Not simply because school was not the product of internal development, but also and especially because of a deep-rooted split between the education system and African socio-cultural realities. The result is disjointed societies, malfunctioning economies, schizophrenic cultural identities, torn, on the one hand, between widespread social practices classified as 'traditional' and considered as an historical, and, on the other, a westernised set of pseudo-values applicable to a minority which are set up as symbols for modernization, social development, and scientific and technological progress.

These are the fundamental reasons behind both the crisis in African education and, consequently, the problem of revamping systems which is on nearly everyone's agenda. These problems subsequently bring up the



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challenge of redefining 'school' by re-orienting the learning process to fit local socio-economic realities, cultures and languages, as well as enhancing the value of endogenous potential (knowledge and skills). One of the conditions is that local communities recuperate the control of education. It is in the interaction between the school and its environment that foundations are laid for receiving, adapting and internalizing external or universal contributions and capacities strengthened for a more active integration into the global society. This reappropriation also opens the way for initiative and

creativity to adapt models (for classroom construction, teaching materials, teacher recruitment and remuneration) to local resources, and enables each country to provide education for all its citizens within its means. As well as sharing knowledge among all sectors of the population and training key resources for development, it is also a matter of boosting the skills needed to exploit the acquired knowledge to the full by developing capacities intrinsic in its socio-historical roots in order to meet production, innovation and creative activity in a competitive global market.

Meeting these challenges in the 21st Century requires commitment on the part of the state, active participation of civil society, an astute use of new communication technologies, advanced skills in terms of concepts, methodologies and logistics to guide the process of change and guarantee its scientific legitimacy. We have no choice. In Ki-Zerbo's words, we must 'educate or perish' in the global village of information where the *knowledge economy* already reigns and will continue to reign for years to come in the 21st Century.

MAMADOU M'NDOYE

## IIEP FLASH

### Visiting Training Programme – Spring 2000

**T**HE next Visiting Trainees' Programme will start on 12 January 2000. All those who are interested in being admitted to this programme are kindly requested to submit their applications shortly, if possible before the end of November 1999.

#### Aim and target groups

The programme is intended for practitioners in educational planning and management, those who have or will have training responsibilities in this field and specialists in the design and implementation of development projects, and who wish to take a shorter and more flexible training than that provided through the full IIEP Annual Training Programme.

The main aim of the Visiting Trainees' Programme is to improve the participants' professional skills by focussing on their specific training needs in the various fields of educational planning and management.

#### Content and structure

Visiting trainees are invited to choose from the following courses

which can be taken alone or combined.

Course on:

- *Strategic issues in educational development*  
(12 January – 15 February 2000)

This course is composed of a common core and a certain number of short parallel units, some focussing on basic education, others on secondary, technical/vocational and higher education.

Specialized modules on:

- *School mapping and micro-planning*  
(21 February – 3 March 2000)
- *Designing educational development projects*  
(13-24 March 2000)
- *Monitoring and evaluating the quality of education*  
(28 March – 6 April 2000)
- *Budgetary processes*  
(28 March – 6 April 2000)
- *Management of higher education*  
(25 April – 3 May 2000)
- *Management of teachers*  
(25 April – 3 May 2000)

#### Admission requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements which are the same as those for admission to the IIEP Annual Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management:

- *Experience:* several years of professional experience as a technician, trainer or researcher in the planning or administration of formal or non-formal education.
- *Professional training:* a university education or equivalent, preferably in a field relevant to educational planning and management.
- *Languages:* for admission to this programme, the visiting trainee must have a good working knowledge of English or French.

For more detailed information or applications to this programme, please contact as soon as possible:

IIEP Training Unit  
7-9 rue Eugène-Delacroix  
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Tel: +33.1.45.03.77.00

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# Raising the quality of equality – Asia's challenge for Y2K

*The Asian education systems, which thrive on diligence and competition, were one of the driving forces behind the 'Asian Miracle' in the latter half of the 20th Century. These systems, however, may not be the answer to one of the major political tasks and common challenges of the 21st Century: raising the quality of equality. Mr Cheng Kai-Ming<sup>1</sup>, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Chair Professor of Education, Hong Kong University, gives us his opinions.*



**T**HE world is very much connected, and the further development of technology will enable further quantum changes in connectivity. Like others, the Asian nations are moving into the Information Era where knowledge plays an essential role in human lives.

Most of the economic activities are knowledge-based and most of the workforce comprises knowledge-workers. Knowledge is renewed more quickly and new ideas soon become obsolete. People's careers are changed more often and their social networks vary with time. How is education in Asia to cope with such changes?

In the Century just passed, modern education systems, very much modeled after industrial productions, have been established throughout Asia. They are able to embrace the traditional Asian respect for education, and have produced many intellectuals who excel in various parts of the modern world. The education systems have also helped build the thriving metropolitan centres in Asia. Diligence and competition, which are very much at the heart of Asia's education systems, have also contributed to the developments that were at one time seen as 'miracles' in the Century. However, the education systems are not always seen as successful in reducing the disparity among different social strata, and sometimes even held responsible for widening the gap between the rural and the urban.

In the new Century, education is

likely to be redefined as unbounded opportunities for lifelong learning. The Asian systems will face new challenges. Known for their competitive examinations, the Asian systems could survive only if such examinations no longer pose dead-ends to learning. In a *knowledge society*, the category of 'raw labour' is disappearing from the scene. While cheap labour used to be an essential factor for economic success, a knowledgeable workforce is the crucial factor for development in the future.

Meanwhile, the development in technologies has led to a quantum change in the connectivity between people and between places. Education in the new Century will face a more

'connected' society, where access to information will be the privilege of no-one in particular, and communications will transcend social barriers. Education will then face the undeniable mission of providing unfailing learning opportunities to all parts of the nation and all sectors of society, to everybody, at any time, anywhere.

The zest for information technologies and the reform of lifelong education already on the move in many Asian countries, should set a very good foundation for the challenges that are yet to come.

CHENG KAI-MING

<sup>1</sup> Mr Cheng Kai-Ming is also Visiting Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education.



# Putting Latin America on the 'write' track

*On the eve of the 21st Century, Latin America still finds itself with a workforce unable to read properly. How can it possibly meet the needs of emerging global economies. Ernesto Schiefelbein, President, Universidad Santo Tomas in Chile, feels something can be done by taking simple measures and by following examples which have proved their worth, such as the Escuela Nueva.*

**E**VEN though Latin America has invested 12 billion dollars in the last decade, no real improvement in the quality levels of education can be observed. In 1990, the time was ripe for improving quality given that 95 per cent of the children were enrolled in school. However, still half of Grade IV students were unable to understand a simple paragraph on the first page of their national newspaper. Something had gone wrong. The time has come, therefore, to pay attention to the causes of this dramatic situation, and hopefully to design strategies that will be more effective.

Despite a fair amount of information about poor educational outcomes, the phenomenon is not commented on in the media. Public opinion is not properly informed. Only in Chile has there been a national debate about the low quality of education, and by the mid-1990s this generated a consensus on expanding time for learning. However, overall in Latin America, little has been analyzed and no relevant solutions have been put forward. There has been little echo in the press and mass media about the social impact of poor quality education, both in terms of economic efficiency, consumer rationality, community participation, or control of violence and corruption.

The problem is even more serious than is indicated by the bad figures. Grade IV students answered correctly 50 per cent of multiple-choice items on reading comprehension. These answers include one-third of answers

'correct by chance'. Furthermore, most reading problems are concentrated in the lower socio-economic levels of society. At these levels, it is reckoned that some three-quarters of students are unable to read with an acceptable level of comprehension. This means the workforce will be unable to: read and correctly assimilate instruction manuals for the machinery they have to operate, understand safety instructions and health recommendations, or even learn how to use services available in the society in which they live.

This is not the place to suggest probable causes of the problem. We can, however, point out that the projects do not include the three highest cost-effective strategies suggested by a group of ten world experts<sup>1</sup>. The experts agreed that countries should start by implementing simple interventions which do not cost much but have an impact. For example, *the best teachers should be assigned to the first grade* in order to help students to learn to read as well as possible. The experts also highlighted the need to have enough time to learn and suggested that *the official school year should be lengthened*. The third priority was given to a *policy not to switch around classroom teachers during the year*. But these strategies have not been implemented in any of the projects financed by co-operation agencies in the past decade.

It is also puzzling that the approaches and methodologies of the



Colombian *Escuela Nueva* experiment have not been adapted to other projects designed to develop basic education in Latin America. In spite of being one of the few programmes successfully evaluated in the region, it has only been used to improve primary education in Guatemala and Nicaragua. Why has such a well proven strategy been overlooked in most Latin American countries?

In conclusion, it is necessary to pay attention to the quality issue, and to identify the real problems. Countries have to learn from past mistakes. Otherwise the region will have to bear the economic implications of implementing solutions that are not related to the causes of the problems.

ERNESTO SCHIEFELBEIN

<sup>1</sup> E. Schiefelbein, L. Wolff and P. Schiefelbein. 1998. *Cost-effectiveness of education policies in Latin America: A survey of expert opinion*, Inter-American Development Bank, Technical Study, Washington, DC.

# Through a glass darkly

*Bearing in mind the diversity of education systems in Europe and North America, T. Neville Postlethwaite, Professor Emeritus of Education at Hamburg University, has highlighted what he feels to be the **six** main challenges which face education in Europe and North America on the eve of the 21st Century.*



**T**HE variation between the states in North America and between the countries in Europe is great. Each system of education has its strong and weak points and no system has solved all of the problems. With this in mind, the following six challenges have been selected from many.

➤ *Balance between initial and continuing education.* As populations age, job markets change with ever increasing rapidity, and the amount of leisure time increases, the issue of the balance between initial and continuing education is a major challenge. How can educational provision best be developed in a flexible way to meet a diversity of learning needs? What are the key competencies required to have people stay involved in learning? How can the present initial education curriculum be changed to increase the will to continue learning? Can the concept of cross-curricular competencies be developed to achieve this lifelong learning? Can the different ministries involved in education and industry work together in order to establish new industries in synchronization with the demise of older industries and initiate a re-education of the affected workforce?

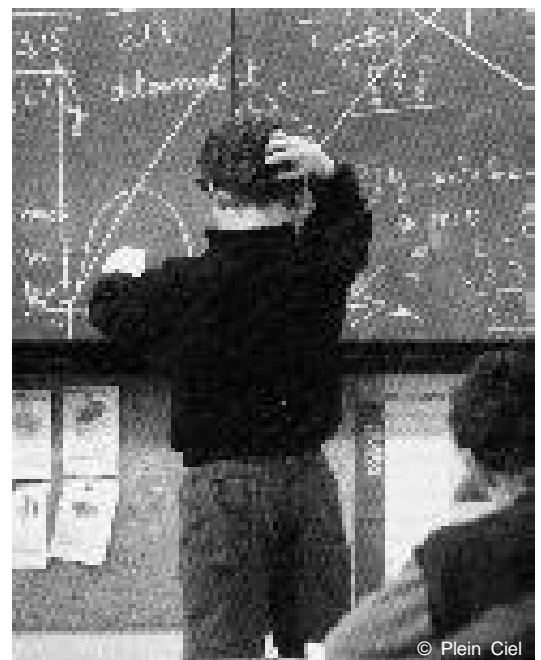
➤ *Balance between who benefits from education and who pays for it.* There is a rising demand for education but limited state budgets to finance such education. How can the beneficiaries of education (individuals, their families, the economy, and society at large) share the costs more equitably? How can private sources of funding be

mobilized in ways that do not lead to inequality in access (e.g. repayments of loans based on tax returns, etc.)? How can education be made more efficient and cost-effective?

➤ *Educational technology.* The use of the Internet has exploded in a very short period of time compared with the use of radio and TV for educational purposes. How can good quality and flexible educational programmes and resources be produced for use in educational technology, including the Internet? How can the schools be equipped with the basic facilities so that all children can benefit? What sorts of training programmes are needed for teachers to be fully conversant with the technology? What sorts of experiences are needed at school so that all children continue to use educational technology for learning purposes in later life?

➤ *Democracy and tolerance.* Genocides and intolerances (even hatred) in different parts of the world are displayed throughout the media. What can education do in order to engender tolerance and understanding among not only these groups but in all peoples? Some will argue that it is tradition, the family and out-of-school experiences that cause intolerance, but what can the school and the media, a strong educational influence, do to combat it? What steps should ministries of education undertake to identify what the school can do?

➤ *Unity and diversity.* The European Union is meant to be a union of European states. What are the implications for providing a unified education system throughout the EU but at the same time catering to the particular needs and desires of Member States? What steps can the ministries of education involved take to begin to make this a reality? Increases in immigration from all parts of the world have made North American society increasingly multicultural with ethnic and religious groups demanding that educational institutions provide greater learning opportunities for members of their groups including more about each group's own culture and history. What can the individual schools, as well as the states in which they are located, do to meet this



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challenge?

► *Standards in school education.* International studies of educational achievement have shown that there are marked differences in achievement in different school subjects between systems in terms of overall mean scores, the mean scores of the best 20 per cent of pupils, and the mean scores

of the worst 20 per cent. Such studies have also shown quite large differences between regions and also between schools within a country. To what extent does each country monitor such achievement at different grade levels on a continual basis and then take corrective action to diminish such differences? What are the concomi-

tants of such differences? To what extent do different systems demand a standards-based education system? Finally, how can achievement and other outcome indicators become an integral part of public policy and planning?

T. NEVILLE POSTLETHWAITE

## Laying the foundations for change

*After the breaking up of the USSR, the Russian Federation undertook a series of large-scale transformations within its education system. Professor Vladimir Filippov, Minister of General and Professional Education of the Russian Federation, outlines for our readers the basic trends of the reforms undertaken in the Federation's system of general and vocational training.*



RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION

**T**HE reform of the education system in the Russian Federation, carried out since 1992, has helped to lay the foundations of large-scale transformations and the basic directions of state educational policy. State educational policy in the transition period aimed to preserve the unity of the country's education system, to expand opportunities for continuous education for its citizens, and to increase educational quality. These aims were achieved by:

- developing and introducing constant and coherent state educational standards at each level of education, envisaging federal components obligatory throughout the country;
- creating mechanisms to ensure the horizontal and vertical mobility of learners within the education system;
- creating uniform mechanisms of certification and accreditation of educational establishments ensuring quality control over the educational process;

- updating the contents of curriculum.

As a result, a system of continuous education at different levels has been formed in the Russian Federation, based on democratic principles: it focusses on the realization of basic human rights and the values of a civil society and is characterized by its ability to assimilate the essence of Russian and world culture.

The main result of reforms in general primary and secondary education was the creation of conditions needed for the transition from a unified and uniform curriculum to a flexible one open to choice. This transition presupposed diversification of curricula, opportunity to choose textbooks, programmes, courses, forms of education and methods of delivery.

With this aim in mind, a government commission was set up to update the contents of general primary and secondary education, and to define a national educational standard for general basic education which is

supposed to guarantee educational quality and the proper assessment of knowledge.

The contents of the secondary school humanities courses in philology, social sciences, art, physical education have been updated and new textbooks and reading material in literature, history, social science have been published.

The development of natural science and mathematics in schools is based on strengthening the integration of knowledge in natural science gained from various school subjects and elaborating uniform approaches to forming basic natural science notions studied in different courses. New textbooks for mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry and technology have been specifically designed for students specializing in the humanities.

The definition of a basic compulsory curriculum for primary and secondary education, of specified requirements and a system for assessing the students' knowledge is almost completed.



Preparatory work for the transition of general educational establishments in the Russian Federation to 12-year training is underway and the 12-year general education curriculum will be laid down by the Basic Education Plan.

Reforming the structure and content of vocational training in the Russian Federation has opened up new opportunities for its diversification. As a result, vocational training is now able to satisfy both personal needs as well as meet the social and economic requirements of the country.

Diversification takes the form of a multi-level education system: vocational training is ensured for personnel at different levels, the programmes become more flexible, and are dispensed by multi-functional educational institutions. New specializations, disciplines and courses have been introduced, inter-disciplinary programmes created, enrolment procedures changed, new training methods introduced, and the administrative system reorganized.

As regards the training of managers, their professional structure and qualifications have been re-examined. The gradual shift towards providing vocational training for the service sector has taken place in basic vocational education institutions. Bearing in mind the changing situation in the labour market, the list of professions to be covered by basic

vocational training has been updated, streamlining the types of training provided (instead of 1,200 specialities, there are now just over 300), which should facilitate the integration and adaptation of graduates into the labour market.

Within the system of secondary vocational training, the number of students doing economics and the humanities (especially law) has significantly increased. Admissions to these specialities has increased from 11 per cent in 1980 to 34 per cent in 1998, whilst the number of admissions registered in technical and agricultural faculties has fallen from 53 to 34 per cent and from 12 to 6 per cent, respectively. Whereas previously secondary professional training institutions had a very specific profile (e.g. mechanical engineering, power engineering, construction, agriculture etc.), recently more and more have become multi-profile.

The wide spectrum of educational services is most fully provided by a new kind of upper secondary vocational educational institution – **colleges** – which cover more than 30 per cent of all secondary professional educational institutions. Today these '**colleges**' are those best adapted to the new socio-economic environment, well integrated into regional educational complexes offering multi-level and multi-profile vocational programmes for various

categories of the population, including the unemployed.

Over the last 10 years, there has been a heavy drop in the number of higher education students studying at engineering and technical faculties and an increased number of students doing economics, law and humanities.

Higher education institutions prepare bachelors and masters in 94 disciplines, including natural sciences and mathematics, humanities and socio-economic sciences, pedagogy, engineering, agriculture. They also offer 477 specialities of higher professional education and training.

Higher education widely uses modern information technologies, first of all computer training programmes, technologies of database formation and access. State education standards, certification and accreditation of educational institutions are closely monitored. The use of information technologies in training is highly encouraged.

Modern telecommunications technologies have allowed the Russian Federation to develop a uniform system of distance education, aimed at meeting the vocational training needs of the population. Technologies giving students direct access to the latest research undertaken in higher institutions are being developed further.

VLADIMIR FILIPPOV

## The Virtual Institute – Activities



### **An invitation**

An Internet based discussion forum will be offered in early Winter for French-speaking participants on the topic of reducing repetition. It will be open to all interested in this important issue. It will be based upon a recent title in the series *Fundamentals of educational planning – Reducing repetition: issues and strategies* by Thomas

Owen Eisemon, which will be forwarded to participants prior to the forum. If you are interested, please contact the Institute.

### **Available document**

The summary of the discussion forum held in English on the topic of reducing repetition is available upon request, and can be found on the IIEP Web site at <http://www.unesco.org/iiiep/> by

selecting *What's new* and then *Other*.

### **Activities in 2000**

Several activities are planned for 2000. If you would like to be informed about them, send your e-mail address if you have not already done so.

Contact for the Virtual Institute:  
Susan d'Antoni at  
[s.dantoni@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:s.dantoni@iiep.unesco.org)

# The challenges for the school of the future

*A recent newspaper headline read dramatically that 3 out of 4 students in the USA, aged between 9 and 16, cannot write properly. This result, based on a sample, might reflect poor students or a bad test, but there is little doubt that the concern with student achievement is justified. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that nearly 100 million children in our global village still do not attend primary school.*

**B**ASIC education has undoubtedly occupied the centre stage over the last decade, since the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in 1990. Progress has been made but many challenges still remain. To simplify matters, countries can be divided into *two* groups. In the *first* group, consisting mainly of African and South-Asian nations, many children (sometimes one out of two or even less) still do not attend primary school and illiteracy therefore reproduces itself. The *second* group has to a large extent universalized primary and even the first cycle of secondary education, but children, especially those from poor families, leave school without acquiring the basic knowledge or skills. The challenge, therefore, is one of improving quality while ensuring greater equality.

Solving the problem of access in the first group of countries will not

only demand more resources but also more creativity. The traditional school model is expensive – both for governments and parents – and not fully adapted to the needs and the specific situation of, for instance, a poor rural household or slum children. The success of alternative models depends on their ability to offer quality teaching (with more interactive learning), a programme which prepares students both for further study and for the world of work and a flexible design adapted to the living circumstances of its learners. Such models have been mainly developed outside of the formal education system, by non-government agents. One challenge is to give the formal system this flexibility to respond to customer needs, while remaining a tool for social mobility and equality rather than segregation.

In the growing group of countries, where access to primary school is universal, equality and segregation will become (or remain) the major concern because of growing disparities in the quality of schools and teachers and the ensuing differences in achievement. *Four* factors are indispensable to an efficient and equitable education system: well-equipped schools, a strong teaching force, competent management and relevant content. Each of these

factors remains a challenge. **All schools need to be provided with basic equipment.** The scenario whereby many children bring their own desk and chair to a school, where a textbook is shared between four or five pupils, is still too prevalent. Sadly, but predictably, the same countries which under-invest in education, spend heavily on debt reimbursement and often also on defence. **A motivated and confident teaching force** remains the first guarantee of successful learning and can actually make up for the lack of equipment. However, in reality, teachers seldom play this role not only because of their poor qualifications and training, but also because their working conditions and salaries are discouraging. The issue of salaries is a moot one. It is true that there is little relationship between salaries and performance, and there is no proof that salary increases lead to better teaching. But there is a limit under which salaries become so low as to be insignificant. Consequently, teachers take on other jobs by necessity and are no longer available or willing to invest themselves fully in the classroom. There is a flagrant contradiction between the escalating expectations of parents and society in schools and the poor incentives offered to teachers.

A good school is one with a good headteacher. The statement is a simplification, but only slightly so. **Competent management at the school level** is a must to improve teaching and learning. This fact, hardly



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a surprise, has been used as an argument to offer schools more autonomy. The challenge then consists not only in the professional development of the schoolheads, but also in defining a support, monitoring and evaluation framework at central and regional levels. Finally, the essence of a school lies in the **content** of its teaching. Because of the rapid speed

with which society changes and the multiplicity of messages for young people, more is being expected from schools. They should ensure mastery of the basic skills and preparation for the world of work, but also foster values and, more than before, are expected to just 'take care' of children. This might well be the main challenge for the school of the future: how to combine

the need for a broad curriculum, to develop students' capacities in an all-round fashion, with the growing emphasis placed on narrow learning acquisition for competition and selection purposes? And how can educational planners fit this concern with content, an issue somewhat far from their traditional preoccupations, into their agenda?

ANTON DE GRAUWE

## Providing secondary education for all

*The rapidity of changing knowledge and the challenges of a global society in which everyone should have access to knowledge are putting pressure on countries, both developed and developing, to supply an adapted secondary education which will prepare today's youth to fit into tomorrow's labour market. How can this be achieved? Some deep reflection still has to be done on the role of secondary education in today's environment.*

**F**ACED with the complexity of the modern world and the knowledge explosion, many countries feel the need to extend the period of compulsory education. At the dawn of the 21st Century, to gain full membership in social, economic and political life, individuals must not only know how to read, write and count, they must also be capable of expressing themselves fluently both orally and in print, master a foreign language, have enough scientific background to understand their environment, know their own culture and be open to the cultures of others. They should be able to apply logic when solving problems and to work with others. And, of course, they should be able to continue to learn. It is as from the age of 12 onwards that adolescents are able to reason and acquire the above-mentioned skills. It is in secondary school that they can take full advantage of broad-based teaching in mathematics, sciences, literature, history, etc. Developing secondary education will be one of the major priorities at the dawn of the new millennium.

The rate of enrolment in secondary education is, however, still very low in many countries. In 1995, 40 or so countries had gross enrolment rates below 30 per cent. Often, quality is lacking and pupils fail to learn to think. Added to this is the preoccupying fact that despite their restricted number, many secondary school graduates are unemployed. This may be a sign that no jobs are available, that labour markets are inflexible, or that young people's expectations are unrealistic in terms of current employment prospects. Also, the instruction they receive may well be ill-adapted to preparing them for self-employment.

The problems that need to be solved and the challenges that must be met constitute an exhaustive list, beyond the scope of this article. However, here are a few key points for reflection.

► *Cover the cost of secondary education.* There are few developing countries which have sufficient resources to finance the development of quality secondary education, especially when basic education for everyone is not even being met.

Countries should define what level of enrolment they would like to achieve in order to support their development policy, and the financing strategies to be adopted: what are the possibilities for increasing available resources, reducing costs – a pressing need in some countries – and finding new sources of financing? What role should be played by local communities, families and the productive sector in this respect? What should be the role of the state? Will it seek to guarantee quality public education (at least for those who could be urged to continue their studies at university level)? Will it encourage private schooling via various grants and tax breaks? Will it allocate funds subject to certain conditions (teaching conditions or school results)?

► *Reconcile higher enrolment rates with quality teaching:* if in some countries it is possible to increase enrolments and the quality of education simultaneously, in many others it is more probable that high enrolments will result in a lowering of standards. Here again, what should be the key

area of involvement for the central government?

► *Reconcile equal access with the diversity of educational 'supply'.* Broadening access to secondary education cannot be done without diversifying 'supply' and training methods. Ensuring equality does not mean that all students should follow the same courses. At the junior secondary level, the setting up of core curricula tends to be widespread, but a diversification of content is necessary at the senior secondary level if the diversity of student needs is to be satisfied. This diversity can take the form of various streams and options, or different delivery systems in both formal and informal modes. Distance learning may be necessary for those who are unable to enrol for geographical or economic reasons. To ensure parity of quality and esteem of these various modes and streams is a major challenge. What kind of certification and credit system should be created to

allow a transition between various types of education? What partners should be associated with this operation?

► *Facilitate the transition from school to work.* Both general education and vocational training should contribute to the 'employability' of young persons. This means that emphasis should be placed on acquiring operational skills and practical knowledge as well as theoretical and academic knowledge. There is a tendency, in some countries, to introduce work orientation in general secondary education and to generalize the curriculum of vocational schools, leaving the responsibility for specific training to other bodies. How does one reconcile the tendency to improve theoretical knowledge with the need to keep vocational training concrete and specialized, in keeping with the needs of some youngsters, especially the most disadvantaged? Will alternance or dual training continue to play a major role? Some

interesting innovations have been developed which also strive to provide double qualifications simultaneously.

In many countries, secondary schooling is going through an identity crisis: what is its role when basic education is being prolonged and higher education is becoming more specialized? Much more consideration needs to be given to its role, curriculum, evaluation and certification techniques, and management mode. Major reforms are being undertaken in a certain number of developed and developing countries on all of these aspects. They provide new ways of attacking these problems and their results must be followed closely so as to draw the lessons for other countries. The same is true of the role of new information systems in the future. Their present use probably only gives a hint of what will be possible five years from now.

FRANÇOISE CAILLODS

## Reflecting on higher education in the 21st Century

*The close of this century represents a more matured phase of development than previously witnessed. The end of colonialism and the spread of democracy have shaped the destiny of many nations and millions of people. The efforts in the next century will extend democracy from political to economic and social realms to promote human development. A shift from confrontation to reconciliation between competing ideologies of state planning and free market will strengthen the efforts further. The challenge for higher education lies in developing concerns of equity and social cohesion while trying to mediate between compulsions of globalization and the tensions of national and local aspirations.*

**A**s market-friendly states and state-friendly markets become an accepted framework for development, higher education progressively takes on a new role. It will not only have to promote scientific progress and technological advances, but will also have to contribute towards developing a more caring and sharing

world. In the coming years, there will be more emphasis on the social functions of higher education.

The focus of educational development, especially during the second half of this century, was on basic education. The expansion of primary education has put pressure on post-compulsory levels of education, and, in some

developed countries, secondary education has already become the biggest sector in education. Given the long-term demographic trends, expansion possibilities of higher education in developed countries may soon reach saturation point; however, in middle income and developing countries, it will continue to expand in the years to

come. As a result, investments in higher education may increasingly flow to the less developed countries and mainly concern higher education's traditional clientele – secondary school graduates.

A new and growing clientele for higher education consists of adults, both working and retired, who may require frequent retraining or upgrading of skills. With declining birth rates and longer life expectancy, especially in developed countries, the populations aged 60 and above are steadily increasing. Rapid technological change has progressively replaced stable industrial jobs with part-time work and sub-contracting arrangements, as skill requirements fluctuate with every technological change. Specialized skills become quickly obsolete and investing in general competencies and social skills may prove more profitable in labour markets of the future.

Tertiary education will have to adjust to the demands of these very different clienteles, both in terms of delivery mechanisms and content. The traditional university structure may not be able to respond to these diverse requirements and alternate arrangements will become a necessity. Virtual universities and distance learning modes may become more popular and more able to cater to the increasing demand for higher education. The demand for skill up-grading, however, may not necessarily lead to bigger campuses and larger institutionalized structures. On the contrary, a fair share of higher education could be self-managed and individually paced, and take place outside the traditional university structure. On-the-job training funded by employers may be replaced by retraining and skill up-grading programmes paid by the employees themselves. Such changes may imply developing professional support services and quality assurance certification arrangements, so that the up-grading of skills becomes a frequent feature and an acceptable practice in the labour market.

With the changes in this century, the capacity of the state to 'provide'

has significantly weakened. The logic of market operations alone cannot be relied upon for educational provisions. As a result, the state will probably act more as a regulatory agent to ensure equity in access and quality in provision than as the main 'provider' of higher education. Its role will be more to change the behaviour of sellers rather than that of consumers of the service. The regulated market should be more reliable as regards provision and more efficient in the way it operates.

Technological changes, especially in the fields of communication and micro-electronics, are changing the information flow and control of knowledge. These technological changes are taking place faster than ever before and are becoming affordable to larger numbers of people. While market profitability will dictate conditions for wider physical access, public policies will decide the extent of participation. For example, local pressure to promote a national language will continue alongside global pressures to introduce an international language to access technology. Language, in the absence of a clearly defined national policy, may become a source of widening inequality in many developing societies.

As technological change and globalization transcends national boundaries, higher education will become transnational and learning more individualized and self-managed. Individual institutions and universities across countries will probably develop networks to cater for the global market. The multiplicity of agents and arrangements to meet the diverse demand for higher education might increase the need for certification to assure quality. Here again, the state will have to play a regulatory role by giving more credibility and acceptability to the certification process.

Does this mean that the role of the state will be confined only to regulation? Perhaps not. There may be areas of higher education

which will remain under state responsibility. As markets become more global and corporations become more competitive, it may become less rewarding for universities to invest in basic and long-term research since the benefits cannot be entirely reaped by the respective investors. More importantly, profitability considerations may not help developing areas and disciplines that are socially necessary. Business firms may be happy to invest in designing and developing new technological inventions that give them leadership in the market. Therefore, the state will have to continue investing in basic, long-term research and in strategic disciplines which are important for social cohesion.

Finally, we note with optimism that the future of education in the 21st Century is firmly founded in the gradual transformation of its status through the 20th Century. From an item of consumption by the elite in the early decades of this century, it became a crucial resource for economic development in the 1960s, and by the end of the century it has become intrinsic to human development. Today, development is being redefined in terms of human development and this recent shift in emphasis implies that any development agenda which does not consider education will have little value in the next century.

N.V. VARGHESE



# Giving a second chance to those forgotten by the school system

*Of the 625 million children of school-going age in developing countries, 130 million do not attend school<sup>1</sup>. Their exclusion from the education system, linked both to the difficult socio-economic conditions in which they are living and to the inadequacy of educational 'supply', also exclude them from the economic circuits which are, however, essential to their survival. To give a second chance to those 'forgotten by the school system' thus appears to be one of the major challenges for the 21st Century.*

**I**n recent decades, numerous key players have conceived and experimented with alternative education strategies destined for those who are the most disadvantaged, but without reaching sufficient numbers to provide a definitive answer to the problem. Thus, one of the major challenges for the years to come consists in rethinking the overall education system by focussing on the 'disadvantaged' at various levels:

► *Collecting data relative to education.* In the collection of data, how can one integrate information on the non-formal sector (number, location and profile of those excluded from the system, main characteristics of the programmes proposed by actors outside school, sources which finance such efforts, etc.), so as to allow a reformulation of educational policy on a broader basis for young people outside the school system?

► *Organizing the educational sector.* How to create bridges between formal and non-formal systems, adapt certification methods in keeping with this, share successful experiments in educating young people in difficulty? Also how to enable outside actors to benefit from teacher training, authorize the sharing of school facilities, etc., in order to reduce the gap between young people inside and outside the system? How to involve higher education in the definition of support

strategies for disadvantaged groups?

► *Sharing education resources.* How to support projects which have proved their effectiveness in educating the disadvantaged, without leaving parents or the local community to bear the cost which would only create even more inequality? How to achieve a more equitable distribution of educational resources among young school-going children, those at risk of dropping out, and those who have already left the school system?

► *Establishing partnerships for the educational sector.* What forces outside the school system can be called upon to meet a demand for education which is becoming increasingly important and diversified? How to create greater awareness, motivate them in a lasting way, and provide them with the information and the tools they need to succeed? How to help public authorities acting at the local level co-ordinate all of the initiatives set up for the disadvantaged?

In conclusion, the great challenge facing education in the coming decades seems to be that of equity. However, although it

seems essential to encourage the development and widespread application of strategies which have proven their capacity to adapt to the needs of marginalized groups, care should be taken not to create a 'shadow' education system for 'second-class citizens'.

MURIEL POISSON

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF. 1999. *The state of the world's children*. New York:UNICEF, p. 8.





*"An institution in touch with its environment"*

❑ **Panafrican Seminar on 'Private and community schools in Sub-Saharan Africa'**

*(Johannesburg, South Africa  
5 December 1999)*

This seminar, organized by the IIEP and linked to the bi-annual meeting of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), is open to those responsible for policy analysis and management in ministries of education in Sub-Saharan countries, donor agency representatives, and other finance specialists attending the ADEA meeting. Its aim is to provide a forum for reflection on the current situation of community and private schools and on the prospects for their development in the future.

❑ **Intensive Training Workshop on 'Quantitative methods for planning the quality of education'**

*(New Delhi, India  
6-17 December 1999)*

If the worldwide demands on education systems to provide good quality education for economic development are to be met, then the planners have to be able to set up the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating education systems efficiently. The aim of this workshop, organized by the IIEP in co-operation with the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development and NIEPA, is to train the 20 participants from India in the basic know-how and computer skills needed to work on the design and implementation of a large-scale educational policy research project. During their training, the participants will learn to use a variety of computer software systems for data entry and cleaning, selecting samples of schools, calculating sampling errors, and for classical and modern item analysis, as well as a variety of SPSS applications.

❑ **Master's programme in 'Educational Planning and Administration' in the Dominican Republic**

*(Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
January 2000)*

The Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic asked for IIEP support in creating a Master's programme in Educational Planning and Administration. This programme, which is designed for 50 Education Administration Officers, is organized by the *Madre y Maestra Catholic University*. The opening of the programme is planned for January 2000 and will end in December of the same year. The programme is organized in 12 training modules, for which the IIEP will be in charge of six, namely those concerning: quantitative methods of planning education; policy formulation and planning strategies; information systems for educational management; monitoring, evaluation and supervising education; advanced planning techniques; educational costs, financing and financial administration.

❑ **National Forum on 'Strategies for opening up higher education institutions to their environment'**

*(Hammamet, Tunisia  
February 2000)*

Announced in our last issue (July-September 1999), unfortunately the venue was postponed by the Tunisian Authorities. The Forum will now probably take place in February 2000.

❑ **Third Expert Meeting on 'Educational budgeting in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam'**

*(Luang Prabang, Lao PDR  
14-18 February 2000)*

In 1998 the IIEP undertook, with teams of national experts in the three countries concerned, a comparative research study on budget preparation and implementation procedures. Two workshops (one held in Cambodia in November 1998, and the second in Viet Nam in April 1999) helped participants to analyze budget processes and

in particular the links between planning and budget, management and budget, the use of norms and the control of expenditure. This third and final meeting will help the teams to complete their analyses and finalize their case studies, which are due to be published by the IIEP early 2000.

❑ **Sub-regional course on 'Educational costs, financing and budget'**

*(Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire,  
10-22 April 2000)*

This training course is organized for planners and finance officers from ministries of education or finance. The course is organized for the ADEA/CODESRIA Working Group of Education and Finance, which will contact the countries invited to participate. The IIEP will ensure the preparation and teaching for the course. The course programme will cover: cost concepts and how they are adapted to education, cost analysis, the problems related to educational financing, as well as budget preparation and implementation procedures.

❑ **International meeting on 'Strengthening capacities for budget procedures and analysis of educational costs in Portuguese-speaking Africa'**

*(Maputo, Mozambique  
7-10 March 2000)*

This is a follow-up activity of the course on *Education costs, financing and budget* held in Luanda in 1999. The meeting, intended for personnel from education and finance ministries, will focus on preparing and implementing budgets as well as analyzing budget expenditure. The terms of reference for the three case studies to be undertaken in Angola, Cabo Verde and Mozambique will be discussed by the national teams involved, and arrangements will be made for their finalization, publication and dissemination of the results among the five Portuguese-speaking African, or PALOP, countries.

# What makes SACMEQ so successful?

*There has been a worldwide growth of interest in the application of large-scale scientific survey research techniques to the study of issues related to improving the quality of education. The IIEP has been working to address capacity building needs in this area in association with the 15 Ministries of Education that form the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ): Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.*

**S**ACMEQ's main mission is to undertake integrated research and training activities that will: a) expand opportunities for educational planners to gain the technical skills required to monitor, evaluate, and compare the general conditions of schooling and the quality of basic education; and b) generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan the quality of education.

The first five SACMEQ educational policy reports were published in 1998 and they have already featured in major commissions on education (Zimbabwe and Namibia), cabinet reviews of educational policy (Zanzibar), national education sector studies (Zambia), and reviews of national education master plans (Mauritius). The rapid rise to prominence of SACMEQ's policy research programmes within Ministries of Education poses the question "What makes SACMEQ so successful?" The answer to this question can be found in the following three key features of the design and implementation of SACMEQ's research and training programmes.

➤ *A co-operative working style.* SACMEQ has a co-operative working style in which its National Research Co-ordinators are able to work together, to share expertise, and to learn from each other. An important

result of this co-operation has been that SACMEQ projects have employed the same technical procedures across participating countries with respect to research objectives, target populations, sample designs, data collection instruments, field work, basic data analyses, and policy report formats. These common technical procedures have ensured that SACMEQ's reports offer meaningful policy advice that can be applied within and across countries.

➤ *A clear focus on high-priority policy concerns.* SACMEQ's educational policy research projects commence by undertaking consultations within ministries of education in order to define high-priority policy concerns that are then used to guide research design. The SACMEQ Ministries of Education prefer this approach (in comparison with the traditional curiosity-driven research that is often carried out in universities) because it permits the policy issues raised by decision-makers to govern the whole of the research process – which, in turn, increases the likelihood that research results will actually be used to make informed decisions about planning the quality of education.

➤ *A determination to employ the best research methodologies.* When SACMEQ was initially launched in 1995, the National Research Co-ordinators decided to make every effort to identify and use the world's best

computer-based methodologies (rather than to make do with low quality substitutes). There are three important areas where SACMEQ has employed these state-of-the-art techniques: data preparation, sample design, and test construction.

On 25 October 1999 the biennial meeting of the SACMEQ Assembly of Ministers of Education was held in Paris at the IIEP. At this meeting it was agreed that the Consortium had set world-class standards with respect to the excellence of its training programmes, the high scientific quality of its policy research products, and the ownership of its future directions by participating Ministries of Education. This Assembly of Ministers set down an agenda for action which will lead SACMEQ towards many exciting educational policy research initiatives for the next millennium.

PATRICK PFUKANI,  
ACTING CO-ORDINATOR  
OF SACMEQ

*Further information about the IIEP's programme of co-operation with the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality may be obtained from Kenneth Ross (k.ross@iiep.unesco.org).*