

Wolfgang Hörner
Hans Döbert
Botho von Kopp
Wolfgang Mitter

The Education Systems of Europe

THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF EUROPE

The Education Systems of Europe

Edited by

WOLFGANG HÖRNER

*Erziehungswissenschaftliche Fakultät,
Leipzig, Germany*

HANS DÖBERT

*Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung,
Berlin, Germany*

BOTHO VON KOPP

*Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung,
Frankfurt am Main, Germany*

and

WOLFGANG MITTER

*Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung,
Frankfurt am Main, Germany*

 Springer

A C.I.P. Catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN-10 1-4020-4868-8 (HB)
ISBN-13 978-1-4020-4868-5 (HB)
ISBN-10 1-4020-4874-2 (e-book)
ISBN-13 978-1-4020-4874-6 (e-book)

Published by Springer,
P.O. Box 17, 3300 AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

www.springer.com

Printed on acid-free paper

All Rights Reserved

© 2007 Springer

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

Contents

Preface	VII
Introduction (Wolfgang Hörner / Hans Döbert)	1
Albania (Michael Schmidt-Neke)	11
Andorra (Wendelin Sroka)	32
Armenia (Ingo-Eric Schmidt-Braul/Botho von Kopp)	35
Austria (Ferdinand Eder / Franz Kroath / Josef Thonhauser)	52
Azerbaijan (Rada Spasić)	77
Belarus (Wendelin Sroka)	85
Belgium (Christiane Brusselmann-Dehairs / Martin Valcke)	104
Bosnia-Herzegovina (Katarina Batarilo / Volker Lenhart)	128
Bulgaria (Nikolay Popov)	147
Czech Republic (Jan Průcha)	166
Croatia (Marko Palekčić / Nenad Zekanović)	184
Cyprus (Petros Pashiardis)	202
Denmark (Tobias Werler / Tine Bering Keiding)	223
Estonia (Väino Rajangu)	237
Faroe Islands (Wendelin Sroka)	249
Finland (Pertti Kansanen / Matti Meri)	251
France (Wolfgang Hörner)	263
Georgia (Ingo-Eric Schmidt-Braul / Botho von Kopp)	284
Germany (Hans Döbert)	299
Greece (Panos Xochellis / Anastasia Kesidou)	326
Hungary (Tamás Hives / Tamás Kozma / Imre Radacsi / Magdolna Rébay)	341
Iceland (Thorarinn Stefansson / Ragnheidur Karlsdottir)	356
Ireland (Maureen Killeavy)	378
Italy (Günter Brinkmann / Wolfgang Hörner)	394
Kosovo (Dascha Kuhn / Lulzim Dragidella)	408

Latvia (Irēna Žogla / Rudīte Andersone / Emilija Černova)	418
Liechtenstein (Botho von Kopp)	438
Lithuania (Elvyra Giedraitienė / Dalia Kiliuvienė / Stefan Brauckmann)	451
Luxembourg (Siggy Koenig)	470
Malta (Christopher Bezzina / Grace Grima)	487
Macedonia (Wolf Oschlies)	503
Moldova (Natalia Odobescu)	520
Monaco (Wendelin Sroka)	541
Montenegro (Claudia Strümpfel)	544
Netherlands (Bob van de Ven)	555
Norway (Tobias Werler / Kirsten Sivesind)	573
Poland (Wolfgang Hörner / Inetta Nowosad)	590
Portugal (Jesus Maria Sousa / Carlos Nogueira Fino)	607
Romania (Laura Dumbraveanu)	626
Russian Federation (Gerlind Schmidt)	646
San Marino (Wendelin Sroka)	669
Serbia (Vera Spasenović / Emina Hebib / Aleksandra Petrović)	671
Slovak Republic (Štefan Švec / Mária Hrabinská)	688
Slovenia (Jože Mlakar)	707
Spain (María Jesús Martínez Usarralde)	723
Sweden (Tobias Werler / Silwa Claesson)	741
Switzerland (Lucien Criblez)	758
Turkey (Yasemin Karakaşoğlu)	783
Ukraine (Wolfgang Hellwig / Janna Lipenkowa)	808
United Kingdom (Colin Brock / Nafsika Alexiadou)	826
Education in Europe: The Way Ahead (Wolfgang Mitter)	852
Education Systems of Europe: Statistical profile	867
Authors	877

Preface

Education is a paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand it is universal, as since the period of Enlightenment, it has been declared universal good for everybody. Moreover, we learnt by historical research following the ideas of world system theory, that since this time as far as its main structures are concerned (compulsory state education given by professional teachers in classrooms...) it took even universal traits. However, on the other hand, the fact, that education became state education – organised or at least controlled by the state – was the beginning of another tradition line: education in the form of state organised educational institutions became a means of creating national identity. Universal inclusion as for the light of reason, shining for everybody is opposed to more or less nationalist exclusion (of all the others) shaping the feature of a particular nation state, with a particular educational system.

This fundamental dialectical tension between the universal and the particular, was one of the important motives to make this handbook. One of the central issues of the country studies is precisely to display the relationship between universal values and the search for national identity. Another motive is given by the European dimension of the handbook. The manual has the ambition to analyse the education systems¹ of *all* European countries – on the other hand it confines itself to the European continent, not without opening a global perspective by providing an outlook to developments outside of Europe in the last chapter.

This confinement has its roots (besides pragmatic considerations) in the fact that Europe is of special interest even from a global point of view. The political transformation of the post-communist Central and East European countries developed high political and social dynamics resulting in a process of progressive integration of most of these countries in the European Union. It is not astonishing that these dynamics had direct repercussions on educational policy.

In this context in Europe the results of large scale international student assessment like PISA had a particular echo. In fact, in many European countries the PISA-results were rather a negative surprise, for they did not correspond to the national expectations. Therefore in many countries PISA constituted an important catalyst for reform. It initiated extensive reform discussions and reform processes, unknown in this dimension in other countries outside Europe.

As explained in more detail in the Introductory Remarks the handbook comprises analytical descriptions of all European education systems, written according to a common conceptual framework. However, the reader will find no systematic comparison between the countries in the handbook – this would have been the object of another volume of this size. Nevertheless the Introductory Remarks try to give the readers a sort of guidelines how to make comparisons themselves. The final chapter

¹ The central topics of this handbook and its different chapters are the *education* systems, i.e. pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education, including vocational training. However, the authors sometimes use the term of *school* system, as they have in mind first of all education processes organized in schools. Although technically the term of *school* system does not cover all the education process, in the handbook the two terms are often used interchangeably in similar contexts.

“The Way Ahead”, on the other hand summarizes important systematic results of the country reports in a kind of trend analysis indicating directions of interpretation.

It is not necessary to emphasize that it was a tremendous challenge to maintain the strong cohesion of the conceptual framework for fifty countries and seventy authors. This, the editors sought to achieve by keeping in close contact with the authors. Therefore the volume would not have been realized without the great discipline of the authors in adopting the conceptual framework and adapting it to their specific countries; we have to thank them in first place.

But it would not have been possible either, without the help of several people: we want to thank Heike Balzer and Kerstin Rösel for typing and correcting the different versions of the voluminous manuscript, Stefan Brauckmann, Stefan Kühne, Rolf Diesing and Andrea Kretschmar for their work on the education systems’ structure diagrams and the statistical tables and last but not least our proof readers, Craig Thorrold and Sebastian Sobiecki, for their efficient work.

Leipzig, Berlin and Frankfurt am Main, October 2005

Wolfgang Hörner

Hans Döbert

Botho von Kopp

Wolfgang Mitter

The Education Systems of Europe – Introductory Methodological Remarks

Why this handbook?

In Europe, education systems are deeply rooted in national traditions and are characterized by specific national features. Today, economic, social, and cultural change strengthens the need for policy makers, business leaders, and scholars to learn more about the characteristics of national education systems. This is true not only for the areas of higher education and continuing education, but also for the school sector. In almost all European states there is a growing interest in specifically European educational policy-making, for which there are several reasons: First of all, the enlargement of the European Union (EU), the increasing relevance of international school and student assessment studies, and, finally, the growing internationalization of education and educational studies within the overall process of globalization. The available comparative studies on student assessment provide only little information on institutional and pedagogical contexts. Therefore, the systemic frame, which focuses on patterns of explanatory data, is an essential component of the handbook. As for the European dimension, with the official European strategy of development being 'unity in diversity', it seems to be extremely important to impart solid knowledge with regard to the differences between the national education systems, even if tacitly more 'unity' is its ultimate aim: we must know the differences and their roots before we can create more unity.

The subject of this publication is the analysis of education systems and their development within the area of comparative education. Whereas there are many publications in the field of area studies in particular countries, there are very few publications about system development in European schools as a whole. The German-language publication Anweiler (1996) was an exception, however, it was limited to only ten countries and no new edition is being planned. In terms of English, *The International Encyclopaedia of National Systems of Education* (Postlethwaite 1995) seems to be the only publication to cover a similar field, although the form of an encyclopaedia containing short articles of more than 140 countries from all over the world (not only Europe) has made it extremely expansive. Moreover, it does not have the characteristics of a handbook. This is also true for the somewhat older publication Kurian (1988), which spans as many as three volumes. *The International Encyclopedia of National Systems of Education* is voluminous, the articles are rather short and descriptive (they do not really have a common structure of problem analysis), and the data collected is rather old (most of the data stems from the end of the 1980s). Kurian's encyclopaedia is still older, although relatively more stringently structured.

Against this background, the editors have compiled the German-language compendium 'Die Schulsysteme Europas' in 2002, covering the school systems of all states in Europe and analysing the school systems along the lines of a common analytical framework. This compendium, published by Schneider-Verlag, Hohengehren,

a German publisher in the education sector, was sold out in Germany within eight months, and a revised version was published in 2004.

The main features of this compendium are country studies

- On the education systems of all European states – from Albania to Ukraine; which are
- Based on a standardized analytical framework (from the historical and socio-political background, the administrative context, and the structure over the content of the education system and its current challenges, to the overview about the post-secondary and tertiary education and a statistical annex); and it is
- Written by experts on these education systems, in most cases by education experts from the respective countries.

The editors, experts in international comparative research in education, have at their disposal a Europe-wide network of researchers in education and have experience as editors of the German-language compendium 'Die Schulsysteme Europas'.

The structure of the country studies

The country reports have a common structure in response to a certain logic of systemic research. They follow a common schedule. This common schedule – given to the authors in the form of guidelines – constitutes the methodological heart of the whole concept. The quality of the country studies and the possibility to make explicit comparisons is dependent on the degree to which the authors have respected these guidelines. The schedule follows the central idea of the 'problem approach' in comparative education (see e.g. Holmes 1965). At the very core of the country studies lies the respective school system i.e. pre-school, compulsory, and secondary education. However, the systems of higher education and of vocational education and training have not been forgotten in order to present the education system as a whole, even if the focus of the studies is on schooling at the primary and secondary levels.

The notion of system used in our handbook is to be understood in a wider sense. It encompasses not only the structural features but also the links of the education system to its environment. In our case, this means that the schedule (and the questionnaire explaining it) is composed in its first part by certain accents on the most relevant factors influencing the system. These factors are:

1. The history of the education system,
2. The socio-cultural context of the education system, and
3. The organizational context including the question of governance.

According to this logic, each study has to begin with the historical and socio-cultural background of the education system, which is then followed by the description of the organizational and administrative context of the current education system. The next step is the functioning of the current education system, beginning with a structural overview and followed by an analysis of the different levels of the education system, including, as a separate chapter, post-secondary and tertiary education. Each country study ends with an analysis of current problems and opens perspectives for

further development. In order to make the data in the country reports comparable, we have asked the authors of the country studies to provide compatible statistical data selected from the point of view of possible comparisons.

The historical questions try to draw the lines of the development of the educational systems by embedding this development in the particular cultural context and – if there is such a notion – the specific ‘philosophy’ of a given education system. Particular attention is paid in this part to the recent reform periods – in many cases this concerns the last thirty years, but for countries having experienced a radical political change (like the former socialist states), this may simply be the time that has elapsed after the political change.

The explanation of the socio-cultural context has as its primary objective the educational aims and the general function given to schools. However, these functions receive their significance only in the light of the socio-economic context in which a school works, the social structure of the student population, or the polarity of integration and segregation by the school etc. Topics of special relevance in this chapter are the social position of the main actors of the school system, that is, the teachers (as this has been considered an important indicator of a education system’s functioning), but the role of the correspondent partners of the school, the families and their relationship to the school, are also taken into account. The organizational context has to describe not only the legal framework and the structure of its regulations (including financing and the division of tasks between public and private responsibility). In particular, the corresponding chapter has to deal with the problem of standardizing educational outcomes and, by logical extension, the question of quality management and supporting systems. In fact, these measures should assure that these standards are really attained by all students. It is not difficult to perceive that the problems listed here are not restricted to the ‘classical’ questions of comparative education (how are schools elsewhere? Why are they how they are?). The problems in the second part of this chapter are also inspired by the results of the PISA-studies and the supposed factors of success in schooling linked with school organization.

The central part of each country analysis is a description of the functioning of the current school system at all its levels from pre-primary to post-secondary and tertiary education. The focus of this analytical description, however, is primary and secondary education. Even the more descriptive part of the country study is structured according to the problem approach. Such problems may be the question of comprehensive against segregating structures of secondary schools, the structure of compulsory education as a whole (common school or two different levels), the problem of post-compulsory secondary education and its curriculum, the problem of the relationship between general and vocational education, and the problem of simple or double qualification in upper-secondary education (see also Mitter 1994). By structuring the analyses in this manner, it is possible to follow these problems in several countries or to read the same chapter ‘across’ a number of countries.

Naturally, the scheme given to the authors had to be adapted to the actual situations of the different countries. Thus, e.g. the separation of primary and lower-secondary education is not relevant in all countries. The education systems in the Nordic countries or those in some Eastern European countries have a unique school

type for the whole period of compulsory education. On the other hand, separate schools for special education do not exist everywhere. Finally, the synthesis of the current problems and discussions of the education system at the end of each article has to give an outlook on the perspectives of its development. The illustrations giving the structural schemes of the education systems are an integral part of the country studies. In order to give the opportunity to control the English version of the various countries' educational terminology, a special effort has been made to provide the vernacular terms, too, where possible.

The comparative functions of the handbook

In comparative education four main points of divergence have been distinguished according to the criteria of practical against theoretical interest, on the one hand, and an interest in universal as opposed to particular traits, on the other (cf. Hörner 1997, p. 70f.). They are the idiographic, the meliorist, the evolutionist, and the experimental functions.

The purpose of the *idiographic* function is to work out the particularities, the unique traits of educational phenomena in a system. Comparative research is interested in things that render one educational system different from all others. This search for particularities, however, has its complementary side in the search for common features. The distinction between what is particular and what is common is the elementary logical action in comparative research. At the centre of this research activity there is an interest in individual phenomena.

The *meliorist* function does share the same interest in the individual traits of educational phenomena. However, they are selected in accordance with their supported usefulness in order to 'ameliorate' other systems. As it is not possible to 'import' whole education systems, this research of individual characteristics is typical for the meliorist function. The guiding question of the meliorist function in comparative education would be: what special features of an educational system can be used for enhancing another system? However, it is true that some methodologists of comparative education since the time of Michael Sadler (1861-1943) at the very beginning of the twentieth century are reluctant to use this function, and they ask whether it is logically possible to transfer elements which represent a unique configuration of phenomena to another system that does not necessarily have this configuration. One may add that this pragmatic function of comparative education never lost its significance. On the one hand, the logical problem may be resolved by the structural similarity between the systems; on the other hand, newly legitimated by the modern term of 'best practice', the meliorist function of educational comparisons has regained its importance to shape and to justify educational policy-making (in particular, during the debates after the PISA studies). This political function of comparative education is legitimate if there is methodological control ensuring that the imported elements of 'best practice' may have the same function as in their original context, i.e. that there exist sufficient structural analogies.

The *evolutionist* function is searching for common trends in the development of educational systems. These common trends are considered mostly in a practical political perspective: in educational policy it may be important not to miss the trend

of the evolution in order to be on the 'right path'. One of the most impressive examples for practical use of the evolutionist function is the so-called Bologna process. Its aim is to create a common European (and prepare for the worldwide) space of higher education by adopting a common structure of university studies. The evolutionist function has in itself one inherent danger: namely that in a hidden normative understanding the most developed system (developed in a certain direction) might serve as a model, whereas others have to follow. For the rest, there is a special type of evolutionist thinking, the world-system theory and its application to the evolution of schooling (the universalization of schooling, which may be seen either in a more theoretical or in a more political way).

The *experimental* function of comparative education considers, in the tradition of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), the comparison of systems as equivalent to an experiment in the (natural) sciences. As in the social sciences, the creation of experimental situations is hardly possible, social systems constitute the equivalent of experimental groups bearing different variables.

The handbook may serve all four functions, even if some of them are closer to the book's heart whereas others are of minor importance. The handbook's very centre of interest is without any doubt the idiographic function. The country analyses' first purpose is to offer reliable knowledge about the particular traits of European education systems. These idiographies may be of interest to both European and non-European readers. European readers may be interested in the situation of other European countries, not only in their immediate vicinity, but also those further away. We may remember that the slogan of the European Union 'Unity in Diversity' has, in terms of educational matters, its roots in the nineteenth century, when one of the forefathers of comparative education wrote as a result of his fact-finding visits to other European countries that the recognition of the profound unity of European Education would only be possible if there is differentiated knowledge of their particular traits (quoted in Hörner 1997, p. 79). On the other hand, the wide notion of Europe guiding the composition of the handbook (see below) can be useful for certain groupings of the countries into the 'old' western European members of the European Union, the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe, the Nordic states, or the South-Eastern European countries etc.

However, the 'problem approach', which formed the structuring principle of the country studies, can already transcend the simple idiographic function and open up the investigation for other interests. We may ask, for instance, whether it is possible to identify a common model for the groups of countries mentioned above and, finally, it may be interesting to examine to which extent there is such a thing as a European model of education: Is it possible to define in the field of education common 'European' standards? Are there educational structures or curriculum elements which are not compatible with a European model? Also, are there significant differences between the education systems of EU member states and those of other European countries (such as the new member candidates)? Is it necessary that the candidates first ensure that their education system is 'compatible' with existing European norms?

Readers outside of Europe may in a similar way ask what distinguishes European education from their own. Is there really a European model different from that of Asia or America? The outlook of Wolfgang Mitter at the end of the book traces some elements of answers to these questions. However, neither this methodological introduction nor Wolfgang Mitter's outlook may serve as substitutes for explicit comparisons. Rather, they are guidelines and suggestions on how to pursue such questions. The essential comparative work has to be made by the readers themselves. The country studies can only give the necessary data.

At a first glance, the great number of countries appear to exclude the use of the *meliorist* function, as the wide range tends to hint at confusion. However, if we take the example of the PISA studies, European countries appear both at the top and at the bottom of the ranking. Therefore, the question in what they differ is an obvious one to ask. In particular, the discussions in Germany, where the shock of the PISA results was particularly deep, showed that the question resulting from these differences was not less obvious: what may the underachievers learn from the best performing ones in order to improve their results? What may be the key to their success at the system level? It is true that only the system level is examined in the handbook, even if the notion of 'system', as it is used here, includes elements of internal systemic functioning.

The *evolutionist* function is less evident, but may be deduced from a couple of country studies, in particular in the outlook of Wolfgang Mitter, where this view of the problems dominates. One can ask to what extent European education is developing toward a world model of universal schooling or to what extent it preserves specific European traits. In this sense, the handbook may serve as a data collection to scrutinize the theory of universal schooling within the world system theory. We have already noticed that the Bologna process of higher education can serve as an example of such an 'evolutionary' process: nearly all European countries are adapting their structure of tertiary education to the two-level model, consisting of a BA and an MA, which is, strictly speaking, not only a European but rather a worldwide model. Is there perhaps a hidden 'Bologna process' underway in the field of school education?

The remarks made for the different functions and the explanation of the 'problem approach' show that even the application of the *experimental* function to the comparison is possible provided the reader has a relevant question. As an example, let us consider the transformation countries in Central and Eastern Europe (cf. Hörner 2003): Is it possible to distil a common model of the transformation of educational systems within a theory of social transformation? The juxtaposition of the transformation countries according to the 'most similar systems approach' in comparative social research (Przeworski/Teune 1970, p. 32ff.) may allow us to isolate common factors, which are first elements in a classification model of transforming post-socialist education systems.

Geographical considerations

The desire to offer in a handbook a descriptive analysis of all the countries of Europe from Iceland in the North-West to the republics of the Caucasus in the

South-East may appear as a special challenge. Europe is seen in a wide sense without narrow religious or cultural frontiers. This 'inclusive' notion of Europe was chosen by the editorial board after heated internal discussions. The main purpose of this option was to avoid exclusion. The criterion of belonging to the Council of Europe served as a strict guiding principle for selecting countries. However, in some cases supplementary geopolitical rather than geographical explanations are necessary to reflect and justify the inclusion of these countries in the handbook.

As a matter of fact, in two cases – the Russian Federation and Turkey – a state's territory clearly extends beyond the geographical borders of Europe. However, in both cases, besides the formal criterion of belonging to the Council of Europe, there are particular reasons to consider these countries in a wider geopolitical sense as worthy of analysis in the context of the other countries selected for inclusion. As for Russia, this country has without any doubt its cultural centre in Europe. In spite of some isolated voices who rather wish to see Russia as an Asia-oriented political power, countering Europe, it is evident that Russia, from the point of view of the history of culture, has been shaped since the eighteenth century by the debate about European ideas.

As for Turkey, the situation is more complex. On the one hand, in spite of its oriental history and the close links to the Islamic world, since the beginning of the twentieth century, when Atatürk began to open the country to Western ideas and European civilization – the introduction of the Latin alphabet is an important symbol here – Turkey tried to re-position its political interests between Europe and the Middle East. The fact that Turkey has been recently declared a possible candidate for membership of the European Union may be a strong argument not to exclude it from our wider 'flexible' notion of Europe. Moreover, there is yet another point to consider: Turkey has a significant part of its population living as immigrants in Western Europe and this population is still growing. Therefore, it may be of practical interest, too, to know the educational context from which the immigrant population has come.

Other more complex geopolitical problems are posed by the Balkan states. As for former Yugoslavia, the situation is more or less straightforward for Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia, which have become independent states. As for the Confederation of Serbia and Montenegro, there is no doubt that from the point of view of educational policy, we are dealing with two sovereign entities. Therefore, we have two different country studies in our handbook. The same task has been approached differently for Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was not possible to obtain data about the education system in the Republika Srpska (as a formal part of Bosnia) in a satisfying manner. As a consequence, we have only got one integrated country study, which tries to consider the situation in the Serbian part of the country as far as available data permits.

A certain analogy is apparent in the case of Cyprus, where only the Greek part of the island, belonging now to the European Union, forms the object of a country study. As is known, it was not possible to arrive at an agreement that would integrate the Turkish part, too. Due to this situation and as the legal status of this part of

Cyprus has not been clarified yet, we were unable to find an author with access to sufficiently relevant data and disposed to analyse it for the handbook.

Still more complex is the case of Kosovo. Kosovo is formally still a part of Serbia. However, since the Kosovo War in 1999, the former autonomous province has been placed under the administration of the United Nations (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo – UNMIK). Yet even though the legal status of Kosovo has not been definitively fixed, over these six years the situation has changed, among other things, particularly in the case of the education system, which has been established under the international influence of the UN-Administration. For this reason, a short contribution on the recent history and the actual development of the educational system has been judged useful for the handbook – without wishing to prejudice the status of Kosovo of constituting a sovereign state.

Finally, a special problem is posed by the United Kingdom as four different education systems co-exist on its territory. Here, we opted for the solution of making an integrated study pointing out the differences between England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

The small countries of Southern Europe, Monaco, San Marino, and Andorra, have very short papers, the aims of which are above all to bring out their particular features compared to the education systems of their larger neighbours whose main characteristics they have adopted.

In one case, the Faroe Islands, the hard criterion of belonging to the Council of Europe has not been followed. The Faroe Islands are a self-governing state inside the Danish Kingdom far away from the Danish mainland, with an own language and a certain number of particularities as far as the education system is concerned. Therefore, an own country study seemed justified.

In the case of the federal states (Germany, Russia, or Switzerland) where the members of the federation (*Länder*, cantons etc.) are responsible for educational matters, we venture to speak with a certain degree of abstraction of ‘national’ systems of education: the common characteristic traits are considered more important than the differences between the federated members.

The problem of selecting authors

A crucial problem for editors of a handbook with such a range is to find competent and reliable authors. The established methodology of comparative education offers two possible options: the first is to select authors who are natives of the country they describe. Their perspective is consequently on the inside of the system they are trying to analyse. The advantages of such an approach are evident: the authors possess, as a rule, differentiated knowledge about their own system and its problems. However, they are often not specialists in comparative education. The shortcomings of the insider’s view are a certain bias in the description, due to a lack of distance to the problems at home, and a certain lack of empathy: sometimes it is difficult for an insider to imagine the problems an outsider may consider as relevant or interesting. On the other hand – and this is the second option – an outsider, who is a specialist in comparative education, rarely has the knowledge about a foreign system such as an insider may. However, he or she may very well be acquainted with questioning

foreign systems in a way as to make comparisons meaningful. For these reasons, one of the great forefathers of comparative education, Marc-Antoine Jullien (1775-1848), preferred as early as 1817 (Jullien 1817) outsider analysis to reports from the inside.

Bearing these reflections in mind, our ideal solution was to link the view of the insider with that of the outsider by seeking as many couples of authors as possible with one being a specialist of comparative education and the other a native of the country in question (e.g. Norway, Poland). Where this combination of different perspectives was not possible, we had recourse to different solutions. The country studies were either made by educationists coming from the country in question (e.g. Latvia, Serbia), who, in some ideal cases, were at the same time specialists of comparative education (e.g. Bulgaria, Czech Republic), or, in some rare cases, they were written by foreign specialists of comparative education having some experience of the country (e.g. France). In a few cases, renowned specialists of the area in question - but who were not necessarily educationists - could be gained as authors (e.g. Albania, Armenia). In order to harmonize the different perspectives, the guidelines for the authors explained the purpose and the operational meaning of the structural schedule.

The role of statistics

The methodological concept of the handbook stipulated that for every country the same sets of statistical data be used to make these comparable across all educational systems. The data obtained are published in a separate list at the end of the volume. As the entries follow the same template for each country, it is possible to compare readily the relevant information that the reader wishes to obtain. Here, the reported statistical domains were chosen to add value in comparison to other, more conventional educational statistics published by leading international organizations such as the 'Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development' (OECD) or the 'Eurydice European Unit'. In particular, the statistical appendix compiles information about

- (1) The enrolment of the respective regular age group, subject to the educational level (ISCED);
- (2) The participation of majority-/ minority students;
- (3) School time expressed in various units; and, finally,
- (4) The subject-ordered distribution of teaching time.

Not infrequently in comparative studies, the data compared addresses different dimensions of the problem in question, in particular, where a juxtaposition of absolute figures (not quota) is concerned. Therefore, the statistical framework tries to approach these issues by only searching for relative data or such data sets as are already comparable and thus lend themselves to meaningful evaluations. In most cases, the authors had to calculate the desired data sets themselves on the basis of official statistics (which mostly tend to provide absolute figures). Several authors maintained that the manner of statistical questioning, which was indeed inspired by the logic of data collections of leading international organizations, had no relevance

to their countries or that the corresponding data sets were not available. In these cases, the respective positions could not be filled in.

Conclusion

In sum, we can emphasize that the structure of the handbook has been designed to assemble a broad range of data that permits a multifunctional use of these reports from both inside and outside the domain of comparative education. It is the task of the reader to discover and to make use of these possibilities.

References

- Anweiler, O., et al.: *Bildungssysteme in Europa*. 4th ed., Weinheim 1996.
- Hörner, W., 'Europa' als Herausforderung für die Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft – Reflexionen über die politische Funktion einer Vergleichenden Disziplin. In: Kodron, Ch./ von Kopp, B./Lauterbach, U./Schäfer, U./Schmidt, G. (Eds): *Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft. Herausforderung – Vermittlung – Praxis. Festschrift für Wolfgang Mitter zum 70. Geburtstag*. Köln 1997, pp. 65-80.
- Hörner, W.: Bildungsreform in den Ländern Mittel- und Osteuropas in Vergleichender Sicht – ein Erklärungsmodell. In: Gogolin, I./Helmchen J./Lutz, H./Schmidt, G. (Eds): *Pluralismus unausweichlich? Blickwechsel zwischen Vergleichender und Interkultureller Pädagogik*. Münster et al. 2003, pp. 217-227.
- Jullien, Marc Antoine: *Esquisse et vues préliminaires d'un ouvrage sur l'éducation comparée*. Paris 1817.
- Kurian, Thomas (Ed.): *World Education Encyclopedia*. New York, Oxford 1988.
- Mitter, W.: Strukturfragen des Bildungswesens im internationalen Vergleich mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Industrieländer. In: Roth, L. (Ed.): *Pädagogik. Handbuch für Studium und Praxis*. Studienausgabe. München 1994, pp. 572-586.
- Postlethwaite, N. (Ed.): *The International Encyclopedia of National Systems of Education*, Cambridge 2nd ed. 1995.
- Przeworski, A./Teune, H.: *The Logic of Comparative Social Enquiry*. New York 1970.

Michael Schmidt-Neke*

Albania

History of the school system

Development of the school system

From the Ottoman Empire until 1944

The beginnings of an Albanian school system in the sense of a system that employs the Albanian language can be traced back to the nineteenth century. In its initial stage, the national movement aimed at the awakening of a cultural identity. It was later termed National Revival (*Rilindja Kombëtare*), in line with the usage in other Eastern European countries, and espoused the preservation and instruction of the Albanian language by means of a national education system. In 1887, the first Albanian schools were opened. Four years later, a school for girls was opened. It was not until 1908, however, that the advocates of a written Albanian language agreed on the use of a modified Roman alphabet. The emergence of a national school system was inhibited by both the Ottoman authorities and the Orthodox clergy, who adhered to Greek as the language of instruction. In co-operation with Catholic clerics, the Austrian occupying administration attempted to set up a school system in North Albania during the First World War.

An Albanian nation state was established in 1912; however, it was too instable and weak to contribute to the establishment of an education system on the basis of the Ottoman school system. In particular, the low degree of urbanization rendered compulsory education for six- to eleven-year-old boys and girls, introduced in the 1920s, obsolete; this phenomenon was – and is again at present – particularly marked in the mountainous northern areas.

The Education Act of 1921 decreed that elementary schools be subdivided into three stages: first to third grade, fourth to fifth grade, and sixth to eighth grade. Thus, school attendance was obligatory only for the first two stages. Elementary schools were to be established in all villages with at least thirty children of school age. In the 1920s, less than one fifth of the pupils were girls, but by the late 1930s the figure had risen to one third.

In addition, there existed several general public and vocational types of secondary schools, including one teacher training college in Elbasan: several of these were run by foreign bodies. Article 206 of the Royal Constitution of 1 December 1928 stated that 'elementary education in state schools is compulsory and free for all Albanian citizens'.

* I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Emil Lafe, Academy of Sciences, Tirana, and Jochen Blanken, Coordinator of Adult Education, Tirana, for valuable material, without which I would not have been able to write this article.

This step was anticipated by the Education Act of 27 June 1928, which aligned the structures of the Albanian education system to the Italian model. In the 1930s, the education system expanded. Attempts by the dictator Zogu to abolish private schools and thus to nationalize the school system failed. Private schools were permitted again in 1936, which especially encouraged Italian hegemonic efforts.

The integration of girls into school progressed gradually. Between 1924 and 1934, the number of girls attending primary and secondary schools rose from 4000 to 15,000 and from 117 to 1205 respectively. In 1937, forty-two courses for illiterate women were offered in Albania: 1400 of the 1906 enrolled women received a certificate.

Whereas the average rate of illiteracy was recorded as 84% in 1928, it reached 97 to 98% in the mountainous districts, in which only clerics were able to read and write.

School in the communist era

After the war, the communist government brought Albanian education and pedagogy into line with the Soviet conception, as also happened in Yugoslavia. The promotion of literacy – through adult education, which became compulsory in 1949 – the endorsement of socialism, and the training of qualified personnel, which was urgently needed, were high on the agenda. In contrast to the Zogu regime, the Albanian Labour Party (PPSH) did not regard ‘intellectual overproduction’ as a threat to stability; this new attitude represents a significant paradigm shift. Furthermore, the PPSH sought to achieve a high level of education for people in positions requiring few skills.

The Educational Reform Act of 1946 prescribed four years of compulsory education; this was raised to seven years in 1952, and to eight years in 1963.

Between 1945 and 1949, the number of elementary schools rose from 1097 with 77,240 pupils to 1883 with 150,724 pupils. The education system was organized along the following lines:

- Pre-primary education (*arsim parashkollor*);
- Seven years of primary school (*arsimi i përgjithshëm shtatëvjeçar*), consisting of four years of elementary school (*shkolla filllore*) and three years of lower middle school (*shkolla mesme e ulët*);
- Four years of upper middle school (*gjimnaz*); and
- Vocational or professional training (*arsim profesional*) by means of courses lasting six to twelve months, two years of vocational school, or four years of technical college (*shkolla teknike*).

After Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union broke off relations, Albania, which had remained on the Soviet side, severed its numerous cultural links with Yugoslavia and immediately adopted the policies of the Stalinist USSR. As a consequence, the vocational training sector was improved, the curricula became more practically oriented, and general and professional education converged.

In 1963 – after the split from the Eastern Bloc – a new Educational Reform Act introduced eight years of compulsory education, followed by four years of general middle school. From 1968 onwards, party leadership availed itself of school children in order to promote the Albanian version of the Cultural Revolution. While the latter was opposed to both religion and the traditionalism of Albanian society, it did not, in contrast to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, challenge the monopoly of power of the PPSH. Although the Education Law of 1969 instigated structural changes, they were not as significant as the trend to politicize contents and methods. Especially the integration of school lessons, manufacturing of goods, and pre-military training greatly affected the lives of both pupils and teachers, who were called on for production work during school holidays. Teachers also played an important role in the advancement of literacy among adults.

The first special school for visually and hearing impaired children was established in 1963, and the first one for mentally challenged children was opened in 1970; however, neither institution was considered part of the school system.

Education also contributed significantly to the implementation of a standardized written language, which had not been regulated until 1972. In this year, a pan-Albanian congress, in which philologists from Kosovo, other Yugoslavian regions, and the diaspora participated, agreed on a unified orthography; the new standard was dominated by the southern Albanian Tosk group of dialects at the expense of the Gheg dialect spoken in northern Albania and Yugoslavia.

In the 1980s, social subjects such as the Albanian language, literature, history, moral-political education, and foreign languages accounted for about 45% of the curriculum of the eight-year school; the mathematic-scientific sector for approximately one third; and the fine arts subjects, physical education (PE), and work of social interest for around 7% each. The eight-year school concluded with final examinations in Albanian and mathematics. The grading system ranged from the best mark 10 to the lowest 1; a 5 was a pass.

Against the background of the high level of education envisaged for all people, the number of middle-school graduates increased sharply, especially in the 1970s, and culminated in 1990. The majority of these 35,000 school-leavers graduated from technical or vocational middle school, which gave vocational subjects priority over sciences and social studies.

While a boarding school for blind as well as deaf and mute children was founded as early as 1963, only in 1983 were special schools for mentally challenged and physically disabled children established in an amendment to the law.

In the communist system, the education system contributed to social integration and homogenization. Both the peasantry, which was virtually debarred from upward social mobility, despite the fact that it made up the majority of the population, and the gradually emerging labour force gained access to education and positions on all social levels. However, the offspring of ‘bad families’ was excluded – in some cases over four generations. Among these families were not only representatives of the authorities that collaborated with the enemy during World War II and of the anti-communist combat units, but also relatives of the victims of the communist political

purges. These families were usually interned in remote and underdeveloped villages, in which the children were not offered any education beyond the eight-year school. From 1983 onwards, parents or legal guardians who did not comply with the compulsory education regulations were fined: this move arose from the fact that, because of the deteriorating supply situation, many parents made their children work instead of sending them to school.

A problem common throughout Eastern Europe also affected Albanian teachers; despite all propaganda efforts – 7 March, for example, was celebrated as ‘Teachers’ Day’ – their profession was not held in high esteem. Moreover, teachers were not particularly well paid, especially for their work in addition to teaching. Because of a very egalitarian salary policy, however, the low wages were not resented as greatly as they are today. The teaching profession was – and still is – dominated by women. Teacher training was upgraded considerably with the establishment of the College of Education in Tirana in 1946. Additional Colleges were founded later in Shkodra, Elbasan, and Gjirokastra, where teachers for the Greek minority were also trained. Teacher training courses were extended to four years in the 1980s.

It was not until 1957 that the State University Tirana (USHT) was founded; it remained the only Albanian university until the Velvet Revolution. In accordance with the Soviet system, the basic research departments were transferred to a new Academy of Sciences in 1972.

While middle school teachers studied at the USHT, both PE and arts teachers were trained at advanced technical colleges. They were obliged to participate in extended vocational training courses offered by the Institute of Pedagogic Studies in Tirana. Several pedagogic journals were established in order to inform and instruct teachers, among them *Arsimi Popullor* (*Popular Education*, published between 1946 and 1971) and *Revista Pedagogjike* (*Pedagogic Journal*, published since 1971), as well as the weekly newspaper *Mësuesi* (*The Teacher*, published by the Ministry of Education since 1961). The latter also publicizes the regulations of the educational and academic sector that do not have the status of law; in the late 1980s, it reached a peak circulation of 20,000 copies.

In response to the crisis triggered off by thousands of people taking refuge in the embassies of Western states, the Eleventh Plenary Assembly of the Central Committee of the PPSH, taking place from 6 July until 8 July 1990, reconsidered its educational policies. The reform-minded Minister for Education, Skënder Gjinushi, who was born in 1949, co-founded the Social Democratic Party of Albania, of which he also became president in 1991. Skënder Gjinuqi was parliamentary president from 1997 until 2001, and acted as both Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Social Welfare from 2001 until 2002. He demanded an extension of compulsory education to ten years, followed by one to three years of vocational training. In addition, pre-primary education ought to be improved and, finally, every Albanian citizen should at least obtain middle school qualifications. His plans were not implemented, however.

In Albania, the political changeover progressed chaotically. Especially around the turn of the year 1990-91, people indiscriminately vandalized and looted state institutions, among them schools. As a consequence, teaching was temporarily sus-

pended and could only be continued by means of international assistance. Even after law and order had been restored, the legal status of the schools was insecure, for numerous schools were erected on property which had been expropriated after the war and was now claimed by the families of the former owners. In the Education Law of 1995, the Albanian state accepted responsibility on the one hand for the well-being of teachers and pupils, and on the other for the inviolability of school buildings and land. However, this guarantee existed on paper only; in the civil war in spring 1997, many schools and other educational institutions were heavily damaged.

The contemporary school system in its socio-cultural context

Aims and functions of the school system

The right to education for everybody is codified in Article 57 of the Constitution of 1998; it is implemented by means of compulsory and free education. The right to attend institutions of higher education is contingent on aptitude. In addition, private schools are permitted. Article 59 establishes the education and qualification of children and adolescents in accordance with their abilities as a social objective of the state which, however, cannot be demanded by means of legal action. National minorities are, moreover, granted the right to be taught in their mother tongue.

The Education Law of 21 June 1995 defines education as a national priority, which seeks to further intellectual emancipation, material progress, and individual social advancement. The law emphasizes every citizen's right to equal access to all levels of education without social, political, national, religious, or political discrimination.

Against the background of the discourse on educational reform, a farther-reaching concept of education was advocated. This new conception put the opportunities of the individual on a level with social learning, as summarized by Luan Memushi (2003): 'Learn to know, learn to act, learn to live together, learn to exist'.

Socio-economic context

According to the census of April 2001, Albania has a population of 3.087 million inhabitants living in an area of 28,748 square kilometres; the average population density is 107.4 inhabitants per square kilometre. In spite of a natural growth in population of 1.3% annually, emigration caused an actual decline in total population of approximately 3% in the 1990s. Only 42.2% of the population lives in urban areas.

In the European context, Albania has the lowest average age; despite a decreasing birth rate, about 29% of the Albanian population in 2000 belonged to the five to nineteen age bracket, which is relevant with regard to the international comparison of compulsory education. Thus, the quantitative demands on the public education system are very high. Albania, however, is one of the poorest countries in Europe. In the year 2000, its annual gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to \$3506 and the average monthly per capita income to 9330 Lek (just under 70 Euro).

While the official unemployment rate for 2001 was quoted as 14.5%, other methodical surveys report a noticeably higher rate, a large proportion of which is due to the black economy. Graduates from institutions of higher education account for only a small proportion of the registered unemployed, but they also have good prospects of emigrating. In 2001, 4017 graduates, or 2.3%, were registered as unemployed.

Urban families spent about 2.5% of their expenses on education in 2000. Educational expenditure amounted to approximately 10% of the official budget, which corresponds to about 3% of the GDP. In comparison, the member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) spent 4.9% on average. Macedonia spent 4.1% and Bulgaria 3.4%.

The latest available statistics on minorities date from 1989 and give an official figure of 2%. The actual figure is estimated to be higher, especially when 'gypsies' and other non-registered minority groups are taken into consideration. As a consequence of intensive emigration, the Greek minority has decreased immensely. The Albanian school system provides native language instruction for Greeks as well as the small Macedonian community living at Lake Prespa.

Social position of teachers

Teachers had been organized in one of the four trade unions that had existed since 1982, and had been part of the federation of trade unions, the BPSH, until 1991. However, they founded new trade unions within the framework of two large federations after the Velvet Revolution. The unions successfully negotiated with the government over pay rises for those working in remote mountainous regions. Nevertheless, there was a shortage of teachers, especially of the sciences, as the increased salaries including bonuses were still unattractive for many educated people. Trade and industry held out the prospect of better pay, particularly for those with foreign language abilities.

The total number of teachers has declined greatly since 1990. While eight-year schools experienced a slight increase of 0.8%, pre-primary and nursery schools as well as middle schools suffered a sharp decline of 32.8% and 40.8% respectively. At the same time, the profession has become less attractive for men; the sex ratio has changed significantly in favour of women. Minimum wages in general, and those in the public sector in particular, have been adjusted on a regular basis in order to compensate for monetary inflation. The salaries are set down by the government after the annual negotiations between the teachers' trade unions and the Ministry.

Working at an eight-year school, teachers with ten years of experience earned approximately 16,000 Lek (about 123 Euro) in the school year 2003-04. Furthermore, teachers received allowances if they could not work in their home town and additional bonuses between 350 and 1400 Lek, depending on their qualifications. While teachers' salaries up to 1990 had been slightly above the average of the public sector – which included all employees except the farmers organized in co-operatives – they fell significantly below the average in the 1990s. Especially teachers with little experience cannot survive on these wages; they are dependent on additional earnings from private tuition or jobs in trade and industry. Consequently, they often

neglect their school duties; some teachers fall back on reminding pupils of the examinations and urging them to take their private, paid-for lessons.

The teaching profession is not held in high esteem, even within the school system. The PISA survey demonstrated that Albanian headmasters do not regard the commitment and work ethic of their teachers very highly. While the average Albanian index number was -0.23 , the Bulgarian, German, and Macedonian figures were $+0.26$, -0.01 , and -0.27 respectively. In Albania, however, the spread was very wide; the lowest quarter scored -1.99 , the highest quarter $+1.03$. On the other hand, the rating did not reflect the performance of the pupils adequately; whereas the pupils of the less well-rated teachers reached 356 points, those of the best-rated teachers scored merely 340 points.

The district school board recruits teachers. Although headmasters can recommend the dismissal of unqualified and unreliable teachers, they rarely exercise this right in order to avoid conflicts with the network of informal connections which still characterizes the social structure of Albania. Primary school teachers are not required to hold a university degree; it is sufficient for them to have graduated from a pedagogic middle school. In 2001-02, 45.8% of the teachers working at eight-year schools did not have a university degree. Furthermore, 4.8% of the middle school teachers taught without a diploma. Extended vocational training for teachers has not yet been comprehensively revised. Most of the training is being offered by non-governmental organizations and foundations such as Soros. The majority of the teachers still apply antiquated methods of teacher-centred 'chalk and talk' instruction.

School and family

The social diversification of the previously egalitarian Albanian society has increased the withdrawal from compulsory education of school-age children; however, culturally ambitious families have also furthered their children's educational opportunities. According to the PISA survey, 84.1% of fifteen-year-old pupils are from the middle class background of the highly qualified service industry, whereas only 5.7% of them come from the working class of unskilled labourers. In Albania, the proportions of middle class female and male pupils amount to 92.2% and 74.1% respectively. Conversely, 23.2% of the male and only 3.2% of the female pupils come from the two working classes. This is the highest gender difference among the countries investigated in the PISA survey. Although the material wealth of a family, which is measured by access to luxury goods, is not the deciding factor for a child's performance at school, the children of numerous underprivileged families do not perform at all, for their parents do not send them to school. There is an evident connection between school performance and the cultural assets and activities of a family, such as the possession of literature and works of art and visits to museums, exhibitions, or concerts. The diversity of performance is particularly high in Albania; the literacy indices of children are related to their social background. The pupils from the four social strata reached 317, 331, 354, and 403 points respectively.

The children of mothers who only completed elementary or lower middle school usually fare less well than those of mothers with higher formal education. The dif-

ference between mothers with secondary school qualifications and those with a university degree is exceptionally small.

As in other countries, the children of single parents are not disadvantaged in Albania, where they amount to only 7.9% of fifteen-year-old pupils.

The non-OECD countries, including Albania, maintain that communication within the family on social, political, and cultural topics is more intensive than in the member states of the OECD. The Albanian average index for social communication within the family is +0.10 (cf. Germany -0.24, Macedonia +0.08, Bulgaria +0.44); the index for communication on cultural topics is +0.19 (cf. Germany -0.14, Macedonia +0.17, Bulgaria +0.29).

Organization of the post-communist school system

Legislation and administration

It was not until 21 June 1995 that a new act regulating the primary and secondary school system was passed. It comprises the following main tenets:

- Compulsory education from the age of six until the age of sixteen,
- The secular nature of the state schools,
- The right to establish private schools,
- The provision of free school education,
- The right for national minorities to native-language instruction and curricula that include their history and culture, and
- The right for Albanian exiles to instruction in Albania.

School is a concern of the state. The Ministry of Education and Science (*Ministria e Arsimit dhe Shkencës*) has the responsibility for school inspection, setting of curricula, approval of textbooks, setting of the criteria for qualifications and for recognition of foreign qualifications, teacher education and training, and the establishment of vocational and special schools.

Local authorities have the competence to decide on:

- The establishment of both general schools and nursery schools, and
- The assignment of children to the schools.

Schools are supervised by headmasters, who are appointed by the relevant board of education. The powers of the headmasters are very restricted; the same holds for the authority of the individual schools in general. In theory, several advisory bodies exist, such as pedagogical councils, parents' councils at the level of both classes and schools, and school councils. The latter, if they exist at all, are usually preoccupied with raising funds rather than with advising on the contents of the curricula. Mechanisms for the participation of teachers, parents, and pupils in decision-making have not yet been established.

Financing

The Albanian state is obliged to secure the funding of the education system, except in those cases in which vocational schools enter commercial contracts. According to Albanian budgetary law, however, government funds which are allocated to the local authorities are to a large extent earmarked. As a result, great disparities have emerged; personnel costs for both teachers and other staff are also affected. Payroll costs amount to 82% of the educational budget. The education system depends to a considerable degree on foreign funds; in 1997-98, 8% of the budget was obtained from foreign sources.

Parents are required to pay for almost half of the costs of textbooks and other materials. By giving money or donations in kind, many parents contribute voluntarily to the equipment of schools. In some places, they pay guards to protect dangerous schools. As noted above, school councils are mostly engaged in fundraising.

Public and private schools

The right to establish and freely attend secular private schools was not codified until 1995. The Ministry of Education approves, controls, and revokes schools' licences. Within three to twelve months, it has to decide on applications; in the cases of religious instruction (RI) and partial instruction in a foreign language, the decision lies within the competence of the government. The subjects Albanian language, literature, history, and geography have to be taught in Albanian; the syllabi, moreover, have to comply with the national curricula set by the state. Private schools cannot claim subsidies.

As early as 1995-96, eight private institutions had been approved. An additional type of complementary educational institution was established in 1998, which offered special subjects. The private education sector has expanded rapidly. In 2000-01, 53 private nursery schools existed, in which 188 teachers looked after 3250 children. There were, furthermore, 86 private schools with a total of 11,788 pupils and 1063 teachers; 32 of those were upper secondary schools with 3988 pupils and 443 teachers. Thus, 3.9% of Albanian pupils attended a private school (cf. Germany 4.1%, Macedonia 0.5%, Bulgaria 0.6%). With regard to literacy, children learning at private institutions performed better; they scored 430 points whereas those attending state schools reached merely 345. Since they are able to offer better wages and hence attract highly qualified teaching staff, private schools pose problems for the public school system. Due to the lack of prestige of the state schools, the demand for private schools is great. As a consequence, social divergence increases, for the private institutions, which are not subsidized by the state, have to acquire funding by means of tuition fees and sponsoring. In exceptional circumstances, private tuition can be recognized as compliant with compulsory education regulations, provided that examinations are taken at a public school.

School and teaching standards

Albanian pupils study systematically and use control methods in order to check their state of knowledge. The Albanian index number of +0.45 was the highest among the

countries examined in the PISA survey (cf. Macedonia +0.33, Germany +0.34, Bulgaria +0.19). Albanian girls study more systematically than boys; as a result, the score of the former (+0.61) is much higher than that of the latter (+0.28). More systematic learning is reflected in perceptibly higher index numbers.

Learning by heart is widely practised in Albania. The index number of +0.82 is only exceeded by that of Hungary (+0.89). Whereas this method influences the performance of Albanian pupils positively, it does not affect the average of the OECD countries. Group work is not a key method; Albania scored +0.24 (Macedonia -0.04, Bulgaria +0.09, Germany -0.21). However, the interrelationship in Albania between learning in groups and school performance is insignificant. Young Albanians have come to perceive learning as a form of competition. The competitive nature of university admission procedures has contributed significantly to this attitude. The Albanian index score (+0.47) is the third highest in the PISA survey. As with teaching methods, however, the effect on the pupils' performance is small.

Class size varies considerably in Albania. On average, 30.5 pupils are taught together in a class (Macedonia 31.5, Germany 24.1, Bulgaria 22.5). However, whereas the bottom 25% (i.e. the smallest classes) average only 14.6 pupils, the top 25% (i.e. the largest classes) average 44.1 children. Paradoxically, pupils learning in larger classes perform better (394 points) than those in smaller classes (308 points) as far as their literacy skills are concerned. The explanation of this phenomenon is that schools in rural and especially mountainous regions have smaller classes, but are poorly equipped with qualified staff and teaching aids; hence their bad results. The classes in schools in urban areas, on the other hand, are bigger, but better equipped. Shortage of teachers is neither perceived as a grave problem, nor does it affect the pupils' performance significantly. Disparities between rural and urban regions are manifest in literacy skills; pupils from villages and towns with less than 15,000 inhabitants reached 309 points, those from larger cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants scored 385 points, and children from even larger cities reached 390 points.

The state of repair of school buildings and heating systems, as well as the size of classrooms, vary to a considerable degree. However, both headmasters and pupils consider the structural condition of the buildings to be generally bad. Nevertheless, pupils of schools in bad repair demonstrated the best literacy skills. The schools' equipment and teaching aids and materials is perceived as even worse; Albania (-1.61) has the lowest value of all countries assessed. The connection between the differences in the state of equipment and the wide range of the achieved results (between 330 and 364 points) is evident.

Whereas Albanian schools show a high degree of diversity as far as their performance is concerned, their actual autonomy is very restricted. Neither can they decide on the practical implementation of general pedagogic guidelines, nor do they have discretionary powers for the disposal of material, financial, or personal resources.

When asked to assess their behaviour and obedience, Albanian pupils regarded themselves as very disciplined (Albania +0.64, Germany +0.10, Bulgaria +0.12, Macedonia +0.33). However, disciplined behaviour does not result in good performance, but rather replaces it. With regard to literacy, the least disciplined quarter of

the pupils reached 363 points while the most disciplined scored a mere 330 points. On average, the OECD countries and the three countries used for comparison show a positive interrelationship between discipline and performance. In Albania, small rural schools appear to be capable of enforcing discipline, but unable to motivate and encourage their pupils to learn.

Quality management

Albania participates in international educational programmes, albeit in some cases later than other countries. Only in November 2001 was the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) carried out in Albania, in which 175 schools with 4980 pupils were evaluated. The results of this international comparative achievement test, organized by the OECD, were published in 2003, including the data for Albania and several other non-OECD countries. They reveal the drastic decline of the Albanian education system; in contrast to Germany, however, the alarming results failed to trigger a public reaction. In the overall ranking, Albanian pupils reached an average of 349 points, which is in the lower regions of level 1. Thus, Albania ranks fortieth; only Peru achieved lower results (327 points). The alarming nature of the results becomes apparent when the distribution of the Albanian pupils over the five levels of performance is considered: 43.5% did not reach level 1, 26.8% reached level 1, 20.6% level 2, 7.7% level 3, only 1.3% level 4, and a mere, statistically irrelevant, 0.1% reached level 5. In other words, 71% of all Albanian pupils possess only a basic ability to infer and assess elementary information from texts; they thus have no prospects of pursuing a highly qualified and well paid career. Almost half of the pupils have only mechanical literacy skills or even none at all. Furthermore, these figures do not include the 57.3% of fifteen-year-olds who no longer attend school. Only one Albanian pupil in seventy is able to comprehend and analyse complicated texts, which is one of the prerequisites for an academic course of studies.

The range between the best and the weakest pupils (324 points) in Albania is almost as wide as in Germany (366), albeit on average approximately one hundred points lower. The weakest 5% of the pupils scored 182 points; the best 5% scored 506. Internationally, the better Albanian pupils are only average while the poorly performing ones come close to illiteracy. Albanian pupils also fare relatively badly in mathematics and the science subjects (381 and 376 points respectively); the spread is very high.

Additional support

Pupils rate the performance of Albanian teachers higher than both headmasters and Albanian society. The PISA survey revealed that with regard to support and encouragement by teachers, Albania ranks fourth with an index score of +0.33 (cf. Germany -0.34, Bulgaria +0.24, Macedonia +0.26). However, this additional support is not reflected in the performance of the pupils; those that are supported least fare better (376 points) than those that are supported most (341 points). This apparent contradiction is, however, not unusual; in Germany, the scores are even more dis-

crepant (532:442 points). Those pupils who are most dependent on additional support are the ones that perform poorly.

Fifteen-year-old pupils do not feel comfortable in school, but rather perceive themselves as excluded and out of place; the Albanian index number of -0.41 is among the lowest. Surprisingly, there is no interrelationship between this value and bad performance. In terms of well-being, the strong pupils of Hong Kong score even lower than Albania (-0.42), whereas the weak Israeli children attained the highest index number ($+0.45$).

Despite the lack of well-being in school, Albanian pupils are highly motivated to study hard for good qualifications in order to be able to obtain an attractive job. Measured against the OECD average of 0.0 , the Albanian index number of $+0.57$ for the pupils' interest in reading is the highest value scored by any country (Macedonia $+0.47$, Bulgaria $+0.18$, Germany -0.06).

Outside school, Albanian pupils read more than any other pupils; 41.6% read more than one hour per day. Disparities between East and West are evident; Western pupils – including the strong Scandinavians – read rarely or not at all, which is partially caused by the availability of numerous leisure activities. Interest in mathematics is also very high ($+0.51$); only Hong Kong ($+0.59$) fares better than Albania.

Female pupils fare better not only in subjects in which they are more motivated than boys, but also in those in which their male classmates are more interested. Thus, girls scored 378 points in reading, as against the boys' 319 points. In mathematics, they attained 390 points (boys 372 points). Finally, in the sciences girls scored 387 points (boys 366 points). These figures are exceptional. In Macedonia, girls scored higher than boys in reading (399 points, boys 348 points). While their superiority is very small in mathematics (384 points, boys 381 points), female pupils scored significantly better in the science subjects, with 409 points against the boys' 393 points. Across the OECD countries, however, girls only perform better on average in reading (517 points, boys 485 points), and male pupils scored higher in mathematics, with 506 points against the girls' 496 points. The spread of achievement levels with regard to literacy vividly illustrates the girls' superiority; more than half of the boys did not even reach level 1, whereas only a very small number of their female classmates performed as poorly.

According to PISA, the 0.5% of the fifteen-year-old pupils of minority background who do not speak Albanian at home are not disadvantaged in reading, mathematics, and the sciences; they scored 355, 397, and 380 points respectively. The ethnic minorities are thus fully integrated and at the same time intellectually very capable. However, this does not hold for the Romany people and other 'gypsies', only very few of whom still attend school at fifteen.

In a country that the majority of its population would like to leave, the issue of foreign pupils is not particularly relevant. Nevertheless, 0.4% of the pupils of the age group investigated were born abroad to non-Albanian parents. The Albanian school system does not attempt to integrate these children; they scored 282 points in literacy skills (Albanian average 349 points), 300 points in mathematics (average 381 points), and 337 points in the science subjects (average 376 points). The lan-

guage barrier represents a great disadvantage, but this does not account for the fact that the gap is much higher in maths than in the sciences.

The present education system

Structure

As in all areas of social reform, that of the education system required analysis and reassessment, specifically of the contents of the curricula, of organizational structure, and of achievement levels. Ideologically loaded subjects such as military education, party history, or work for the needs of society were either removed from the curricula or replaced by ‘depoliticized’ courses. As a consequence, schools had to manage without textbooks and teaching aids until new books had been compiled, not least through the support of foreign foundations such as Soros. The school system comprises four levels:

- Public pre-primary school (*arsimi parashkollor publik*),
- Eight years of public compulsory education (*arsimi i detyruar publik*),
- Public middle school (*arsimi i mesëm publik*), and
- Public special school (*arsimi special publik*).

In addition, state-maintained nursery schools and schools exist for the Greek and Macedonian ethnic minorities, in which native language teaching is offered at least partially.

The school year is divided into two semesters with a total of thirty-four to thirty-five weeks. The eight-year school is concluded by two weeks and the fourth year of the middle school by four weeks of examinations. In addition to two weeks’ holidays at the turn of the year and one week at Easter, there is a three-month break from mid-June until mid-September. As in other southern European countries, the long break is a concession to the climate. The university system formerly comprised the State University Tirana, five pedagogical, and several technical colleges. Against the background of educational reform, but without a comprehensive debate, the system was decentralized. This process was carried out in order to satisfy local and regional interests, rather than for academic reasons.

Pre-primary education

Non-compulsory pre-primary education for three- to six-year-olds is offered by municipal nursery schools. Except for food and drink, attendance is free. The task of these institutions is both to take care of the children and to prepare them for primary school. Until 1990, larger companies had to provide nursery schools for the children of their employees; however, most of them had to close during the privatisation and closure of the former socialist companies. Between 1990 and 2001, the number of nursery schools decreased by 45.1% and the number of children attending nursery school by 39.6%.

Most nursery schools no longer offer any catering. In 1990, 665 of the 804 nursery schools in the cities and 351 of the 2622 nursery schools in rural regions could

supply food, but eleven years later only 102 of the 345 urban and none of the 1536 rural nursery schools were able to provide catering. In other words, 84.4% of those three- to six-year-olds attending a nursery school are not offered food and drink.

Primary schools and lower middle schools

The eight-year school is still the predominant school type. While the absolute figures for both institutions and pupils remained stable during the 1990s, the structures became consolidated. Approximately one hundred of those rural elementary schools that teach only grades one to four closed down or merged. At the same time, the total number of existing classes decreased by 27.5% from 26,131 to 18,965. Whereas the teacher-pupil ratio did not change significantly, average class size in eight-year schools increased from twenty-one to twenty-seven. This process is most pronounced in rural elementary schools, where class size grew from thirteen to twenty-nine, i.e. by 113%.

Primary school education is compulsory for at least eight years and is subdivided into junior (elementary school) and senior (lower secondary school) grades. Compulsory education can, however, be implemented in a reduced form or in combined classes of different years. Especially in the sparsely populated mountainous regions, this is the only way to comply with the comprehensive education regulations prescribed by law.

The standard syllabus consists of fifteen subjects which are taught in different phases of primary school education. From grade three to grade five, general science is taught; from grade six onwards, it is replaced by biology and physics. In the final year, chemistry is added to the syllabus. Depending on the teachers available, English or French as a foreign language are offered. The timetable of the first year comprises twenty-one lessons of forty-five minutes, and increases to thirty in the final year.

The proportion of pupils continuing their education at an advanced school reached a nadir of 55% in 1995-96; four years later, the figure had risen again to 67%.

(Upper) secondary schools

Former middle schools experienced the most far-reaching transformations. The reduction in their pupil numbers by 50% is connected to the reorientation of Albanian educational policies. Since the state no longer couples these policies to the prospects of the job market, a trend away from vocational schools towards general secondary schools emerged. All adolescents who have completed their compulsory education and are not older than sixteen have the right to attend upper secondary school. By attending one of various programmes offered, pupils can obtain either vocational college or university entrance qualifications. As with primary schools, middle schools can combine classes of different years.

General public secondary schools comprise grades nine to twelve. They may offer optional subjects and compulsory additional courses; furthermore, specialized institutions, such as art schools, exist. General secondary schools offer fifteen subjects. Social studies are taught only in the first two years, philosophy in the third,

and economics in the fourth. Technology is replaced by computer studies after the second year; instead of geography, astronomy is taught in year four. Fine arts subjects are not included in the syllabus. English or French are taught as standard foreign languages; the head can, however, opt for Italian or German if appropriate teaching staff are permanently available. A second foreign language can be covered by part-time teachers.

By the time the regime of the PPSH collapsed, 69.5% of all secondary schools were vocational schools, 21.4% were combined institutions, and a mere 9.1% were secondary general schools. 67.2% of secondary school pupils attended a vocational programme. Ten years later, the figures for pupils attending a general school had increased by 31.3%, while the number of those in vocational training had decreased by 89.5%. Accordingly, the significance of part-time evening schools has declined. The proportion of secondary school pupils attending evening school decreased from 29.8% in 1990-91 to only 11.9% in 1999-2000. In 1998-99, 72.6% of the pupils who had commenced secondary school four years earlier left school with university entrance qualifications.

Special schools

At the request of parents, children with physical or mental disabilities are required to be integrated into regular schools and given special supervision if possible. Given the deficiencies of the Albanian school system, however, children with special needs can hardly rely on appropriate care and integration into regular classes. Those children who according to criteria set by the government cannot be integrated into regular classes are instructed in special classes and schools by specially trained teachers. Only in 1995 were these institutions legally defined as part of the public school system. In 2002, 798 pupils were taught in 80 classes in 11 institutions by 188 teachers and 108 counsellors.

Vocational training

The transformation of the Albanian economic system was accompanied by the collapse not only of production structures, but also of the related systems of vocational training. New job profiles emerged, especially in the service industries. General secondary schools and public vocational schools (*shkolla profesionale publike*) existed side by side. After eight years of compulsory education, adolescents could attend a two- to three-year vocational programme in order to train as a skilled worker. Subsequent to this course, pupils were able to switch to a general secondary school, where they could obtain university entrance qualifications.

The training programmes for technicians and managers last five years, unless students have already studied for ten years within the framework of compulsory education. The qualifications obtained enable students to continue their education at a university. In consequence, the number of students has increased greatly; universities have become the repository of the unemployed.

Both the poor quality of education, which did not keep abreast of changes in the labour market, and the lack of opportunities for extended vocational training caused rapid transformations in this sector. Foreign consulting organizations such as the

Deutscher Volkshochschulverband (German Association of Adult Education Programmes) became very involved in Albania; it supported, for instance, the establishment of an Adult Education Project (*Projekti Arsimimi i të Rriturve në Shqipëri, PARSH*) in 1999. In addition, Further Vocational Training Centres (*Qendra e Formimit Profesional, QFP*) were established.

It was not until the enactment of the Vocational Education and Extended Training Law on 29 March 2002 that this sector was systematized; the law replaced the relevant regulations in the School Law of 1995. Both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare have jurisdiction over this sector; the two Ministers jointly head the National Council for Vocational Education and Extended Training. Vocational training is funded by the state, municipalities, and industry.

Since vocational schools are allowed to generate revenue by offering fees-based further training courses, they are more autonomous, both financially and administratively, than general schools; moreover, they can enter into commercial contracts. Privately operated vocational schools are subject to evaluation. Professional schools (*shkolla profesionale*) are characterized by a more practical orientation; their objective is to train qualified workers, who are awarded university entrance qualifications after successful completion. The course is subdivided into two stages; the first lasts up to three years, the second two years. In addition, there are vocational colleges that co-operate with companies in order to provide practical training facilities for their students. These companies are legally recognized as part of the vocational training system.

University education

The university system was reformed earlier than the primary and secondary education system; however, the law governing tertiary education, passed on 6 April 1994, was replaced by a new law as early as 25 February 1999. Within the framework of the decentralization of the early 1990s, a new Polytechnic University emerged from the State University Tirana. Moreover, the five teacher training colleges were awarded university status, and the Agricultural Institute became an Agricultural University. There are, in addition, vocational colleges for sports, the fine arts, and nursing. Finally, the armed forces and the police run colleges offering courses that last at least three years.

In contrast to the colleges without university status, universities focus on both teaching and research; the courses last at least two or four years respectively. Tertiary education regulations also safeguard freedom of teaching and research, as well as administrative autonomy with regard to internal structures, and restrict the right of the police to enter university property.

Governmental bodies evaluate and approve institutions of higher education. In the case of a negative evaluation, the government can order the closure of universities or subdivisions of them. Although a distinct body representing the students does not exist, they are included in the senate or council that elects the principal of a university or the headmaster of a college for a term of office of three years. Academic staff consists of teachers as well as assistants for teaching and for research.

University entrance is regulated by means of centrally defined quotas for all courses of studies.

Whereas admission is generally competitive, there are special quotas for Albanian applicants from Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, the Albanian areas in southern Serbia, and the underdeveloped districts of Albania. Between 40 and 50% of the pupils who finish upper secondary school enrol in an Albanian university course.

In 1990-91, 27,641 students were enrolled at institutions of higher education; by 2001-02 the figure had increased by 52.5% to 42,160. The proportion of female students rose from 51% to 62% within the same period of time. Given the fact that the number of graduates remained stable (1990-91 4647, 2001-02 4618), it can be inferred that the number of dropouts increased steadily. In 1990-91, the university sector employed 1806 teachers; in 2001-02, academic staff consisted of 1716 teachers, 1569 part-time lecturers, and 290 assistants.

On 15 October 2002 the first private university in Albania was founded. The University of New York Tirana offers courses in English, computer science, and economics for 110 students; additional courses are to be established. However, the annual tuition fees of \$4500 prevent most Albanians from entering this institution.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Truancy has become a major problem since the Velvet Revolution. As early as 1992, the penalties for parents or legal guardians whose children failed to attend school were increased; moreover, fines for companies which employed children of school age were introduced. In 1994, when the average wage was just under 5000 Lek, the fines were drastically increased to up to 100,000 Lek for parents and up to 200,000 Lek for employers. The Education Law of 1995 reduced the fines to a maximum of 50,000 Lek and an amendment of 1998 to only 10,000 Lek. However, the collection of these fines is in many cases impossible. Willingness to attend school declined greatly in the 1990s; this phenomenon affects especially secondary schools. Albanians traditionally distrusted all state institutions, including the communist education system. The economic success of the new political system seems not to have been perceived as contingent on educational standards.

Emigration caused only a slight decline in the total population. The figures for children attending nursery, eight-year and secondary schools decreased, however, by 38.4%, 2.4%, and 50% respectively. At the same time, the number of students increased by 46.1%. Internal migration reinforced the disparity between urban and rural areas; while the number of pupils attending rural eight-year schools diminished by 13.5%, the figure for those attending schools in the cities increased by 22%. In the period from 1990 until 1999, the number of children or adolescents attending an educational institution decreased from 291 to 226 per 1000 inhabitants. The figures for children in nursery schools dropped from 40 to 24 and those for school pupils from 244 to 190. The proportion of students, on the other hand, rose from 7 to 12.

The PISA survey revealed the desolate state of education in Albania; the situation is even more alarming than in Macedonia. Despite school education being compulsory for children between six and sixteen years of age, only 42.7% of fifteen-

year-olds still attend school. The Albanian figure is by far the lowest of the examined countries; even developing countries in South America and Asia displayed proportions of well over 50%. A noticeable number of Albanian pupils drop out of the national school system as early as after the final year of primary school; 94% of pupils continue their education at secondary school. While in some cases children and their families might have left Albania, migration does not account for a drop-out rate of 6%.

The total numbers of pupils and schools remained stable during the 1990s. However, since the relevant age group grew during the same period, it follows that a total of 11% of the children did not comply with the compulsory education regulations, in spite of the threat of severe fines for their parents. Truancy is particularly pronounced among children who live in rural areas or who have migrated to the outskirts of the cities. As soon as children take up a job, they usually leave school or rarely attend classes any more.

Analogously, attendance of secondary school is inadequate; the Albanian figure of 71% contrasts sharply with the OECD average of 89%. The proportion of female pupils is slightly higher (73%) than that of their male classmates (70%); the view that the education of boys is more important than that of girls has not excluded the latter from school. In the lawless mountainous regions, however, girls are often prevented from going to school because of the anti-educational attitudes of their families on the one hand, and in order to protect them from abduction by criminals and forced prostitution on the other. In tertiary education, the proportion of women is noticeably higher (8%) than that of men (11%).

The PISA survey also inquired into the issue of skipping lessons and late arrival at lessons. In Albania, 25.5% of the pupils stated that they had missed school once or twice in the previous fortnight; 5.1% had missed classes more than twice. Moreover, 13% said that they had arrived late once or twice and 2.6% even more often. Assuming the correctness of these statements, Albania is in line with the OECD average; both Bulgaria and Macedonia fare worse. As might be expected, those pupils who arrive on time and attend regularly perform better.

Numerous schools are characterized by structural environments that are unsuitable for educational purposes; heating systems, water supply, and sanitary facilities are in a desolate condition and in some cases even pose a health hazard. As a consequence of the rural exodus, classes in city schools have to accommodate forty to fifty pupils, which prevents pupils from learning efficiently.

The failure to maintain law and order particularly affects schools and adolescents. Schools were looted and damaged in both 1990-91 and 1997. Even today, schools are robbed and pupils mugged. Adolescents both consume and deal in narcotics. The most serious problem with regard to criminal offences, however, is kidnapping. Numerous young Albanian women are abducted by force or enticed by false promises into prostitution. Many parents keep their daughters away from extracurricular activities or do not send them to school at all. Headmasters usually react by expelling maladjusted children; this procedure, however, is as problematic as the dismissal of inept teachers. Furthermore, security personnel are employed and walls are erected around school buildings.

The omnipresence of violence in Albanian society – especially during the civil war of 1997 – as well as in numerous families traumatizes many children, who cannot cope with these experiences. In most cases, school does not offer adequate support or counselling.

Political discrimination has not played a significant role since 1991. The disintegration of Albanian society has resulted, however, in unequal opportunities with regard to both access to education and the quality of educational infrastructure and contents. The following social groups are particularly disadvantaged:

- Children of poor families;
- Children living in rural regions (58% of the total population lives in the country);
- Children living in the emerging outskirts of the cities, which have developed as a result of internal migration; and
- Daughters of poor families.

In 2001, the Institute of Statistics stated the illiteracy rate of all Albanians over six years of age as being 1.9%, which is an unrealistically low figure. The rapid deterioration of the education system could cause a growth in illiteracy; before long the illiteracy rate may return to that of the 1950s. Poor material conditions have resulted in widespread corruption. In connection with access to tertiary education, the introduction of neither competition nor minimum average marks has been able to eliminate abuses of power.

The education crisis does not feature high on the agenda of public discourse. In autumn 2003, the socialist Minister for Education, Luan Memushi, who has been in office since 2002, published an extensive memorandum entitled 'Educational Reform, Process and Strategy'. He argues the case for decentralization of authority; districts (prefectures), municipalities, and schools should be granted additional responsibilities. Compulsory education ought to be extended to nine years, comprising five years of primary and four years of lower middle school. Pupils, furthermore, should be able to continue their secondary education; after a further three years at secondary school, they could obtain either secondary school or university entrance qualifications. The integration of children with special needs should be improved by diversifying teaching methods. Finally, Memushi emphasizes both differentiated marking criteria and internal and external assessment of schools. Observers may remain sceptical about the chances of implementation of these ideas.

References

- Bejko, W.: Albanien – Mein Leben 1959-1996. Bochum 2003.
- Blanken, J.: Probleme der beruflichen Bildung in Albanien. In: Albanische Hefte (2002) 4, pp. 10-17.
- Dyrmishi, D.: Arsimit dhe shkenca në vitet 1949-1960. In: Studime Historike (2001) 1-2, pp. 111-125.
- Grothusen, K.-D. (Ed.): Südosteuropa-Handbuch. vol. VII: Albanien. Göttingen 1993.
- ILO/IPEC/Institute for Contemporary Studies (Ed.): Street Working Children in Albania. A Rapid Assessment Survey in Tirana, Shkodra and Vlora. Tirana 2002.
- INSTAT (Ed.): Vjetari Statistikor i Arsimit 1998; 2000. Tirana 1998; 2000.

- Leka (Ed.): Të drejtat e Shqipnisë Etnike. Bd. I. Shkodra 1944 (Reprint 2001).
- Memushi, L.: Reformimi i shkollës. Proces dhe strategji. Tirana 2003.
- Metani, I.: Transforming Education. The Albanian Experience. New York 2003.
- Musaj, F.: Arsimi femëror në Shqipëri 1925-1939. In: Studime Historike (2001) 1-2, pp. 43-64.
- Naval Intelligence Division: Albania. Geographical Handbook Series. Oxford 1945.
- OECD (Ed.): Literacy Skills for the World of Tomorrow. Further Results from PISA 2000. Paris 2003.
- Osmani, Sh.: Fjalor i pedagogjisë. Tirana 1983.
- Qendra Shqiptare e Rehabilitimit për të Mbijetuarit e Torturës (Ed.): Ndhimja psikosociale në shkolla. Tirana 2001.
- Schmidt-Neke, M.: Entstehung und Ausbau der Königsdiktatur in Albanien (1912-1939). München 1987 (= Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 84).
- Schmidt-Neke, M./Nikollari, D.: Das Bildungssystem der nationalen Minderheiten in Albanien. In: Bachmaier, P. (Ed.): Nationalstaat oder multikulturelle Gesellschaft? Die Minderheitenpolitik in Mittel-, Ost- und Südosteuropa im Bereich des Bildungswesens 1945-2002. Frankfurt a.M. 2003 (= St. Pöltener Osteuropa-Studien 1), pp. 157-177.
- Temo, S.: Arsimi në Republikën Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë. Tirana 1985.
- Thomas, J. I.: Education for Communism. School and State in the People's Republic of Albania. Stanford 1969.
- Viezzoli, A. L., S.J.: Atdheu i jonë ase Gjeografija e Shqypnis për Shkollë të Mjesme. Shkodra 1929.
- Vjetari Statistikor i Shqipërisë 1991. Tirana 1991.

The World Bank (Ed.):

- Dethilleul, Y./Hoxha, A./Llambi, S./Gjermani, L./Kokomeri, I./ Kita, L.: Albania. Issues and Challenges in Education Governance. Tirana; Washington (D.C.) 2000.
- Dudwick, N./Shahriari, H.: Education in Albania. Changing Attitudes and Expectations. Tirana; Washington (D.C.) 2000.
- Lamoureux, M. E.: Restructuring Alternatives for Albania's VET Subsector. Tirana; Washington (D.C.) 2000.
- Palomba, G./Vodopivec, M.: Financing, Efficiency and Equity in Albanian Education. Tirana; Washington (D.C.) 2000.

Periodicals:

- Fletorja Zyrtare, Tirana 1992ff.
- Gazeta Zyrtare, Tirana 1944-1991.
- Mësuesi (Weekly periodical of the Ministry of Education)

Albania

Postsecondary & tertiary education	University (universiteti) at least four years	College without university status (shkolla e lartë jouniversitare) at least two years	14	15	16	17	Grade			
			19	20	21	22	23	Age		
			Upper secondary education		General upper middle school (shkolla e mesme e përgjithshme)	Vocational school second level (shkolla profesionale - niveli i dytë) five years	Vocational school first level (shkolla profesionale - niveli i parë)	11	12	13
			9	10						
Lower secondary education	General eight-year-school - senior grades (lower middle school) (shkolla e përgjithshme tetëvjeçare - cikli i lartë)		7	8	Compulsory education					
Primary education	General eight-year-school - junior grades (primary school) (shkolla e përgjithshme tetëvjeçare - cikli fillor)		3	4						
Preprimary education	Pre-primary education (arsimi parashkollor)		1	2	3	4	5	6		

Andorra

The Principality of Andorra is situated in the Pyrenees and surrounded by France and Spain. It has an area of 468 square kilometres and a population of around 70,000, making it one of the smallest countries in Europe. Nevertheless, for historical and political reasons it has a complex and pluralistic education system. Historically, the system of the co-principality, established in 1278 with the Catholic Bishop of Urgell in Spain and the King of France as co-rulers, brought about the creation of Spanish and French schools. This initially resulted in the development of two parallel school systems, both governed by the respective foreign administrations.

Beginning in the 1950s, the country experienced a drastic shift from an agrarian to a service economy, with commerce and tourism as the main sources of income. During the same period, the population increased approximately twelve-fold, thanks primarily to immigration from Spain and Portugal, and recently from North Africa. Today, citizens of Andorra account for some 34% of the population, whereas the largest group – around 43% – is represented by Spanish nationals. Based on the principles laid down in the 1993 Constitution, the Principality is a parliamentary democracy, with the two princes – the Bishop of Urgell and the President of France – jointly serving as heads of state, each of them represented by a delegate. Andorra is not a member state of the European Union, but it maintains close links to European organizations. In this context, it joined the Bologna Process in 2003.

Catalan (*català*) is the only official language, with Spanish and – to a somewhat lesser extent – French also being widely used in the country. This linguistic diversity is the basis of multilingual educational structures involving three different public school systems: the Spanish system, the French system, and the Andorran system. While the Spanish and the French systems have long-standing traditions, the Andorran system was only established in 1982. In 1993, the Parliament of Andorra enacted the Qualified Education Law (*llei qualificada d'educació*). According to this law, compulsory schooling lasts from the age of six to sixteen, and free public education is guaranteed from the age of four until the end of compulsory schooling. Furthermore, parents can choose the system they prefer for the education of their children. In 2003, the distribution of pupils in Andorra was as follows: Spanish system - 36%; French system - 35%; Andorran system - 29%. Over the years, the proportion of pupils in the Andorran system has increased considerably, while the proportion of pupils in the Spanish system has decreased. The curricula in all systems are designed in such a way as to guarantee the smooth transition of all pupils into the education systems in Spain and France.

The education system in Andorra comprises six areas:

- Pre-school education is provided for children from the age of three to six and is organized as part of the three school systems. Attendance is not compulsory, but nearly all children participate. In all systems, pre-school education follows a

curriculum-based approach and pays special attention to teaching a second language.

- Primary education covers grades 1 to 6 in the Spanish and Andorran systems and grades 1 to 5 in the French system. It is organized in primary schools.
- Lower secondary education lasts four years, divided into two two-year cycles. Education is provided by comprehensive schools and by grammar schools.
- The upper secondary (post-compulsory) level has two-year programmes in the Spanish and Andorran systems and a three-year programme in the French system. The systems include programmes of specialized general and vocational education.
- The University of Andorra offers a limited number of tertiary-level degree courses.
- Adult and continuing education is provided by a variety of institutions.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport (*Ministeri d'Educació, Cultura, Joventut i Esports*) governs the schools of the Andorran system. To ensure and improve the quality of this system, the Ministry maintains a section responsible for inspection and evaluation (*L'àrea d'inspecció i avaluació educativa*). With regard to the Spanish and French systems, the Ministry has responsibility for the construction and maintenance of schools and for the teachers of Catalan language and Andorran history. In general, education in the Spanish and French systems (including curricula, teaching staff, and salaries of teachers) is organized by Spain and France on the basis of international agreements between the Principality and the respective governments. Teachers in all three systems receive initial training at universities in Spain or France, but the Andorran Ministry of Education is responsible for in-service training for teaching staff in the Andorran system. The Principality has traditionally had a special relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, Catholic religious instruction is an elective subject in public schools. The Church selects teachers for these classes, and the State pays their salaries.

In the Spanish school system, either Spanish or Catalan is used as the language of instruction. In both cases the other language is taught, mostly starting at pre-school level (*educación infantil*) with a minimum of three hours a week. School children have to choose between English or French in primary school, and, once they are enrolled in secondary school, they are obliged to take up the language not chosen at primary school as their third foreign language. After lower secondary education (*educación secundaria obligatoria*), pupils can choose between two-year programmes of general education (*bachillerato*) and vocational education (*formación profesional*). The Spanish system encompasses, in addition to public schools, a number of religious (Catholic) schools and a private, fee-paying school. Catalan is the language of instruction in Catholic schools. These schools are financed by the government of Andorra.

The French school system is based on a French curriculum which is taught in French, but the schools also have a multilingual profile. Thus, Catalan is taught for three hours a week as part of pre-school education (*école maternelle*) and for four hours a week in primary education (*enseignement élémentaire*). English or Spanish is introduced in grade 6 (*sixième*) of the lower secondary school, followed by a third foreign language in grade 8 (*quatrième*). The most important provider of secondary education in the French system is the *Lycée Comte de Foix*. The school offers general and vocational education programmes, ending with the French *baccalauréat*.

The Andorran school system follows a national curriculum. Its distinctive feature is that three languages (Catalan, French, and Spanish) are used as media of instruction. At pre-school, education for three- to four-year-olds is offered in Catalan. This is followed by the class for four- to six-year-olds, where instruction is delivered in Catalan and in French. Primary education continues bilingual education. In primary school, as in pre-school, classes are taught by two teachers, one teaching in Catalan and the other in French. Bilingual education is gradually supplemented by English (from grade 3) and Spanish (from grade 5) and is continued at secondary school. At the upper secondary level, general education programmes lead to three types of *baccalauréat* (*batxillerat*): the *baccalauréat* in humanities and languages, the *baccalauréat* in science and technology, and the *baccalauréat* in economics and social sciences. Since 1997, the *baccalauréat* of the Andorran system has been recognized in France.

The great majority of Andorran students study in Spain or France. The University of Andorra (*Universitat d'Andorra*), established in 1997, offers a limited number of on-campus and distance courses. The programmes are provided by four departments: the University School of Nursing (*Escola Universitària d'Infermeria*), the Advanced Computer School (*Escola Superior d'Informàtica i de Gestió*), the Centre for Virtual Learning (*Centre d'Estudis Virtuals*), and the University Extension Centre (*Extensió Universitària*). Today, Andorran policy is focused on extending educational services, on improving the system of quality assurance at all levels, and on enhancing the European dimension of schooling.

References

- Cairat Vila, M. T.: Case study of Andorra. In: Junyent Montagne, F. et. al. : The organisation of language education in small states. Strasbourg 2003, pp. 9-14.
- Embassy of Andorra in Belgium: Educational System in Andorra. Online-publication, retrieved March 22, 2005. <http://www.andorra.be>
- Junyent, F./Areny, J.: Sortides professionals al sistema les educatiu Andorrà. Paper, presented at the Institut d'Estudis Andorrans in Toulouse/France, January 22, 2004.
- Principality of Andorra: Bologna process. National Report 2004-2005. Andorra 2004.
- Universitat d'Andorra (Website of the University of Andorra). <http://www.uda.ad>
- Xarxa Educativa Nacional d'Andorra (Official website on education in Andorra). <http://www.xena.ad>

Ingo-Eric M. Schmidt-Braul¹ and Botho von Kopp

Armenia

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones

The history of education in Armenia is closely linked with that of the Armenian Apostolic Church. When Mesrop Mashtots introduced the Armenian alphabet in the early fifth century, he established a monastic network with a corresponding education system based on scriptoriums, where education was free and students of different age groups were taught. This infrastructure was transformed later into the medieval universities network under clerical authority.

The present education system reaches back into the short period of the first Armenian Republic, from 1918 to 1920, and was developed during the following Soviet era. In 1920 schools were secularised. In the 1920s, the abolition of illiteracy was initiated through a cultural reform programme that turned many traditions upside down. In 1932 compulsory primary education was introduced, reducing the population's illiteracy from 83% to 16% within some eight years. By 1960, a literacy rate of 100% was announced. Increased facilities for schooling, remarkable in the 1960s, allowed a move towards compulsory secondary education. Throughout the period of Soviet rule, the State gave exceptional priority to education, providing each level of education free of charge for everyone. Armenian education followed the standard Soviet approach of complete state control over curricula and teaching methods.

Reforms and innovations

Through their support for an increased awareness of Armenian cultural characteristics, for the Armenian language, and for an increase in national confidence during the preliminary stage of independence, the Armenian authorities took decisions anticipating sovereignty. One decision that affected education was the switch in 1990 from Russian to Armenian as the language of instruction in schools. Teachers, however, were not prepared for this step, and there were no relevant textbooks available.

After independence and the achievement of economic stability in the 1990s, enormous efforts were made to change the content and methodology of education, in spite of rather limited resources and numerous negative implications. New curricula

¹ The author is grateful to Malgorzata Matuszek of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun and to Lilit Petrosyan, graduate of Yerevan State University for preparing background material. The author is Chairman of NGO Knowledge Transfer (*Wissenstransfer e.V.*), which focuses on the exchange of knowledge between countries of the European Union and Eastern Europe, and Chief Executive of IBA International Media and Book Agency.

were elaborated, new textbooks prepared, and the structure of the education system revised. A serious issue was that parents could not afford to buy textbooks for their children, because the majority of the population was living below the poverty level.

To underline the importance of education even in difficult times, the authors of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (RoA) confirmed in Article 35 the right to education of all citizens; free education, including in secondary public schools; and the right for every citizen to receive higher or other professional education on a competitive basis.

The first step in transforming education was taken with the enactment of the Law on Education. Within the project 'Education Financing and Management Reform'², implemented from 1998 to 2002, two main policy directions were given. This was followed by the State Programme for Education Development in the period 2001 to 2005. This latter constitutes the basis for the second level of reforms, which are aimed at sustainability and compatibility with international standards. The main issues of reforms so far have been:

- *The content aspect* – aimed at the improvement of general teaching and learning, including new subject curricula, textbook creation and publication, textbook provision to all students, increased quality in education, etc.

- *The structural aspect* – aimed at the decentralization of the management of education and an increase in institutional autonomy. This included the introduction of new mechanisms for the financing and management of general education, and revision of the organizational and legal status of institutions. Authorities focussed during the first stage on central issues, especially on securing access to and the quality of education, on equality, and on funding. The reform package included:

- Democratisation of the education system;
- Selection and training of young, motivated and highly competent teaching personnel, and re-training of active teachers;
- Development of new textbooks according to reformed curricula, and an improved supply mechanism for them; and
- Increased parental and community participation in school government and financing.

² The project was implemented from 1998 to 2002 and had two main components, the Textbook Component and Capacity Building for Reform Management; the latter had three subcomponents: Strategy for Finance and Management Reforms, Capacity Building For School Autonomy, and the School Improvement Programme.

In 1998 the Centre for Educational Reforms was founded as a project implementation unit by the Ministry of Education and Science. Among its main activities are the retraining, re-qualification, and assessment of teachers and management staff. It provides methodological assistance and services for the introduction of new methods and techniques to educational institutions, and is responsible for the development and implementation of new textbooks.

The maintenance of school buildings has to be mentioned as a critical topic. As schools have not received funding for repair, furniture, and equipment since about 1992, international organizations included this issue in their assistance programmes, and thereby alleviated the problem. In 1997 the Social Investments Fund was established with one of its emphases being the repair of damaged schools.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

The decline of the national social and economic situation, falling family incomes, and decreasing living standards during the first decade of independence have seriously affected the entire education system. Many parents were even not able to pay for adequate clothing for their children.¹ The former widespread presence of ideology in education was initially replaced by a total lack of relevant guidelines.

As education is considered a constitutional and a human right, the Armenian State guarantees ten years of schooling free of charge. Primary school education focuses on the development of literacy and language skills, the basics of logical thinking, the provision of preliminary learning and work skills, and familiarity with national values. At the end of the fourth grade, academic achievement is assessed by two tests, one in maths and one in reading and writing Armenian. The secondary level aims at providing pupils with a humanistic and scientific understanding of standard subjects, with an awareness of their environment, and with the basic knowledge required for independently performing their societal role.

Both primary and basic secondary schools provide a standard education; the curriculum for both levels is universal and does not include any specialization. Maths, Armenian language, and one foreign language are obligatory. The majority of graduates continue their education at the next level of secondary education, i.e. high school or vocational school.

With the deregulation of the state monopoly on the provision of education, the number and diversity of educational institutions are increasing. Compared with the early 1990s, the number of both general education schools and higher education institutions has grown, even though the number of students has decreased. In addition to public higher education institutions, the private sector has been growing continuously. The level of education is considered to be lower than in state institutions, but a sizable number of students are studying at these institutions.

¹ This was in 1995, when some 20,000 children did not attend school due to financial or social factors, and 120,000 school-age children attended school irregularly for the same reasons.

Socio-economic context

According to data of the Ministry of Education and Science, there are 1416 schools for general education (for the following cf. UNDP 2002). In addition, fifty-three boarding schools provide disadvantaged children up to the age of twenty-two years with rehabilitation services. Enrolment in Armenia is regulated by the corresponding legal framework, which primarily concerns the compulsory education of children aged seven to fourteen in the public schools of the elementary and basic secondary education system. The number of children receiving general education is around 533,000; some 62% attend schools in urban areas, and 32% in rural communities. Between 14,000 and 20,000 children from families living under very unfavourable socio-economic conditions do not attend school presently. With an average of 11.2 years of schooling, Armenians ranked among the most educated nationalities of the former Soviet Union; however, for the generation aged thirteen to thirty-three, this figure decreased to 10.8 years. Groups with a high level of education are affected more by the decline in incomes, because the employment market values the quality of convertible knowledge and not the level of education. Low income limits educational opportunities, including occasionally the access to free compulsory basic education guaranteed by the Constitution.

Social position of the teaching profession²

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, there are 1416 schools across the country with more than 59,000 teachers involved at the various levels of education. The teacher-student ratio (1 to 10) is at a comparably high level at present and above the EU average (1 to 17). Being underpaid, teachers – with an average monthly salary of about 25,000 drams (about € 40.00) – are forced into second or third jobs. Improvement might come from the government's pledge to raise teachers' salaries to an average of 65,000 drams (about € 105.00) by 2007.

About one fifth of the present teaching profession does not have pedagogical education at all, some 70% are graduates from an institution of higher education, 20% are graduates of higher pedagogical institutions, and some 8% are graduates from common universities and other colleges. Elder teachers outnumber their younger colleagues. 82% of teachers are female. At higher education institutes, however, the ratio is different; here some 72% of teachers are male.

School and the role of the family

The earlier achievements of the education system disappeared after the collapse of the Soviet system. Only 58% of pupils completed the tenth grade in 1995. In a survey questioning families and pupils about the usefulness and quality of school education, the majority of families expressed scepticism and serious concerns. A report from 2002 found that 72.9% of salaried employees judged the present school education as useful, while more than 64% of the unemployed found it completely useless

² Source: Ministry of Education and Science Education;
<http://www.armenianow.com/2003/february14/home/conditionofeducationsystem;>
[http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/armenia/rapport_1.html;](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/armenia/rapport_1.html)

and not helpful in finding a job. Even 36.4% of the questioned self-employed people with higher education believed that education has no real value. Another indicator of the overall dissatisfaction with public education is the fact that additional lessons in groups or on a one-to-one basis are very common among school-age children. In total, about 30% of children participate in such lessons, with a preference for group lessons in lower grades and individual subject lessons in higher grades.

Supplementary payments from the family budget have become inevitable at each level of education. The opportunities, however, of low income families are limited. Only one third of them contribute a substantial proportion of family income to education. Among parents with incomplete and complete secondary education, this figure amounts to 47%, for higher education graduates it reaches 55%, and for those with post-graduate qualifications 73%. Thus, Armenia is developing into a society with inequalities. In spite of severe economic limitations, many parents help to raise funds that especially support after-school activities, and contribute to current costs such as heating. Parent involvement in school life helps to ensure the enrolment and the continued attendance of children from less privileged backgrounds.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

At the levels of county and community administration, state education policy is implemented by local self-governing bodies; these keep a register of pre-school and school-age children and ensure their enrolment. Often, however, a lack of operational links between executive units at different levels and contradictory directives delay enforcement of national education policy in all its details.

The basic structure of the education system and reform objectives are laid down in the Law on Education, adopted by the National Assembly of Armenia in April 1999. The Law includes definite regulations for the reform process based on the Constitution. In May 2000, the government issued a decree approving new national standards for general education, according to which the performance and quality of school education is regulated. In addition, a number of legal acts regulating the public administration of the country, and the Civil Code of the RoA, were already in place before the Law on Education was enacted. Hence, several provisions of the Law were already part of current legislation, which gave rise to contradictory regulations and numerous directives for enforcement.

The general reform of education management and finance started with a pilot project that began in 1998 and ended in 2001. The evaluation of the project showed that the main directions of the reforms were correctly chosen. The Government Programme for the Development of Education 2001 to 2005 foresees that general education institutions in the Republic will adopt these new modes of financing and management by the year 2005.

Decentralization of public school governance, with strong emphasis on school self-management was one of the first reform targets. The process was initiated in 1996, when people's education divisions were dissolved and school management was transferred to the education departments of county (*Marz*) administrations. They

were assigned responsibility for the organization and performance of schools, and for the supervision and confirmation of headmasters in office. Bank accounts were opened for schools. In the course of the Education Management and Finance Reform, the government passed a resolution on school charters naming School Boards as the supreme bodies of school management, and making them responsible for financial-economic performance and reporting, for approving estimated costs, and for electing school headmasters. This decision is being implemented in a step by step process, and includes the following issues:

- Governance of schools through the School Boards as supreme bodies of school governance, composed of representatives from teaching staff, School Councils, the local community, and representatives appointed by top management;
- Election of headmasters by the Board and accountability of headmasters to the Board; and
- Election by Parents' and Teachers' Councils of those School Board members who represent the entire community.

700 schools to date have adopted the new management system. 700 headmasters, 4000 board members, and 250 school accountants have been trained to ensure the process of transfer to self-management and increased school autonomy.

On the whole, the Armenian education system is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, which develops education plans and standards, and controls their implementation. The appointment of department heads for education at county and community level has to be confirmed by the Ministry.

Financing

The education system is primarily financed from the state budget. In 2003 spending on education accounted for 10.5% of the national budget; in 2000 it amounted to 11%, which corresponded to around 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and was thus about half of the international average. This level of funding reflects continuing budgetary constraints. The present state budget is still under the influence of former Soviet norms. Within the whole education budget, the share of general education rose to a remarkable 72% in 2000, compared to only 46% in 1996; this exceeds the average European level of 70%. As one part of the Education Financing and Management Reform Project, schools should receive more financial independence, and should generate non-budget funds from school activities and external third party contributions. A new mechanism replacing funding per item with per capita funding has been introduced. Authorities believe that this move will introduce more fairness into budget allocations and equipment standards. According to the state programme which started in 2000, by 2005 all general education schools will have budgets based on the per pupil funding scheme.

In the structure of the state budget, the education budget is defined by levels of education and operational classification. The distribution of financial resources within the system is highly disproportional. Additional requests, such as for support towards adequate social environments for staff and students, do not necessarily receive a favourable response. Moreover, the current budget does not fully cover the

material costs of educational institutions, and nor does it include allocations for developing teaching materials.

Another critical budgetary issue is textbook development and supply. In order to handle this task, the Ministry of Education and Science has established the Textbook Revolving Fund as an NGO within the framework of the World Bank reform project.

General standards of the school education system

When educational standards and the national curriculum were raised as an issue after independence, it was clear that Armenia would aim to make every effort to meet European and international standards and to follow the definitions of the UNESCO Declaration on Education for All.³ The National Curriculum provides general guidelines related to education, training, learning, assessment, and the objectives to be achieved. Thus, it is the main guarantee of quality education for every citizen. Both central government and regional and local self-governing units employ it as a framework for performance. The performance standards have a benchmark character referring to a number of relevant issues such as:

- Guaranteeing the systematic, sustainable, and comprehensive character of educational content;
- Considering the age and the mental and physical characteristics of learners;
- Providing the skills required in successive grades for managing the learning process of basic and specialist subjects, and continuously adapting relevant subject- and grade-related teaching and learning materials;
- Including a reasonable level of self-determined and solution-oriented learning as a component of managing the education process;
- Preparing teaching opportunities for cross-sector and interdisciplinary subject presentation and integration; and
- Adapting current international trends in education to the national education process.

Quality management

The standards for each level of education do not include criteria that could be applied to assess the quality of the pupils' learning environments, such as the condition of schools or the quality of teachers, of learning tools, of the teaching process, and of learning output. At present, teachers mostly follow traditional forms and assessment criteria. The Armenian authorities are seeking to establish international comparisons regarding the quality and standards of education performance. The country has not yet participated in the PISA survey, but it has tried to elaborate alternative international comparisons to assess how well the national education system is performing at different levels. Though Armenia is not a member of the IEA,⁴ with the support of the World Bank Armenian pupils of the fourth and eighth grade were

³ http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/armenia/rapport_1.html

⁴ International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

included in the TIMSS⁵ test. In the first round, students from some thirty schools participated, and in the second round, conducted in 2003, more than 6500 pupils from 150 schools took part. The current system does not include a coherent and overall mechanism for monitoring and evaluating either the education system as a whole, or individual education outputs, as for example TIMSS does. The Education Management Information System (EMIS), which was introduced as one element of the reform agenda, might contribute to the elimination of this deficit. Implementation of the process started in January 1999. The EMIS will summarize data collected from schools country-wide, and will process, correct, and edit them into a database that will generate large scale indicators needed at all levels of the education process not only for quality management, but also for budgeting, distribution, planning, and general management. A two-level approach has been chosen: one central database fed directly with information from schools will be created at the Centre for Education Projects under the Ministry of Education and Science, while other databases at county level will serve the same purpose, but will be regionally oriented.

With regard to higher education, the Armenian authorities aim to become a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. As a step in this direction, a new Law on Higher Education has been drafted reflecting the conditions of the Bologna process. Degrees will be easily comprehensible and comparable, and the system of gaining credits will be standardized and harmonized, to mention only two of the necessary amendments which will be realized within the overall reform of the education system. Admission into higher education institutions is conducted on the basis of entry examinations. Pre-tertiary schooling will be extended from ten and eleven to twelve years, which represents another step towards quality improvement and integration into the European Higher Education Area.

All state institutions of higher education are accredited. There are, however, no well-established mechanisms for the accreditation of private institutions. These usually receive a licence after a rather brief examination by a ministerial commission. This does not yet include quality control of either their teaching and learning content or their degrees. Although some of these private academies have a high reputation and are known as elite academies, their students are not always sure about the quality of their degree, or whether their certificates will be valued in the future when they are looking for a job.

The current school system

General structure: overview

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, by 2003 there were 1392 state-owned general schools. Of these, seventeen were pure primary schools, 146 were basic schools serving grades 1 to 8, and 1171 were full secondary schools with grades 1 to 10 or 11.

⁵ Third International Mathematics and Science Study. Conducted in 1995, 1999, and 2003.

About 560,000 pupils are currently enrolled at public general schools. They are instructed by some 55,000 teachers, of which 83% are female. Most of the teachers are graduates of either universities or higher pedagogical institutes.

In addition to public schools, there are almost fifty non-state private schools with an enrolment of some 2700 pupils and 555 teachers, many of them with high-level scientific degrees. The number of pupils in each class does not exceed fifteen. Average monthly tuition fees range from € 30 to € 70. These non-state educational institutions are independent, but they have to follow the national curriculum and national standards. They do not receive allocations from the national budget.

The State Programme for Education Development (2001 to 2005) contains a clear commitment to improving the quality of the Armenian education system and ensuring a better match between what schools provide and what modern Armenian society and the modern Armenian economy require. The intention is that the government programme will serve as the main framework for the projected reforms. The education system has the following structure:

- Pre-primary education:
Nursery; for children of two to three years.
Kindergarten; for children of three to seven years.
Day-care centres (uniting both).
- Secondary (full) general education:
Primary school; grades 1 to 3, ages seven to nine.
Secondary basic school; grades 4 to 8, ages nine to fourteen.
This cycle closes with the Certificate of Basic Education.
Secondary senior school (high school), grades 9 to 10 (after 2006, to grade 12), age level at present fourteen to sixteen (after 2006 up to eighteen, depending on age of entry to primary education).
This cycle closes with the Certificate of Full Secondary Education.
- Primary/intermediate technical/professional education provided by vocational technical schools/colleges with programmes of two to five years' duration, depending on the profession studied.
- Secondary and post-secondary technical education with courses of between two and four years' duration in 127 different technical professions.
- Higher education:
five-year diploma degree followed by *aspirantura* (doctoral studies), or four years of bachelor's and master's studies plus two years of postgraduate doctoral studies.

The visitor to schools in Armenia might be amazed to find that the structural weakness of the education system has been a strong incentive for many citizens to find ways to ensure schooling for their children. Parents assist dedicated teachers, working hand-in-hand to teach and to train their children. Education is still assigned the highest priority, and the percentage of children who drop out or miss classes is extremely low compared with schools in the USA and Europe.

Due to the relatively low number of minority population groups,⁶ the education system under government control does not operate any schools for national minorities. Some schools have Russian classes, where Armenian children who lived in Russia for a long time and then emigrated can study. In addition, there are Russian schools reserved for children of Russian nationality living with their families in Armenia; at least one parent has to be a Russian national. These schools are fully subordinated to the government of the Russian Federation.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education prepares for the stages of continuous education to follow. It therefore aims at developing children's intellectual, physical, moral, and mental capacities, and at providing a sound basis for communication skills in their mother tongue. It also aims at allowing children to learn basic behavioural and social skills, to learn about their surrounding natural environment, and to understand the elements of their own history and culture.

State policy at this level supports the key role of the family. The State provides conditions fostering the education of children in families and assists parents by maintaining a network of pre-primary institutions, namely kindergartens and nurseries providing customized education plans. In recent years, the tendency has been to combine kindergarten and primary schools, using kindergartens as the basic structure.

Pre-primaries are no longer in great demand; their number decreased between 1991 and 2002 from 1069 to 825 institutions, which is a reduction of more than 20%.⁷ Twenty-one private kindergartens have been operating since the late 1990s. In 1991 39%⁸ of children aged between three and six years attended kindergarten; in 2000 the figure had fallen to 21%, and in 2002 it was only 18%. Various factors are responsible for these figures: the lower birth rate, economic difficulties, large scale migration of parents with children of this age group, and lower quality of pre-primary school services. Currently, 4866 teachers and 844 principals are working in kindergartens. Nearly 93% of them are professionally trained, and 34% are graduates of higher pedagogical institutes.

Because in 1996 the ownership of the public pre-school institutions was transferred to the communities, they are funded and managed by local self-governing bodies. In many cases this has a distinctly negative impact upon the prospects of continuing operation; many facilities were simply closed down because of a lack of funding from the community budgets.

⁶ Armenia is *de facto* a mono-ethnic country with 93% of the population being Armenians, 1% Azeri, 2% Russians, and 4% Yezedi Kurds, Jews, and others.

⁷ Compared with the pre-independence figures of 1989, when there 1,334 units, there was a decrease of 36.7% by 2002.

⁸ 143,900 children for 1991; in 2000 53,200 children were enrolled, in 2002 only 44,849. This represents a decrease of 69% in eleven years.

Primary education and basic education

According to the Armenian constitution (Art. 35), education is free of charge in public schools and compulsory up to the eighth grade. Primary and basic education is divided into three levels:

- Elementary or primary school (grades 1 to 3);
- Basic School (grades 4 to 8); after successful attendance of grade 8, pupils receive a diploma certifying that they have completed the eight-year basic secondary education. They may continue their studies at
- Secondary senior school (high school), or at specialized secondary technical institutes.

Upper secondary education

There are two streams in upper secondary education: secondary senior school (high school) and initial ‘intermediate’ technical education. Senior school (high school) covers grades 9 to 10 or 11, and completes secondary education by preparing pupils for further studies, either at higher vocational levels at specialized institutes or in academic courses at university. Pupils graduating from senior school (high school) receive the Certificate of Maturity, which certifies that they have completed the full course of secondary education, and which enables them to continue their studies at higher education institutions. Senior school, including secondary technical (vocational) school, is attended by about 76% of the reference population.

Intermediate technical education⁹ is provided by vocational technical schools and colleges. Entrance is after the completion of basic education up to the first secondary level. Courses last from two to five years, depending on the profession studied, on the level of skills to be reached, and on the pupils’ prior education. At present, teaching covers some 100 professions in fifty-six schools with 2100 registered pupils. The number of institutions decreased in the decade after 1991 by more than 40%. In 1991 ninety-three schools had an enrolment of more than 33,000 pupils, which means an even more dramatic decrease of 93.6% in pupil numbers.

Special education schools

Special education institutions for disadvantaged children operating under special legal regulations¹⁰ are supervised by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Health. Both Ministries are responsible for creating adequate educational conditions for disabled young people, for providing suitable locations, and for approving education plans. However, they do not have the means to eliminate the disparities preventing the access of various social groups to the educational process. This lack creates conflicts with the constitutional rights of every citizen to receive education.

⁹ Also known as ‘basic’ professional education.

¹⁰ Article 12 of the RoA Law On the Social Protection of the Disabled states: ‘The state shall guarantee the right of the disabled to education and professional education, and shall prepare adequate specialists for this.’

At present, special education units include fifty-one public boarding schools, with thirty-eight of them serving children with specific educational needs, five supporting children who have been left without parental care and children of socially disadvantaged families, and eight catering to especially talented children. Compared to 1991, the number of boarding institutions has increased by 8.5%, and the number of children in boarding schools has increased strongly by 32.3% to a total of 8500 pupils. A new boarding school strategy has been developed that has reformed the education and rehabilitation system for disabled children. One of the next priorities will be the development of special education possibilities at general education schools and in communities. Centralized enrolment of children at boarding schools is intended to improve specializations and care. Creating improved conditions for children with minor disabilities at general schools might improve their integration into the wider community. In the middle term, more places will be available at boarding schools for those who need more specialized care and education.

Legislation allows disabled children to study at general education schools if they wish to. In practice, however, they experience difficulties. General schools mostly reject children that have even a slight disability. Some NGOs engage in the protection of the disabled and their families.

Post-secondary and tertiary education¹¹

At the post-secondary/pre-tertiary level Armenian students have two options: pre-tertiary technical education institutions, and higher education institutions. Both require the completion of full secondary level education. Due to the need for higher qualifications in the job market, interest in pre-tertiary qualifications is gradually increasing. There are seventy-seven public and sixty-two private institutions. Enrolment has decreased by 31% from 40,600 students in 1991 to some 28,000 students now. Higher education degrees are considered essential for access to most economically interesting and prestigious professions.

Universities are required to prepare graduates for a global labour market, because that is where they are needed and what they have to be prepared for.¹² Today, the higher education sector in Armenia is served by twenty¹³ public and seventy-three private, non-governmental institutions; in 1991, the year of independence, there were only fourteen public institutions. Higher education has become more humanistic in its overall orientation. Student enrolment at public institutions was 47,200 in 2002, which is only slightly below the figures for 1991, when there were 48,918 students. In private institutions, tuition fees usually have to be paid. At public universities, some 40% of students study with the support of a state grant; the others pay tuition fees. The amount per academic year depends on the university and the faculty, and ranges from c. 200,000 to c. 800,000 Armenian drams.¹⁴

¹¹ <http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/armenco.htm>

¹² <http://www.armenianow.com/2003/april11/features/backtothefuture/>

¹³ <http://www.armstat.am/StatData/2001/EducationCulture.pdf>
[Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 1998-2002. Yerevan, 2003]

¹⁴ The exchange rate is approximately 1 euro = ArmDram 630.

Nine universities currently offer post-graduate and research degree courses; master's degrees are offered at three universities. About 2000 master's students and some 1300 post-graduate students are included in the above figures.

In public institutions, there was statistically a ratio of about one teacher to eight students during the academic year 2001-02. In private institutions the ratio was one to ten. Institutions have implemented new structures, changed curricula and teaching content, and adapted to the new degree system as part of the wide-ranging reforms preparing the country to join the Bologna Declaration and thus become part of the European Higher Education Area. Membership is envisaged for 2010. The credit system of higher education is subject to these reforms. At present two different systems of requirements and credits are applied, depending on the institution and the course. The higher education system presents a mixed picture of young and very progressive academics on the one hand, and a great number of traditional staff members, many of them in the sciences, on the other.

Before being admitted to undergraduate and graduate higher education, students must have completed full secondary education or its equivalent in a vocational training or secondary specialist institution, and must sit competitive entrance examinations. If they have the means, school graduates use services provided by private tutors to prepare for university entrance exams. About two thirds of applicants to public institutions study with private tutors. 56% of those who do not use private tutors mention that they cannot afford them.

Higher education in Armenia is based on a three-level structure. To what extent the former two stage diploma system is still applied, remains an unclear issue, but it has been at least officially abolished. The first level, that of bachelor's studies, comprises a four-year study programme. The main objective is to acquire general knowledge in the subjects enrolled for and to become familiar with self-determined learning. Having accomplished the four-year programme the bachelor's degree (*Bakalavri kochum*) is awarded. The diploma that was common in the former structure was awarded after five years of study.

The second level is that of graduate studies, in which students acquire more profound knowledge in the subject of specialization, and study additional subjects. This can be either a one- or a two-year programme. In both cases, the student is awarded the master's degree (*Magistrosi kochum*). Master's degrees are awarded only by state institutions. Students graduating with a bachelor's degree from a private institution can only continue their studies at a public university. The only exception is the American University of Armenia,¹⁵ which is a joint venture sponsored by Armenian Diaspora foundations. The degrees of this institution, which is a campus of the UCLA,¹⁶ are recognized by Armenian authorities and are among the most prestigious degrees awarded in the Republic.

At the third level, students continue with post-graduate studies for three years towards a researcher's degree (*aspirantura*). To enter this level, students have to

¹⁵ Established in 1992 in Yerevan, the American University of Armenia follows the Anglo-Saxon education model. It offers courses such as business management, computer studies and communication, political science, medicine, law, and comparative studies in foreign languages.

¹⁶ University of California at Los Angeles.

hold a master's degree or a specialist's diploma. The objective is to acquire advanced scientific and technical knowledge and to learn how to conduct scientific research. After completion of this level and the defence of a dissertation, students are awarded the candidate of science degree (*Gitutiunneri Teknatsu*).

After the *aspirantura* and the award of the candidate of science degree, researchers can undertake doctoral studies in one of the research institutions of the Academy of Science of Armenia. The progress from candidate to doctor of science (*Gitutiunneri Doctor*) includes serious in-depth research. The candidate of science and the doctor of science degrees are both highly valued in the Armenian scientific community. The candidate of science degree can be obtained at public institutions of higher education as well as at research institutes linked to the system of the Academy of Science. The doctor of science degree is awarded only by the Academy of Science.

In the academic year 2001-02, about one quarter of students of private institutions completed a bachelor's degree. Some proceeded to master's courses at public universities, but the majority entered the labour market. Thirty of these non-state institutions run licensed courses with certificates for officially recognized professions. Their major fields of study include subjects like international politics and relations, law, economics, medicine, and foreign languages.

With regard to the institutional governance of public higher education institutions, full independence is guaranteed by law. Administrative rules and activities are defined by the universities' charters, which require approval, however, from governmental authorities. Universities are fully independent in their decisions relating to the opening or closing of faculties and chairs, the charging of tuition fees, research, scientific output, finance, and partnerships with third organizations.

Current issues and perspectives for development

Education in Armenia is highly valued and the drop-out rate is low. The authorities have decided to introduce a decentralized system and a more democratic approach. Nevertheless, there are still a large number of changes that the Armenian education system needs to undergo. Most of the urgent tasks are related to the difficult socio-economic situation of the country.

Education and the economy are in a close relationship. ICT has been one of the few sectors experiencing growth in recent years, and ICT-related skills are precisely those that are in short supply. The improvement of the quality of professional education to meet the needs of the new labour market implies the participation of employers and other social partners. The most urgently required skills include digital literacy, foreign language competences, the ability to work in a team, problem-solving abilities, flexibility, and self-corrective work habits. The problems are not so urgent at the higher administrative levels, where reform programmes are developed, but rather at the level of the teachers and headmasters implementing change. It must be said, however, that their general socio-economic and work conditions do not provide them with positive stimulation. A second project supported by the World

Bank¹⁷ is composed of four modules, is scheduled for four years, and is aimed at increasing access to and quality of education.

The State Programme for Education Development is identifying funding and structural problems, and has developed a plan of action to introduce new mechanisms for moving the reform process forward and for mobilizing additional resources by increasing the efficiency of the system. The core elements of this plan include:

- To re-design central and local funding and spending policies to foster further development of education and ensure greater efficiency in the use of funds and in financial operations of educational institutions, thus securing transparency and increasing direct financial responsibility to open up additional resources;
- To improve management structures and competences by supporting further decentralization of the system, and to increase self-determined performance to reach a clear distinction of responsibilities and obligations based on effective controlling and reporting mechanisms; and
- To increase the efficiency of operational performance according to economic criteria and a viable student-teacher ratio; where necessary smaller units with unfavourable costs should be merged with bigger, financially more efficient units with better teaching opportunities.

Alongside these challenging tasks, a shift is taking place in teaching and learning strategies. New skills, summarily characterized as solution-oriented critical and analytical thinking, will replace the former approach of routine learning. New subject curricula and new teaching methods are required, as well as teachers able to switch to and follow the new approach. The revised curricula will require the education system to:

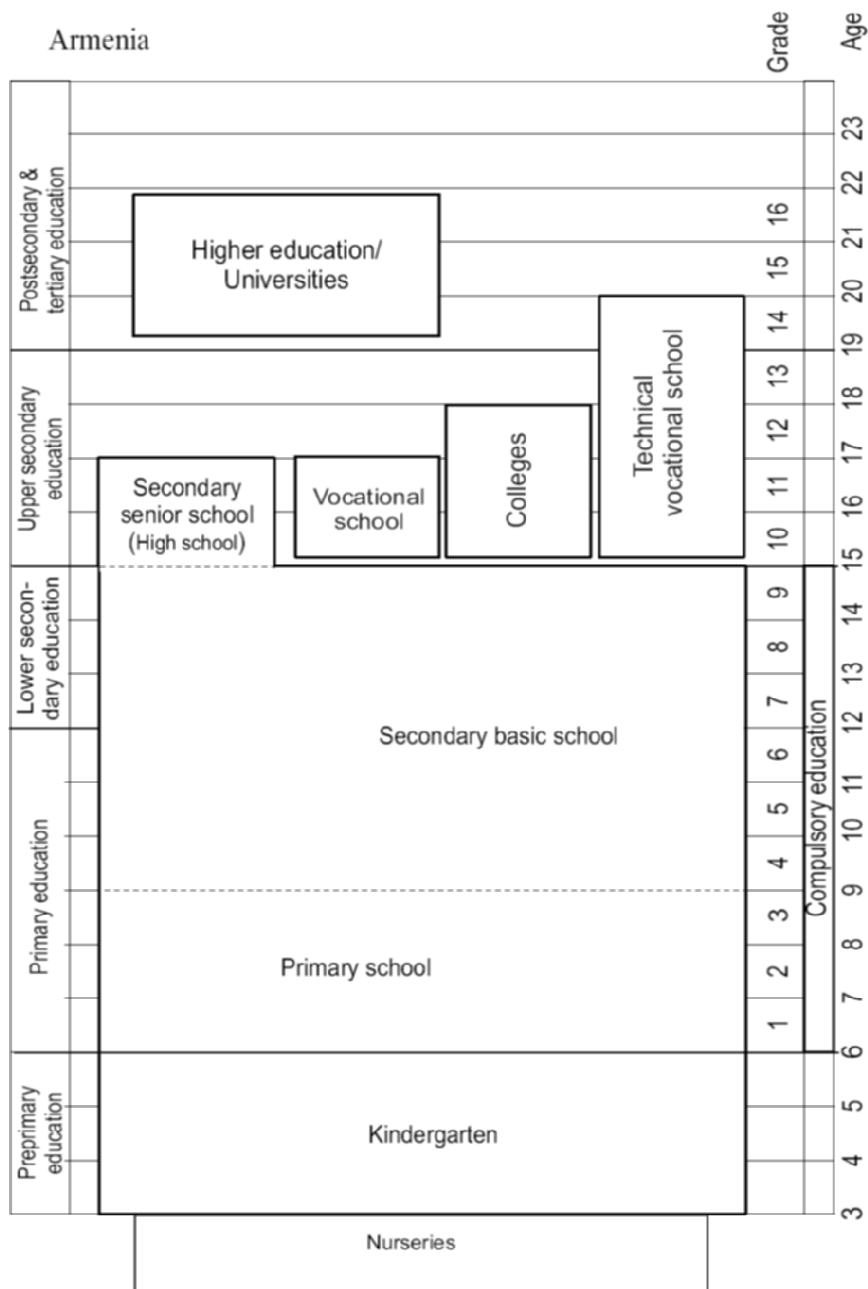
- Apply new methodologies in the teaching process and follow a clear and comparable system of pupil assessment;
- Introduce an independent and external system of learners' quality assessment that does not depend on education management authorities;
- Provide schools with modern ICT, and include communication technologies in the teaching process;
- Train teachers to apply the new teaching methodologies and assessment systems, to use and to instruct students in ICT, and to include e-learning tools in the teaching process;
- Introduce a more relevant and inclusive general education curriculum and a system for evaluating system performance; and
- Ensure that schools in Armenia have capacities to integrate a variety of educational technologies as part of teaching and learning.

¹⁷ Education Quality and Relevance Project, http://www.wds.worldbank.org/serlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/09/30/000094946_03091304002983/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf

Basic general education does not provide pupils with sufficient training and social competences to adapt to their environment. The emerging employment market demands that pupils acquire a wider range of skills before they enter working life. It is thus necessary to revise the structure and content of general secondary education accordingly, and to reconsider the length of education at each level; this implies a move from ten to eleven and then twelve years of basic schooling, as outlined in the State Programme. With this fundamental re-orientation, the education system should approach European standards in less than a decade. New national standards have to be adopted, subject curricula need to be revised, textbooks to be changed, and resources to be provided in order to meet the challenge of the eleven and twelve-year school.

References

- Education in Armenia (prepared by Harutyunyan, K./Davtyan, N./Sargsyan, G.). Yerevan 2003.
- Education Financing and Management Reform Project (prepared by Harutyunyan, K.). Yerevan 2002.
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia: State Program for Development of Education, 2001-2005. Yerevan 2000.
- National Environment LLC Research and Consulting: Beneficiary opinion assessment on 'The Education Financing and Management Reform Project' of the Republic of Armenia. Yerevan 2002.
- UNDP – United Nations Development Program: Education, Poverty and Economic Activity Survey. Situation Analysis Report. Yerevan 2002,.



Austria

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

The history and development of both the Austrian school system and Austrian educational policy are characterized by disputes between the political parties, especially between the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the Christian Social Party (ÖVP). The restoration of Austrian sovereignty after the Second World War triggered off the same debate about core issues of educational policy that had remained unsolved during the First Republic; how to organize teacher education and the lower secondary school system (Thonhauser 1992). The debates led to the School Reform Act of 1962, which provided the statutory foundation of the Austrian school system, and which is for the most part still valid today. The School Organization Law (SCHOG) of 1962 set out the organizational framework for Austrian schools, and was followed by the School Instruction Law of 1974, which regulated school-internal processes, especially the tasks, rights and duties of all those associated with the school (parents, teachers, and pupils).

The desire for consensus between the two political parties mentioned above, fostered by experiences during the war, led in 1962 to the following compromises, which in the years to come proved to be problematic:

- A compulsory ninth school year was introduced in the form of a ‘polytechnic course’. This one-year course was to prepare all pupils who did not seek a middle or higher school qualification for entry into a vocational career. For all other pupils there was no *de facto* prolongation of compulsory school attendance.
- The previous upper forms of the primary schools were integrated into secondary modern schools, which were divided into two strands. This type of school was now considered to be the ‘normal’ school for all ten- to fourteen-year-old pupils who did not want to go to a secondary general school (grammar school). It was to prepare pupils for a vocational career, for attendance at a middle or higher vocational school, or for enrolment in the newly established upper forms of the secondary system.
- Teacher education remained divided into two streams; primary and secondary modern teachers were to be educated at newly established pedagogical academies, while teachers of secondary general and secondary vocational schools gained their qualifications at universities.

The new system of organising schools soon proved to be unsatisfactory. A new movement, starting in the USA in the sixties, became popular in Europe; this movement regarded qualifications gained from schooling or from professional experience as an economic factor (human capital). In Germany and Austria this was a

disquieting concept, given the low percentage of school graduates and academics in comparison with other countries (Picht 1964). The fear was that this deficiency could lead to a significant disadvantage in competition. Thus, politicians sought ways to entice new segments of society into secondary schooling.

One strategy was based on the conviction that a significant proportion of talented children and adolescents could not progress to secondary schooling due to social, regional or gender differences. It was assumed that this proportion of unused talent was particularly high among children from rural areas on the one hand, and among girls on the other. Thus, a major aim of educational policy in the sixties was to exploit reserves of talent. Educational barriers were identified primarily within deficient early childhood environments and within structural weaknesses of the education system. More specifically, these weaknesses were considered to be insufficient stimuli towards learning during school age, a regional lack of secondary general schools, educational cul-de-sacs that did not lead to further education (e.g. the second strand of the secondary modern school), and the insufficient use of bridges and transitions from one system to another.

This situation led to the Social Democrats' renewed demand – supported by some members of the Conservative party – that schooling of ten- to fourteen-year-olds should be organized through a comprehensive school system. Comprehensive schools had already been introduced in a number of European countries. However, the political implementation of a comprehensive school system was doomed to fail for the following reason: the two main political parties, the Conservatives and the Social Democrats, had decided to raise the status of school laws to constitutional level, where a two thirds majority in parliament was needed for any resolution or change. This decision soon turned out to be a severe impediment to innovation. Educational policy was from now on forced into achieving a broad consensus, meaning compromises. Substantial reforms could therefore only be achieved with great difficulty.

Reforms and innovations

Once the new 'educational partnership' had been established, a consensus was reached to test far-reaching innovations in schools through scientifically controlled experiments. In the early stages, there was an apparent competition between the proposed reform models:

- The additive comprehensive school (the fusion of secondary modern and grammar school with regard to premises and organization),
- The integrated comprehensive school (no separation of pupils into secondary modern and secondary general schools), and
- The orientation form (fifth and sixth year are integrated into one strand, after which the separation into secondary modern and secondary general takes place).

The school reform experiments were soon reduced, however, to one reform model, the integrated comprehensive school. This school model was to assert itself against the competing secondary general schools (AHS). Its handicap was that AHS pupils from the local catchment area of the integrated comprehensive school did not enrol at these schools. During the period of educational experiments, which lasted from 1970 to 1985, the lower level of general secondary schooling was regulated anew. The hitherto compulsory entrance examination was replaced by the elementary school's assessment of a pupil's ability to participate in secondary schooling. In addition, identical curricula for the secondary modern and the secondary general schools were implemented in the mid-eighties.

Contrary to the results of the school experiments, which pointed towards the introduction of a comprehensive school system, a new school model, the *Neue Hauptschule* (New Secondary Modern) was introduced. The new feature was the replacement of the existing streaming system (the two ability strands) with streaming in German, English and maths. The lower level of the secondary general school remained unchanged as a parallel form of school organization.

After 1985, the trend to send children to an AHS rose sharply; in the conurbation areas, 50% of pupils of a single year attended an AHS, in Vienna more than 80%. This trend is still continuing. One reason for it is the widespread view that the AHS still stands for 'elitism' and therefore a better education. A more convincing explanation for the dominance of the AHS is the fear of parents that if their children attend a lower school they might be deprived of further educational opportunities. Despite the unsolved problem of how to organize school for the ten- to fourteen-year-olds, a rich and diversified range of schools and curricula evolved in the upper secondary level, which attempted to cater to the interests and talents of every child, and which led to university entrance qualifications.

The socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and the general function of schools

Austrian schools have the statutory mandate 'to equip young people with knowledge and know-how necessary for life and for a future occupation, and to enable them to acquire cultural knowledge themselves' (SCHOG). Elementary education in primary schools for all pupils is followed by the acquisition of fundamental general knowledge for those who opt for the secondary modern, or of a comprehensive, in-depth general education for those who opt for the secondary general school. 'Young people should be enabled to make independent judgements, they should be led to social understanding, they should be open to the political and ideological values (*Weltanschauung*) of others, they should be enabled to participate in the economic and cultural life of Austria, Europe and the world, and to help solve the common tasks of mankind driven by love for freedom and peace' (SCHOG, §2).

According to the legislation, all types and forms of schools in Austria are bound by the same objectives, meaning that the curricular contents of individual subjects are less important than the fostering of personal attitudes and behavioural patterns of children and adolescents. All subjects have to be taught in accordance with this

overriding objective. The implementation of this educational task is to be accomplished through instruction that is oriented to the pupils' developmental level, that takes place within a co-educational setting, and that aims at social integration. The national curriculum issued in 2000 for the lower secondary level reflects these objectives in a concrete form; in addition to subject matter competence, personal development, social competences, dynamic and transcurricular competences such as communicative and team skills, entrepreneurial competences, and the willingness to engage in lifelong learning are stipulated.

International comparative tests in which Austria has participated since 1990 show that the performance targets of the school system are not always realized to a satisfactory degree. Austrian pupils' scores are average, compared with all participating countries, but also show a number of less desirable, thought-provoking particularities (Haider, Eder, Specht and Spiel 2003, pp. 13ff.).

The TIMSS results (performances in maths and natural sciences) of 1993 and the following years show a declining tendency within the system; pupils at the end of primary schooling achieved top results, but at the end of lower secondary schooling they only achieved average results. In the advanced performance test Austrian students gained the lowest ratings among sixteen nations (TIMSS International Study Centre 1996, 1997, 1998). The reading competence of sixteen-year-olds in the PISA tests for OECD nations was in the upper-middle sector. The same position was reached for maths and natural science, which were labelled as 'minor domains' (Haider and Reiter 2001, pp. 48ff.). When, however, the national costs for the schooling of a sixteen-year-old were compared, it showed that several nations achieved top results with much lower costs. Despite the relatively good position of Austria in the OECD ranking, test results show that around 14 to 18% of sixteen-year-olds were categorized as 'bad readers' who would hardly be able to gain knowledge autonomously. This result was based on the inclusion of sixteen-year-olds who had left school.

These findings suggest that every year a large number of young people fail to find a job because they lack basic qualifications or possess them to an insufficient degree. These findings also correspond to the repeatedly aired doubts of economic experts that the required old and new qualifications (a high level in the three R's combined with key qualifications) can actually be taught and acquired at school. Teachers report a rise in learning and concentration weaknesses, as well as an increase in disruptive behaviour among pupils. They complain that schools – without effective support from society – have to take on more and more educational tasks which were previously considered to be the responsibility of the family.

Socio-economic context

The Austrian school system is characterized by an early segregation of pupils going to secondary modern (HS) and secondary general schools (AHS). This segregation still takes place, even if the original justification for it, that the elite should go to an AHS, while the mass of pupils should go to an HS, is no longer valid. After four years of primary schooling pupils (and parents) now have to decide which of the two school options they want to choose, given the appropriate preconditions. The deci-

sion is not only dependent on the intellectual level of pupils, but is also heavily influenced by their social and regional situation.

The two types of school described above differ substantially. The AHS guarantees continuous education for eight years; schooling is only interrupted if pupils do not achieve the required results, or if they decide themselves to opt for another educational path. A child who goes from primary to a secondary modern school has no claim to admittance to the top strand in the system, even if he or she possesses the necessary intelligence to attend an AHS. Thus, the child is constantly faced with the threat of being downgraded to a lower strand if he or she does not perform well enough. After four years of secondary modern schooling, the child has to make a further decision about another school or vocational career option. Compared with schooling in an AHS, the educational path at an HS is unstable and discontinuous; children are often further disadvantaged by acts of re-schooling, which often means down-schooling. Social-empirical studies show that regional and social barriers that are present when a child is admitted to an AHS or the upper stream of an HS always affect those who come from a poorer socio-economic background. The higher the educational status of parents and the higher the social capital of a family, the more likely a child is to end up in a privileged type of school, securing at the same time options for successful access to secondary schooling.

Looking at assessed school performances, the same phenomenon is evident; Austria, together with other German-speaking countries, belongs to the group of nations in which the socio-economic and socio-cultural status of a pupil strongly determines his or her performances in reading, maths and the natural sciences (Eder 1995; Haider and Reiter 2001, pp. 102ff.).

Since the eighties the school system has been shaped by an increasing number of immigrant children, some of them already in the second generation. The original concept of multicultural education, based on the expectation that foreign children would eventually go back with their parents to their countries of origin, ultimately proved untenable. It was gradually replaced by the concept of a far-reaching cultural and linguistic integration, a necessary precondition for successful participation in classroom instruction. The percentage of pupils with both parents not born in Austria is approximately 10%. Immigrant children, however, are not evenly spread within the school system. Most of them attend primary and secondary modern schools on the fringe of major cities. The percentage of foreign pupils in these schools is more than 50%. