

EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTIONS IN THE SPEECH AND EVIDENCES OF PRACTICE

C l a u d i a N e v e s

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Summary

Since the last decades we have been witnessing, more and more, the pressure upon Education and Training Systems. The debate between researchers and philosophers of education, around the new philosophical and political contours of nowadays' education, that emerge from social, cultural, and economic contexts impelled by Globalisation, has also been coming to intensify. The investors and the economic agents alert for the need of more and better training and qualification to face the demands of the competitive labour market. Education and Training Systems are also pointed as the cause for a deficit of competences and knowledge to face the new challenges of societies. In this context, the work of the International Organizations has been developed to evaluate the responses of educational systems and educational policies, in order to trace new orientations that can converge with the purposes of the development of the societies. For this problem, centered in the inherent dynamics of the social phenomenon, we believed we needed an approach that sustains a systemic vision of the reality that we tried to analyse.

This communication presents the main conclusions of a study developed in a master thesis which purpose was to understand how the International Organizations evaluate and monitorize the Educational Policies in the world and which indicators are used "to measure" the Educational Policies.

Résumé

Depuis les dernières décades nous avons témoigné à une pression chaque fois plus grande sur les Systèmes d'Éducation et de Formation. Le débat entre chercheurs et philosophes d'éducation, autour des nouveaux contours philosophiques et politiques d'éducation, qui émergent des contextes sociaux, culturels, et économiques que la Globalisation a forcé, s'est venu à s'intensifier. Les entrepreneurs et les responsables économiques, alertent pour la nécessité de meilleure formation et qualification pour répondre aux exigences du marché de travail compétitif. Les Systèmes d'Éducation et Formation sont aussi indiqués comme la cause d'un déficit de compétences et de savoirs pour répondre aux nouveaux défis des sociétés. Dans ce contexte, le travail des Organisations Internationales est venu à être développé dans le but d'évaluer les systèmes et les politiques éducatives, afin de tracer des orientations qui puissent converger avec les finalités des modèles de développement des sociétés. Pour cette problématique centrée dans les dynamiques inhérentes aux phénomènes sociaux, nous croyions être ajustés un approche qui soutienne une vision systémique de la réalité que avons essayé d'analyser.

Cette communication présente les principales conclusions d'une étude développée dans le contexte d'une thèse de Maîtrise qui a eu par objectif comprendre comment les Organisations Internationales évaluent et supervisent les Politiques Éducatives au niveau mondial et quels indicateurs sont utilisés pour "mesurer" l'Éducation.

1. Context and problematic

With the end of World War II, the United Nations was created to draw a global policy based on a bipolar geo-strategic balance, later known as the Cold War. The Plan Marshall was developed to support the reconstruction of the world economy. The United States of America granted financial support to the European countries devastated by the war, in order to stabilize and re-balance Europe's economic growth. This plan also aimed to restrain the communist regimes of the Soviet Union, of China and of North Korea. In this way, a new development project was expanded based on the industrial and technological development, supported by a positivist and structuralist vision, impelled by the Industrial Revolution based in the trust of unlimited progress.

In the 70's, the oil crisis led to the decreasing of economic growth of the western developed countries. The principles of the capitalist system began to be questioned. The paradigm of industrialization was no longer giving answers to the social and environmental problems that worsened. The priority given to the labor productivity ended up creating a scenery of enormous world asymmetries, worsened by serious menaces to the nature.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the communist dictatorships, in the beginning of the 90's, new countries emerged, intended to be democratic, defensive of freedom and man's rights. In this way, the new strategies began to comprehend the development as a form of competitiveness in the world's market, forcing the national governments to re-orientate their social and economic policies. These strategies originated an intensification and multiplication, all over the world, of interdependences among States. Furthermore, although States had to reconstruct their economies and societies to act in this global scenery, States had also to correspond to a new world order, imposed by international organizations that assumed a new role in global government.

However, in the last decades we have been coming to attend a bigger pressure from numerous social movements that demand that governments mobilize themselves to face the negative consequences of the globalisation. As a result, a global conscience emerged, reflected in several reports of experts, which tried to examine humanity's problems. Nowadays, for many economists, politicians, environmentalists, and other experts, to speak of development is to speak of quality of the people's life without sacrificing the natural resources of the planet. For many of these experts, this scenery can be achieved with the improvement of the educational systems, health systems, and other systems, in contexts of freedom, sustained by a civic and environmental responsibility.

2. The Millennium Development Goals

The United Nations are the entity that fights so that peace, democracy and the Human Rights are extended for everyone. While in the decades of 60, 70 and 80 the work of the United Nations for the development was concentrated mainly on the economic growth, nowadays, its work is centered in the promotion of the humanity's well being and the eradication of poverty, seen as the maximum goal of the world's development. During the decade of 90, the United Nations promoted a series of summits and encounters to

debate and reflect upon the enormous transformations that societies were experiencing. In September 2000 the world government leaders met in the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York, to establish commitments that help to create a more just and balanced world. As a result, the international community committed to expand and to promote the Human Development as the key for the social and economic progress sustained in all the countries. Thus, the Millennium Development Goals were established as a reference to measure the progress of the development of countries in the world. This commitment was well known as the Millennium Declaration, and 191 States committed to accomplish up to 2015 the following goals:

- Eradicate the extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empower woman;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensure environmental sustainability;
- Develop a world partnership for development.

The 191 States presented in the Summit committed to guide their policies and to enlarge their efforts to achieve these goals. Therefore, 18 goals and 48 indicators were defined for best guide those efforts. The Statistical Division of the United Nations maintains a base of Millennium indicators, compiled from international data supplied by responsible international agencies. From this database a report, presented by the General-secretary of the United Nations, is published annually, showing worlds' progress regarding the Millennium Development Goals. These goals were assumed as main references, also by other international organizations dedicated to the development and education.

3. New Development models

Although the Millennium Development Goals contribute to the Human Development, they do not reflect all the important dimensions of Human Development. Underlying to these goals, the United Nations Development Programme - UNDP - defined the concept of Human Development, to appeal to the creation of structures that allow the development of human capabilities with free access to opportunities, in order to balance and to share fairly the gains and the costs of globalisation. This vision of development defended by UNDP is the following: "*People are the true wealth of the Nations. In fact, the main goal of the development is to enlarge human freedoms. The development process can expand the human capacities, expanding the choices that people have to live their lives in a full and creative way*" (Human Development Report, 2004, p. 127). So, UNDP has been publishing annually, since 1990, Human Development Reports. Several countries and several experts, like the Nobel Economy prizes Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz, also point out the Human Development as the main aim of the economic growth.

The United Nations, worried with the serious environmental conditions, have also been organising in each decade, Summits about the environment and the development models. In 1992, in the Rio Summit was presented, for the first time, the concept of Sustainable Development. In this Summit common values were established for the

planetary survival, as well as a global strategy that could change the way societies were going. In 2002, another summit took place in Johannesburg, to evaluate the progress of the strategies defined in 1992. But the conclusions were far from the expectations. The emphasis in sustainability enhances the political effort regarding the future of development models, and the future generations. This sustainability implies a suitable contribution, not only for the maintenance of the growth and capital, but also for the efficient use of the natural resources. In this sense, the ecological sustainability means the respect for the integrity of the ecosystem. The social dimension is equally important, because its development will assure the justness, the social mobility, the social cohesion, the participation, the empowerment, the cultural diversity and the institutional development. In this perspective, the economic growth should be considered an important mean to reach that end.

It is in this context that the education, formal or informal, emerges with a fundamental role for the harmony of human beings, societies and the planets' environment.

4. Education in the context of the International Organizations

Since the 50's, the International Organizations worked towards the reconstruction of the world economy. Since then, these organisations have been promoting educational policies through out the world. These policies extend to the international scale, through agendas defined by organizations as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, UNESCO and OECD. The tendency to uniform educational systems, initiated by Mass Schooling, was reinforced by these organizations that wanted to make comparable the world educational systems analyses. In this way, financial, information and knowledge nets were developed, as well as comparative studies based on the quantification of comparable results, that created important statistical projects.

