

Network of Education Policy Centers

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EDITORIAL

The 1st General Assembly and future of the Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC)

By Lana Jurko, *Center for Educational Research and Development, Croatia*

After three years of successful common project work and professional growth the Network of Education Policy Centres has decided to institutionalize and to acquire an individual identity as an international NGO. With this in view, the first General Assembly of the Network was held in Zagreb, Croatia on the 10th and 11th December 2006.

Why NEPC?

Networks dealing in policy that respect basic principles of rule of law and human rights, have high ethical standard, and are highly professional will without doubt empower not only their members but society as a whole to adopt a participatory approach to policy. Those Networks that understand the importance of evidence based policy and its advocacy, and have the professional capacities to engage in them, can create a productive arena for discourse and negotiations on politically and otherwise sensitive issues.

We envisage NEPC as such a network. We see NEPC not only as a local or regional actor but one that will provide global arena for discourse in education policy. NEPC is an ambitious network; this ambition is based on the background of both our members and the informal network, the expertise, professionalism and know-how within our network. We believe NEPC will provide its members with the grounds for an ambitious and proactive future for the benefit of their societies.

About the GA

The main aim of the General Assembly was to begin the process of formalization of the network. Compared to the current situation, the advantages of this will be that NEPC will acquire a clear institutional identity, ownership and responsibility to member centers. It will have a certain decision making autonomy in terms of setting project priorities, a clear and identifiable leadership and accountability of the management staff, better coordination and monitoring of network activities, as well as simpler and more transparent financial management and an increased sense of project ownership.

As we are all aware the Open Society Institute - Education Support Program played an important role in the initial development of NEPC. Therefore, we are very pleased that ESP is supportive of NEPC formalization and will continue to be our main donor. NEPC intends to maintain a close strategic partnership with ESP and will encourage ESP and other OSI programmes to use the sources of expertise already existing within the Network for their future strategic interventions and analysis.

Main decisions reached at the GA

1. 24 Education Policy Centers joined the Network as of 25th January 2007 and signed a Memorandum of Agreement.
2. The *Medium Term Strategy: the Way Forward* was voted in and became the official document of NEPC. Full version can be found on www.edupolicy.net and also in this issue of the Newsletter.
3. The Executive board of the network was elected consisting of:
 - Alexandru Crisan, Center Education 2000+, Romania
 - Maria Golubeva, Center for Public Policy Providus, Latvia
 - Lana Jurko, Center for Educational Research and Development, Croatia
 - Saule Kalikova, Education Policy Analysis Center, Kazakhstan
 - Grace Kaimila-Kanjo, OSISA, South Africa
 - Giorgi Machabeli, International Institute for Educational Policy, Planning and Management, Georgia
 - Natalya Yabloneskene, Center for Educational Policy Studies, Russia
4. It was decided that the executive director for the next two years will be a member of the board and the honour for this period was given to Lana Jurko.
5. With that in mind NEPC secretariat will also be hosted by the institution of the Executive Director - Center for Educational Research and Development from 1st January 2007 – 31st December 2008.

OSI related professional and regional education networks

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Planned activities in 2007.

For the first two years, until the Network is consolidated not all of the planned activities will be possible. However, it is of utmost importance to become an active and productive network as soon as possible. Therefore in 2007 we shall prepare at least one project based on the themes discussed in the GA. You can read more about that in the article by Maria Golubeva in this issue of the Newsletter. We will shortly commence the process of project development and encourage all members to participate actively in this. Very shortly members should expect an e-mail from the Secretariat on this subject. We should complete this process by the end of March in order to submit it for the OSI grant.

Mapping of experts and expertise within the Network will be one of the main short-term tasks for the Board and NEPC Secretariat.

We will continue with the Newsletter and should have 4 issues in this year and would like to invite you to send submissions on your projects and current issues in your countries. The Editor of the Newsletter will contact liaison persons.

On the technical part we will also update and develop our website as well as create a visual identity of the Network, will also prepare a marketing and fundraising strategy for the Network in order to create a clear path for sustainability of our Network and for becoming a visible global actor. The Board will revise the Bylaws which will be electronically voted in by all members in March 2007.

We are hoping that our next General Assembly, which will be held in late November or early December 2007, will also be a Global Education Conference on the theme of our common project.

As you can see it is a rather ambitious plan and for it to be successful it must rely on the cooperation, professionalism and enthusiasm of all of our members so I encourage you all to be as active in the network as you can. On a personal note, may I just say that I am indeed looking forward to leading our vibrant and productive network for next two years!

Lana Jurko
Executive Director
NEPC

Minutes of the GA, the Medium term strategy, List of members can be found on www.edupolicy.net
For any questions please contact lane@idi.hr

NEWS & EVENTS

Network of Education Policy Centers: the Way Forward. Medium Term Strategy (2006-2010)

After three years of successful common project work and professional growth the Network of Education Policy Centers has decided to institutionalize and to acquire an individual identity as an international NGO. With this in view, the NEPC Interim Board has created and revised the present medium-term strategy for the Network.

1. Context and Challenges

Education communities in the area covered so far by the Network of Education Policy Centers face a number of challenges, some of which are of national or regional, and some of global character.

Over the last fifteen years, education reforms and profound structural changes in the organization and funding of education processes have taken place in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, and Russia. These changes, however, have not all led to improved accessibility and quality of education, or to the promotion of tolerance and democratic values in respective societies.

In most countries educational reforms are still taken 'technically' (e.g. as curriculum reforms, school network consolidation). Nevertheless, there are cross-cutting areas of concern, such as 'dropouts' and vulnerable groups, education for children of migrants and some minorities, education in remote rural areas or poorer urban neighborhoods that are still poorly covered by government policies. These problems, common to many of the countries represented in NEPC, are in fact global problems that are best addressed through far-reaching concerted effort of global networks, of which NEPC aspires to become one.

Values and rights. Tolerance, respect for difference, multiculturalism, civic education are not in fact at the top of education policy agenda of national governments – nor are they, indeed, at the top of the agenda for investment in human resources of the European Union, where building the labor force for competitive economy is a real priority. While promoting tolerance and respect for difference is, at least theoretically, also on the EU agenda, in practice the existing funding policies show relatively little commitment if at all. Children's rights, including the right to education, are not properly monitored and implemented in the majority of Central Asia, Caucasus, South-Eastern Europe and FSU countries.

Access to education. Official statistics on literacy, school attendance, and other sensitive questions is often unreliable, and does not reflect the situation of marginalized groups in education. In some cases statistics is even used for hiding problems of school attendance or access to quality education, and for preventing the development of 'second chance education' and gender equity in education (where real problems are evident - e.g. for girls in Tajikistan and boys in Mongolia, girls from rural areas, Roma girls in all countries).

Educational isolation. Provision of educational opportunities for children in so-called 'special schools for delinquent children', or institutions of detention, for young people in prisons is of low quality or does not exist at all.

Quality and social divide. International comparative surveys demonstrate widening gap between high and low achievers in education in the region, which is due to 'elitist' structural policies of secondary education (opposite example to e.g. Finland where this gap is very small) and due to worsening social and economic security of families. This gap will contribute increasingly to socially marginalized many youngsters.

Transparency. Education quality divide is huge in some countries that support selective intake of students from early grades or allow high fees (sometimes informally collected from better-off parents) in some secondary public education institutions, this way contributing to increasing social divide. Transparent distribution of public funds for education at national and local levels (from national budget to school budgets) is a big challenge, and at the moment there is no sufficient capacity in place for monitoring it.

Participatory education policy development. Development of education policies is becoming in real terms bureaucratic versus participatory. In Central Asia, Russia and Caucasus participatory education policy development is increasingly undermined because of autocratic or over bureaucratic culture of policy development and neglect for the role for NGOs, especially those with international contacts and partners. In the new member states of the EU less and less international cooperation and experience sharing among non-governmental actors in education is possible because of the lack of EU interest to support non-governmental sector and because structural funds are 'state' based.

The institutional, political and cultural environment in which the work of independent education policy centers takes place requires the pooling of resources and strong reliance on international experience in order to be able to strengthen participatory approaches to education policy and to have a positive impact on policy processes. The reason for this is that governments tend to develop a monopoly of policy-making because the resources for implementation are strongly concentrated in government hands, and built-in participatory mechanisms are often very imperfect, especially in countries with relatively recent experience of democratic transition. International networks such as the Network of Education Policy Centers can provide consolidated support in cases when civil society organizations experience severe political pressure in connection with sensitive issues they are working on. Network can provide international backing and support for opening in-country policy debate. Network can take a lead in analyzing sensitive areas in education, developing policy advice and advocating for alternative policy options. Sharing of information and know-how, building capacity in the area of education policy analysis and advocacy could be added value provided by NEPC.

2. Vision

The *vision* of NEPC is to develop into a strong formally established network of leading education policy centers, a global actor with local and regional expertise in education policy that promotes the values of an open, democratic, multicultural, and pluralistic society. Policy in our understanding involves implementation and evaluation as well as the formulation of new policies.

3. Mission

The mission of the NEPC is promoting flexible, participatory, evidence-based, transparent education policies embedding open society values. By promoting these values we understand proactive policy initiatives as well as advocacy and monitoring activities that will ensure that governments and national education systems deliver on their commitments.

4. NEPC: today and tomorrow

The Education Policy Centers (EPC) emerged as international community of practice in the countries of the region in the last couple of years addressing the need for independent and information-based policy analysis, advocacy for equity, and effective, sustainable solutions in education policy processes. The Centers took on the role of an independent voice in maturing democracies. They are diverse in nature, organizational structure, professional background, scope, size, and role in education change. Most of them established social partnerships with key stakeholders in education in their countries. The common feature of the Centers is that they are based on strong local knowledge, have developed international contacts, and have built links with key international organizations.

The Education Policy Centers have some joint activities already: (a) organizing annual meetings; (b) publishing the Directory of the EPC Network; (c) issuing electronic Newsletter 'Education Policy' which can be found on (d) the Network's Internet site www.edupolicy.net and (e) training courses on policy analysis and policy advocacy; (f) two joint monitoring projects: Monitoring Drop-outs and Monitoring private Tutoring.

Many education policy centres maintain strong links with OSI and contribute to open, democratic and participatory policy processes. The Centers monitor education policy and implementation and promote transparent, non-discriminatory, non-selective education for all by offering quality research and analysis as well as advocacy for education change and equity. Centers are successful in providing alternative sources of information and alternative policy options as well as facilitating open public debate and raising awareness through advocating for policies aimed at equal access to all levels of education.

ESP had an important role in the initial development of NEPC. Therefore, NEPC intends to maintain a close strategic partnership with ESP. NEPC would also like to encourage ESP and other OSI programs to use the sources of expertise already existing within the Network for their future strategic interventions and analysis.

After three years of NEPC existence and successful common project work and professional growth it is now the point for NEPC to develop its identity as an international NGO. As compared to the current situation, the advantages of this would be:

- Clear institutional identity, ownership and responsibility to member centers
- Certain decision making autonomy in terms of setting project priorities
- Network's autonomy in selecting external experts for its projects
- More flexibility and openness in choosing institutional partners
- Clear and identifiable leadership and accountability of the management staff
- More focused management
- Better coordination and monitoring of network activities
- Better, simpler and more transparent financial management
- Increased sense of project ownership.

Based on the outputs already achieved, the Education Policy Centers through networking have opportunities to promote values stated in the Network's mission, gain new ideas and contacts, plan joint projects and learning events, develop education policy analysis and advocacy capacity. Hopefully OSI GESB will continue to encourage the development of the Network and professional communication on education change policies in respective countries in line with the open society education agenda and the new strategy of OSI educational programs currently being developed.

NEPC intends to benefit all its members by providing:

- Improved possibility to set up bilateral and multilateral partnerships;
- Improved opportunity to position itself as a member of international professional community;
- Interaction and education via joint projects, training workshops, exchange visits, etc.
- Synergy, joint generation of new ideas; mutual enhancement;
- Giving more weight and more voice for centers vis-à-vis national governments and civil society;
- Experience of work within a new framework, with emphasis on horizontal links, strengthening and growing due to interaction;
- Cooperation on the basis of common interests.

The result of the institutionalized network should be:

- pooling of resources and strong reliance on international experience in order to be able to strengthen participatory approaches to education policy and to have a positive impact on policy processes;
- possibility to provide international backing and support for opening in-country policy debate;
- possibility to take lead in analyzing sensitive areas in education, developing policy advice and advocating for alternative policy options;
- possibility to sharing of information and know-how, building capacity in the area of education policy analysis and advocacy

4. Guiding principles

The guiding principles of NEPC follow from its mission:

- NEPC promotes responsible and informed education policy.
- NEPC follows the principles of transparency and accountability and upholds high implementation standards in its project activities and future grant-giving programs.
- NEPC encourages its member organizations to follow the principles of equity and accountability for their staff, donors and societies in which they operate.
- NEPC advocates participatory and transparent policy processes.
- NEPC work is based on participation and cooperation of its members.
- NEPC is open to ideas and initiatives of all of its members.
- NEPC is open to cooperation with other networks and institutional partners, as well as individual experts interested in promoting open society values in education.

5. Strategic Goals

The strategic goal of NEPC is **to generate** a consolidated know-how on education policy and practices for educational communities, policy makers and international organizations.

The strategic goal will be achieved through the following objectives:

- **To become** a recognized global actor/player and international independent voice in promoting open society values in education.
- **To create** a consortium for advocacy on international and national level and to monitor education policies and implementation across several regions covered by NEPC.
- **To build** a community of practice through providing opportunity for communication, exchange of information and expertise in education and policy development.
- **To promote** participatory policy development approaches, actively engage in policy advocacy and development processes based on values stated in the mission through networking, stakeholder involvement and capacity building.
- **To foster** an open and creative space as well as synergy for developing, supporting and implementing joint projects and initiatives.

6. Activities

6.1. Building a Community of Practice

6.1.1. Building the Network

- Creating an institutional structure for the network as a community of practice
- Setting regularly a *priority topic in education* to be promoted by the network in public debate regionally and globally
- Providing consolidated support in cases when a member organization experiences severe political pressure related to sensitive issues in education
- Ensuring proper mechanism for fundraising and financial sustainability.

6.1.2. Capacity Building for educational actors

- Providing professional development and training for education policy actors and stakeholders
- Organizing internships and study visits.

6.1.3. Information sharing and dissemination

- Update and development of NEPC Web site
- Issuing Newsletter
- Conducting Newsgroups
- Creating and facilitating virtual learning platform
- Issuing publications.

6.2. Creating a Consortium for Advocacy

- Maintain the priority topics such as the situation of vulnerable groups in education on the national and international agenda
- Encouraging members to identify and place key issues in education on public agenda
- Confronting policy makers with evidence based results of international analyses of common problems in education; developing alternatives and advocating for alternative solutions in line with open society values
- Generating the public debate on topical education policy issues
- Empowering the stakeholders to articulate their rights and needs in education
- Initiating regulatory and legislative change together with educational stakeholders and measuring the impact

6.3. Mapping and responding to regional challenges in education policy

- Identify region-specific policy challenges to open society values and equity in education
- Plan and implement strategic activities to counter the threats to tolerance, inclusion, social coherence and equity at the national and regional level (Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Caucasus, Southern Africa, and other regions)

6.4. Developing and broadening Know-how in Education

6.4.1. Education Policy monitoring, evaluation and analysis

- Providing quality analysis of education policies for education communities, policy makers and international organizations.
- Monitoring and evaluating policies implemented by Governments, educational systems, international organizations and others in the field of education.

6.4.2. Developing, supporting and implementing joint projects fostering open society values in education systems

- Identifying current priority themes for open society values in education
- Initiating joint projects on these topics; e.g. equity, student-centered education, the “soft” aspects of education quality, public participation in education policy, tolerance etc.

6.5. Positioning NEPC as an international independent voice in promoting open society values in education

6.5.1. Organizing Global Assembly

- Global Assembly on a specific theme in education (together with the NEPC General Assembly).

6.5.2. Promoting and highlighting the available expertise within the Network

- To bring the available expertise within the Network to the attention of international organizations implementing education change in developing countries
- Cooperation with transnational organizations active in education
- Providing services to policy makers, NGOs, international organizations, and stakeholders.

7. Accountability

Elaborating adequate accountability mechanisms vis-à-vis the network's donors, especially its main donor, GESB, is crucial to NEPC.

Responsibility towards the donor should come in the same package as responsibility towards the member organizations of the network. The Bylaws of NEPC will provide for appropriate accountability procedures.

8. Sustainability

The sustainability of medium term development of NEPC will be achieved based on a three-phase approach:

Phase 1 (3 years): Start up period in order to establish and consolidate the network

Fundraising emphasis will be put on seeking funds from grant schemes and trying to diversify at the same time. It is estimated that at the end of Phase 1 grants will make up to

90% of the budget while in-kind contributions, membership fees and service fees will make about 10%. The network will at the same time develop appropriate mechanisms for self-sustainability (selling services, participating in international tenders, etc.)

Phase 2 (2 years interim phase): Even though applying for grant schemes will continue, more stress will be put on service providing mechanism that will be income generating.

This will be accomplished through marketing, raising the profile of experts within the network and setting procedures for members' commitment to the network. The fundraising target is to cover 40 % from the self-generated income and diversified grants.

Phase 3 (final phase of medium term development): The percentage of income coming from tenders and self-generated income will increase as compared to phase 2 and proportion of self generated income will be greater than that of third-party donor grants.

It is both the hope and aim of the board to make the NEPC a self-sustainable organization by developing mechanisms that will provide funding. Those are:

1. Selling services such as:

- Training in the areas of NEPC expertise
- On-line education policy courses: short practical courses on focused topics available
- Consultancy services to Governments and international organizations
- Publications.

2. Membership fees

3. Participating in international tenders

9. Expected outcomes

- NEPC is an institutionally established widely recognized actor in education policy internationally.
- Member organizations have increased analytical skills, advocacy and networking capacity.
- NEPC newsletter and publication reach a wide audience of education communities, policy makers globally.
- NEPC studies and publications are credible sources of information about education policy internationally.
- The overall quality of education policy and analysis increased in the targeted countries and regions.
- Positive policy changes are evident in the targeted education systems.
- The stakeholders in targeted regions are stronger participants in public policy and have more influence on formulation of educational policy.
- Coherence between educational policy and educational practice.
- International organizations acknowledge and utilize the expertise available in the network for implementing education change.
- New issues in education policy are brought to the attention of international policy makers.

NEPC intends to measure its policy impact through:

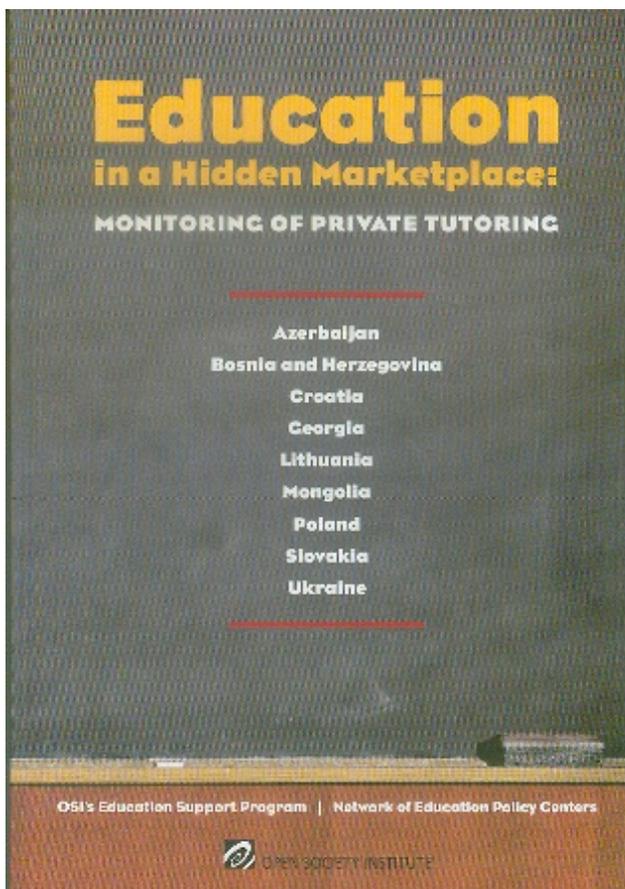
- Impact studies realized 3-4 years after project implementation and commissioned to independent organization
- Changes to legislation and national policies as a result of NEPC advocacy
- Inquiry based on interviews, questionnaires and situational/stakeholders' analysis
- Different types of studies.

NEPC will elaborate its own impact analysis mechanism with relevant output and outcome indicators and measurements in order to provide for appropriate accountability.

For any question related to the NEPC **Medium Term Strategy** please contact лана@idi.hr

A NEW BOOK HAS BEEN RELEASED

Education in a Hidden Marketplace - eds. Silova I., Budiene V., Bray M.



Education in a Hidden Marketplace
eds. Silova I., Budiene V., Bray M.

Education in a Hidden Marketplace is the first cross-national study of private tutoring in the former socialist countries. It examines how the opening of a free market has affected education and analyzes the nature, causes, and consequences of private tutoring in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine. The report also identifies challenges that confront education stakeholders and policymakers as they decide how to respond to the rapidly spreading and constantly changing phenomenon of private tutoring. While no single piece of research can fully explain these complex issues, this book provides an important empirical foundation for policymakers considering the implications of past trends and current patterns, as well as appropriate policy responses.

The study was supported by the Open Society Institute's Education Support Program and implemented by the Network of Education Policy Centers. The Education Support Program and the Network of Education Policy Centers promote education reform that will strengthen open society values in countries in transition, particularly in South Eastern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia.

Content:

Foreword

Private Tutoring: Educating Society or Driving Social Stratification? *Virginija Budiene*
Summary of Findings
Introduction *Iveta Silova and Mark Bray*

Part I: Concepts and Issues

Chapter 1. The Private Tutoring Phenomenon: International Patterns and Perspectives *Mark Bray and Iveta Silova*
Chapter 2. The Context: Societies and Education in the Post-Socialist Transformation *Iveta Silova and Mark Bray*
Chapter 3. Methodological Considerations *Iveta Silova, Mark Bray and Algirdas Zabulionis*
Chapter 4. The Hidden Marketplace: Private Tutoring in Former Socialist Countries *Iveta Silova and Mark Bray*
Chapter 5. Implications for Policy and Practice *Iveta Silova and Mark Bray*

Part II: Country Reports

Chapter 6. Azerbaijan *Iveta Silova and Elmina Kazimzade*
Chapter 7. Bosnia and Herzegovina *Dzenana Husremovic and Dzenana Trbic*
Chapter 8. Croatia *Zrinka Ristic Dedic, Boris Jokic, and Lana Jurko*
Chapter 9. Georgia *Anna Matiashvili and Nino Kutateladze*
Chapter 10. Lithuania *Virginija Budiene and Algirdas Zabulionis*
Chapter 11. Mongolia *Alison Dong, Batjargal Ayush, Bolormaa Tsetsgee, and Tumendelger Sengedorj*
Chapter 12. Poland *Barbara Murawska and Elzbieta Putkiewicz*
Chapter 13. Slovakia *Martina Kubdovd*
Chapter 14. Ukraine *Liliya Hrynevych, Anna Toropova, Tymofiy Pylynyk, Leonid Sereda, and Ulyana Gerasevich*

Appendices

Appendix 1. General Characteristics of the Study Sample: University Programs by the Level of Demand
Appendix 2. Questionnaire
Glossary *Eric Johnson*
Notes on the Authors
Notes on Institutions

To request a copy of the book, please contact espassistance@osi.hu

The Network Brainstorms New Project Themes

At the first NEPC General Assembly in Zagreb, representatives of the member centres from virtually all regions in which NEPC is active have come together to discuss the current challenges of education policy in our countries, and to formulate topics for future network-wide projects. The following two projects themes were generated as a result of this brainstorm.

1. *Educating Divided Citizens?*

Segregation of students is common practice in state school systems in many societies. Not only does the choice of school depend often on the student's ethnicity, gender, or mother tongue, but also curricular differences for students of different ethnic and linguistic groups are manifest in some cases. In Bosnia, for instance, ethnic segregation is embedded not only in the separation of students of different ethnicities in different schools, but also in the different curricula for these groups. In Latvia, there is no curricular divide between future citizens of different ethnicities, but the choice of school is still strongly conditioned on the student's native language – Latvian or Russian, and the traditions of civic enculturation are vastly different. And in some places in Central Asia, girls have to attend school separately from boys, the gender divide conditioning also to some extent the content of education and teachers' attitudes.

Segregation of Roma students is an issue across a number of societies, both in Central and in South-Eastern Europe. As a result of this segregation, the representation of Roma students at the secondary and tertiary levels of education is disproportionately low. Finally, in many countries students with disabilities are still segregated in separate schools, a problem that particularly concerns students with mental health and developmental problems.

In some cases, segregation leads to radically different career chances and pre-defines unequal access to higher levels of education. In other cases, by providing very different models of civic and political enculturation for future citizens, it recreates the ethnic and linguistic divide in societies lacking cohesion. In this way, too, it reduces the chances of future generations to build viable participative democracies.

A comparative, network-wide research and advocacy project covering the issues of ethnic, linguistic, or gender segregation, as well as segregation based on disability, is long due. NEPC is uniquely placed to conduct such a project in East-Central Europe, the Balkans, and Central Asia, possibly to include other regions. The main aspects to be measured are the effect of segregation on educational achievement of segregated groups, and the in-built aspects of ethnic and linguistic conflict in cases of different civic enculturation of segregated groups. The results of such project could provide a basis both for advocating more open and inclusive national education systems, and for providing evidence-based case for desegregation.

2. *Educational Consequences of Migration*

Over the recent decade, the impact of migration on societies globally, and also in the regions of Eastern and Central Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia, has increased. Children of migrants make up a considerable percent of school age population and their situation within the educational systems of receiving countries is not always favourable. Besides, internal migration and temporary labour migration impact the access to education of children who stay within their country of origin, but whose parents are earning their living abroad, or children whose families have had to migrate within one country.

The settings of educational migration differ according to region. Thus, in Poland and the Baltic States children left behind by parents working in the UK or Ireland are sometimes experiencing lack of support and their school attendance suffers. In Central Asia, as NEPC Dropouts Project has demonstrated, statistics on school attendance is incomplete, particularly where the access of children of internal migrants to education is concerned. The issue of access of refugee children to education is also problematic in some countries of the region. The issues of inclusion and exclusion of children of migrants in national education systems are of global interest and of great importance also from the perspective of MDGs.

The following aspects of educational consequences of migration could be the focus of network-wide research and advocacy project for NEPC:

- 1) Children of migrants vis-a-vis 'mainstream' groups: equal access, comparative advantage or disadvantage in education?
- 2) Children left behind by labour migrants: a special concern within national educational systems or a gap in statistics?
- 3) Models of coping: how do schools and local education authorities adapt to migration in the absence of central policy on the issue?
- 4) Measuring subjective wellbeing: does the level of subjective wellbeing of migrant children differ significantly from the level of subjective wellbeing of their peers who did not experience the consequences of migration?

The resulting cluster of country-based studies, supplemented by comparative research, should provide a basis for advocacy projects aimed at improving the situation of migrant children at school and, possibly, serve to prove the benefits of inclusion and inclusive education in a world where the workforce is increasingly mobile, and where great disparities of income exist between regions.

For further discussion on this topic please contact Maria Golubeva, maria@dfci.jxi.g.lv

Education policy perception index by NEPC – supplementary tool for evidence based advocacy activities

NEPC already has experience in evidence based advocacy and in the future intends to develop monitoring and advocacy as its core activities. There are several major questions to answer when considering the future of the work of the network in this direction:

- How to make the communication process easier within the network for timely identification of network-wide priority issues and mobilization of resources within the system?
- How to make results and priorities of our work more visible?
- How to ensure involvement of all members in planning and monitoring of network activities?

One of the models to make NEPC advocacy activities more relevant, timely and informed is creating a list of priority issues and a simple measurement instrument "Education Policy Perception Index" for regular (annual) rating of participating countries according to topicality and urgency of this or that issue related to education policy. The INDEX will provide a comprehensive picture country by country (with less expenditure and in shorter time period). This will contribute to timely identification of problems and tendencies in participating countries and reacting to them and also show whether or not advocacy campaigns (planned by the network) regarding the issue have been successful on a country level. The rating scale (INDEX) will be developed by NEPC (local teams) according to unified, simple and valid measurement instrument and published regularly (once a year) on the NEPC website.

NEW PROJECTS& INITIATIVES

Creating a rating or index of this kind and promoting its visibility will brand NEPC and enhance its identity in the international arena. Education policy perception index will also facilitate planning of joint projects between two or more members of the network. For example, the comparative research projects on particular priority issues can involve the countries with the highest and lowest scores in the scale.

Network members discussed the idea at the recent NEPC meeting in Zagreb. After the presentation of the idea by George Machabeli (EPPM/Georgia) the participants of the workshop discussed the proposal, instruments of implementation and the timeline for creation of the final project.

Preliminary agreed action plan envisages:

- Conducting of brainstorming of all members of NEPC electronically- During January 2007.
- Creation of the first draft of Project proposal and action plan- January-February 2007.
- Development of the whole project final draft – by the end of March 2007

Management of the preparation activities will be coordinated by EPPM, Georgia.

For more details on this topic please contact Giorgi Machabeli, machabeli@eppm.org.ge

PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Publication reviewed by Grace Kaimila-Kanjo, GraceK@osisa.org

Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education is the title of this year's Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report. As with all the other EFA Monitoring reports, this year's report provides evidence and analysis aimed at guiding policy and action on EFA. While the report charts progress towards all the six EFA goals as set in Dakar in 2000, the major focus is on goal number 1: that of early childhood care and education. The report provides global and regional assessments on the state of EFA in general and early childhood care and education in particular. It also assesses aid to education, highlights effective policies and practices to accelerate progress, and draws attention to emerging challenges.

Regarding the overall trends of EFA achievement, the report notes that progress to meet the EFA goals set in 2000 is rather worrying. Despite continued overall global progress at the primary level, including for girls, too many children are not in school, drop out early or do not reach minimal learning standards. It notes also that many countries are neglecting the connections among early childhood, primary and secondary education and adult literacy, therefore missing opportunities to improve basic education across the board — and, in the process, the prospects of children, youth and adults everywhere.

Out of 125 countries, 47 have achieved the EFA goals. Of the countries farthest from achieving EFA goals, the majority are in Sub-Saharan Africa. In terms of education finance, the report presents a mixed picture. While developed countries that have achieved their EFA goals spend 5-6 % GDP on education, those countries farthest from achieving EFA goals have had tremendous increases in education spending since 1999, some as much as 30%. Perhaps the answer might lie in the fact that the children most likely to be out of school and to drop out live in rural areas and come from the poorest households. Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia have three quarters of such children. In order to improve the prospects, the report recommends policies that tackle exclusion; improvement of teacher training, recruitment, deployment and working conditions; expanding secondary education; paying more attention to gender issues, and acting on all the EFA goals in a holistic manner.

With regard to the focus area of early childhood education, a grim picture is painted. The report notes that ECCE is a right recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which almost all countries have ratified. ECCE provides remarkable brain development that lays the foundation for later learning, and can improve the well-being of children especially in the developing world. Yet ECCE is a neglected area in most of the countries, especially in the developing world where it is needed the most. The report notes that almost half of the world's countries have no formal programs for young children, especially those under 3. The few ECCE programs in developing countries are run by private establishments, posing major challenges for poor children. Governments and donor agencies accord very low priority to ECCE, thus in most developing countries, ECCE policies do not exist and where they do, they are seldom implemented.

The report recommends high-level political and donor support to the ECCE sector; the formulation of national ECCE policy through a consultative process that clearly spells out the roles and responsibilities of particular stakeholders across relevant sectors and levels of government; the designation of a leading government agency for policy on young children and ECCE and an interagency coordinating mechanism with decision-making power, national quality standards in ECCE including the training and recruitment of qualified teachers, on-going monitoring and data collection, and the inclusion of ECCE in key government documents such as national budgets, sector plans and PRSPs. In a nutshell, more attention and more funding need to be accorded to ECCE by governments and donors.

A full version of the report is available on www.efareport.unesco.org

Policy Reviews on Education Development for Disabled and at Risk Students: First Results from Eastern Europe

Publication reviewed by Grace Kaimila-Kanjo, GraceK@osisa.org

This publication is a synthesis report of the preliminary findings on the situation of education development for students at risk and those with disabilities in South Eastern Europe. It is part of the reports that have been prepared by the Centre for Co-operation with Non-Member Economies (CCNM) and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of the OECD. These reports contribute to the commitment of the OECD to the overall aims and strategies of the Education Reform Initiative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe by taking stock of the current situation and contributing to the identification and implementation of education policies of ministries of education in this region. This particular report offers reports on special needs education policies of education systems in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. These reports are part of the follow-up of the Reviews of National Policies for Education in South Eastern Europe conducted by the OECD in 2003).

The aim of the review is to improve the current situation of special needs education in close co-operation with ministries of education in South Eastern Europe. The publication seeks to steer discussions on the issue of inclusive education, emphasizing the development of individual education programs and the introduction of instruments for monitoring the progress of students in classrooms. The review also takes stock of progress made so far with already established model schools and pilot activities in the field of teacher training.

The country reports serve not only as a reference point but also as encouragement for further action in this field. Following these findings, a number of seminars and related activities have been and will be organized for key stakeholders: ministry officials, experts, teachers and statisticians, including other stakeholders such as committees of parents. Furthermore, the intention is to disseminate the findings of these reports to the widest possible audience, thus encouraging the various efforts in the countries themselves. For this reason, the synthesis report is available in English and French and is being translated into various languages of the countries themselves.

The synthesis report indicates that there is general recognition of "special needs education" but still a wide gap between official recognition and implementation. The concept of defectology is still persistent though education systems open up for an inclusive approach. The report indicates barriers for inclusion to be lack of resources, regulatory framework, and fragmentation of competencies, public awareness, and stat. Teacher training is also a problem, thus it affects identification of students with special education needs, monitoring progress, involvement of school community. The scarcity of reliable data distorts realistic analysis and sustainable reform: there is no reliable information of where the missing children are and why they are where they are.

The report concludes with recommendations for improvement in this area: capacity building at school and administration level, regional exchange and national impact, lobbying on the international, regional and national level for support from institutions and support for local level activities such as model schools, teacher training and consultations with parents. The detailed report can be accessed on www.oecd.org/edu/nonmembereducation

For more details on books review topic contact Grace Kaimila-Kanjo, gracek@osisa.org

Teachers Matter - Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers

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Many OECD countries face major difficulties in recruiting enough qualified teachers to replace the large numbers who will retire in the next 5-10 years. Most countries report concerns about teacher effectiveness, whether or not they are experiencing teacher shortages. Furthermore, teachers' roles are changing, and they need new skills to meet the needs of more diverse student populations, and to work effectively with new types of staff in schools and other organizations.

In April 2002, the OECD Education Committee launched an international review of teacher policy, to help countries share innovative and successful initiatives, and to identify policy options for attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. This publication is the major output from the work, which also generated 25 reports produced by participating countries, 10 reports by external review teams that visited countries, and several commissioned research studies. This OECD project provides probably the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of teacher policy issues at international level.

Teacher policy is high on national agendas. The far-reaching economic and social changes underway have made high-quality schooling more important than ever before.

The demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex. OECD Education Ministers have committed their countries to the goal of raising the quality of learning for all. This ambitious goal will not be achieved unless all students receive high-quality teaching.

All countries are seeking to improve their schools, and to respond better to higher social and economic expectations. As the most significant resource in schools, teachers are central to school improvement efforts. Improving the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure, on ensuring that competent people want to work as teachers, that their teaching is of high quality, and that all students have access to high quality teaching.

This report draws on the results of a major OECD project, *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*, that was conducted over the 2002-04 period. The project involved the preparation of Country Background Reports, visits to some countries by external review teams, data collections, commissioned research, and workshops. The fact that 25 countries took part indicates that teacher issues are a priority for public policy, and likely to become even more so in future years.

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

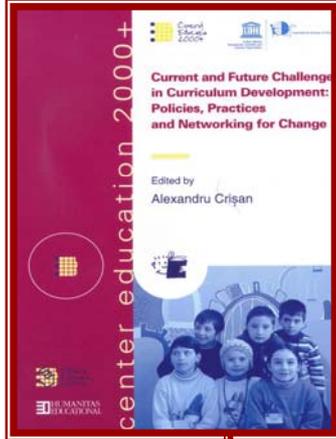
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CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: POLICIES, PRACTICES AND NETWORKING FOR CHANGE

ALEXANDRU CRIȘAN (Ed.)

Education 2000+ Publishing, Humanitas Educational, 2006, 223 pp.
(ISBN 10 973 1715 04-5)



The book is part of the Collection Education Policy, Series: Studies, Research, and Practices of Center Education 2000+ (Member of the Soros Open Network – Bucharest, Romania). It compiles the Key Note Speeches, Poster and Workshop Presentations held at the International Colloquium “Current and Future Challenges in Curriculum Development: Case Studies and Networking for Change” organised in Sinaia (Romania) between 17 and 19 November 2005. The Colloquium was part of a larger Program, Vision Exercises: for better Education Policy Development and Implementation in Romania. The Program was co-financed by Center Education 2000+ and UNICEF (Romania Office). As for the Colloquium as such, it was supported by the Open Society Foundation (Romania) through the East-East Program: „Partnership Beyond Borders”, the Education Support Programs for South East Europe (Ljubljana) and Center Education 2000+.

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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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