OECD

Since the decade of 70, OECD has been coming to develop a set of indicators of education. In the 80's these indicators were adapted by several countries as guidelines for political action to improve the quality of education. In this context, OECD developed INES Project - International Indicators of the Educational Systems - to help countries in the conception and development of instruments to monitor the educational systems. Concerning the students' performance indicators the PISA Programme - Students Achievement Indicators on Regular Basis - was created, to gather data about the knowledge acquired by the students in the domains of reading, mathematics and sciences. The CERI Project (Center for Educational Research in Innovation) is devoted not only to the international comparison, but also to the international cooperation for the development of better local systems of indicators. The systematic consolidation of educational indicators has been developed in the publication *Education at a Glance*, published since 1992. Regarding the evaluation of education, two activities of OECD stand out: the exams to the national policies of education of the members of OECD, that in the last years has been covering the form of thematic exams in a comparative base; and the gather and analysis of statistics and indicators of education, developed by the INES Project, whose results are published in the report *Education at a Glance*, accompanied by *Analyse of Educational Policies*.

UNESCO

With the end of World War II an educational and cultural organization was created to establish the humanity's intellectual and moral solidarity to prevent new sceneries of war. This was later known as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation - UNESCO. In the World Education Forum in Dakar in the year 2000, the international community entrusted to UNESCO the coordination of the movement of Education for All. Thus, UNESCO tries to assure that the Education is present in all the international agendas and that human and financial resources are mobilized to assume the commitments of the agendas. UNESCO facilitates the development of partnerships to monitor and to synthesize the progresses of the countries so that Education can be accessible for all. The UNESCO's Institute of Statistics is the responsible agency for the collection of education statistics. Through technical workshops and reflection debates and meetings, UNESCO has disseminating a common framework regarding education and training. In this way, since 1992, UNESCO has been publishing the World Education Reports where the world political trends concerning education are analysed, through the analysis of statistical indicators.

The World Bank

The World Bank was created in 1944 in order to help the reconstruction of Europe. The reconstruction continues to be the main focus of the World Bank's work, but as the result of natural disasters, war conflicts and special needs of countries with development problems. The strategic orientation of the World Bank is directly connected to the challenge of reducing poverty and to reach the goals defined by the Millennium Declaration. In that sense, the World Bank supports the countries to strengthen its capacities with loans, the relief of debts, etc., etc. The World Bank is one of the external financiers of Education in the world. The educational work of the World Bank is of varied nature, however, it is anchored in a Strategic Sector for the Education that assures the help to countries, evaluating its needs first. Regarding the Education for the Knowledge Economy, the World Bank developed an analytic program to understand which are the necessary transformations so that the education and training systems can be able to face the challenges of the knowledge economy. That's why the World Bank is centring its efforts in less developed countries in order to support its governments to develop more effective educational systems. EdStats, short for Education Statistics, is a comprehensive education statistics database developed by the World Bank's Education Group of the Human Development Network in collaboration with Development Data Group in the Development Economics Vice-Presidency. It compiles data from a variety of national and international sources and provides information on key education topics¹.

5. The Evaluation and monitoring of the world Educational Systems

Nowadays, the speeches of the International Organizations assume the education as fundamental for the development of societies, placing the human person as the central role in the development process, based on the person's self construction, in a Lifelong Learning process. In this perspective, the education and training are considered to be the motor of the development models, balancing the fundamental dimensions of the

¹ <http://www1.worldbank.org/education/edstats>

societies. Thus, Education is no longer considered as a mean of instruction and socialization, adapted to an established order, as it was in the Republican School; it is no longer a form of democratisation, as it was in the School of Masses; it is no longer an instrument of human resources training, as it was defended by the Human Capital Theories; it is no longer an immaterial investment for the knowledge society, as it was defended in the perspective of the Education for the Competitiveness. The Education, in the perspective of the Human Development and of the Sustainable Development, becomes a sustained process of self-valorisation along life, centered in the individual's relationship with several groups of the society, in a systemic vision, facilitating its personal statement in all the dimensions.

But, the reality demonstrates a growing dissatisfaction of societies regarding the education and training systems. This dissatisfaction as to do with the fact that investments in the education did not produce the expected results, pointed out by the speeches that promoted equal opportunities and social promotion of the ill favoured. So, the debate about the quality is increased and public data concerning education and training systems' performance is more and more demanded.

The indicators of education exist as instruments of political orientation in the industrialized countries for 20 years. The indicators appeared as a form of justification of the educational costs. Nowadays, they are used as information regarding the evaluation, planning and administration of the educational systems. The purpose of the educational indicators is to give to know the situation of the education and training systems, to facilitate its analysis and evaluation. The indicators identify the key factors that influence the quality of education, enlarging the government's political options. So, the indicators of education are categories of analysis built to facilitate the gathering of information about the several components of an educational and training system, allowing judgements of value concerning key aspects.

Given the complexity of the several educational systems, the information supplied by the indicators will always be a limited one. So, we need to have indicators that satisfy a group of technical characteristics, like being valid and precise, representative and not just statistical measures with no context. The indicators should also have a logical and empiric relationship between them, in order to create groups that are a valid representation of a certain educational system conditions.

Each one of the International Organizations, previously referred, describes a group of indicators to evaluate and monitorize the progress of educational systems. The concern to create equitable development models, not just for mankind but also for the environment, is reflected in the speeches of these organizations, which establish new aims for education according to this logic. In this sense, the comparisons done in these statistical studies constitute important diagnoses of the education systems that guide political decisions and actions in national policies. In other words, these organizations sustain and promote the contemporary educational thinking, by evaluating and monitorising the world educational policies.

However, the investigation that we present, pointed for a lack of coherence among the purposes and the goals defined for education, and the indicators that evaluate and monitor the educational policies in the world. From the analysis of the reports made by these international organisations committed to the Millennium Development Goals, it

seems that these reports point out a positivist vision of the education based on statistical measures, indicators and describers.

So, in this investigation we tried to analyse the main reference documents in the evaluation of the educational policies. From the analysis of the main purposes and goals established for education, in terms of Millennium Development Goals, in a perspective of Human Development and Sustainable Development, we tried to define a series of analysing categories. Later on, the analysis of the gathered data led us to complete and to add new categories of analysis. Consequently, it was possible for us to stress the indicators defined by these International Organizations, used to evaluate and monitorize the Educational Policies, allowing us to infer on other readings not contained in these documents.

Picture 1. Comparative board of the number of indicators given to each category of analysis, by organisation.

CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES		OECD	UNESCO	WORLD BANK
Personal Development and social well-being	Responsible competences for the quality and conservation of environment			
	Citizenship competences			
	Mobility and interchange	1		
	Social-economical context		8	1
Quality of educational/training and professional course	Basic Competences	5	2	
	Knowledge society competences		5	1
	Sensitisation for scientific	2		
	Teachers	5		
	Learning abilities	4	1	2
	Employment and economic profitability	5		
	Continuous Learning of professional abilities			
Equal opportunities	Effectiveness of educational establishments	6	15	8
	Gender balance	1	4	2
	Respect for the social, cultural and religious diversity			
	Recognition of competences and abilities of non formal contexts			
Resources Optimisation	Opportunities of Lifelong Learning for all			
	Financiers	4	5	1
	Humans	2	3	
	Physical			

Our analysis allowed us to verify that the conclusions of these studies seem relatively limited regarding the concept of education, subjacent in Human Development and Sustainable Development models. It was possible for us to verify that some elements that have an enormous influence in the educational results are neglected. In this way, we formulated the hypothesis that the evaluation models applied by these international organizations may not contribute for the improvement of the quality in the education. However, it is important to maintain this effort to improve the construction of indicators, as well as modelling the processes and the educational systems.

Final considerations

With this research we didn't intend to question an evaluation culture, nor the referential systems for the coordination of policies. We intended to contribute for the development of an intelligibility that allows the construction of evaluation instruments that connect the referential frameworks, goals and purposes of education, to the execution of programs to reach those goals and purposes.

In the perspective that faces education as a process where a group of dimensions interact becoming a complex phenomenon, a statistical evaluation will hardly allow the diagnosis this process where various dimensions interact, like the cognitive dimension, the affective dimension, the cultural dimension, the citizenship, the empowerment, the social relationships, the social responsibility, the professional training, etc., etc. In other words, the indicators are too reducers and simplifiers of the reality that we want to evaluate.

Not questioning the need to evaluate and monitorize the educational policies, perhaps it is necessary to change the technological analysis logic to a systemic logic that allows a global vision of education and training. Perhaps it is necessary to reformulate the technical instruments of evaluation in order to not misrepresent the goals and purposes of the education in terms of Millennium Development Goals and of the new educational paradigms.

We do not want to undervalue the studies developed in an economic perspective or in a sociological or administrative perspective. But we would like to call the attention for the need for these studies to be complemented with an educational perspective that defends that evaluation procedures should keep in mind the goals and purposes defined for the education and training systems, nowadays.

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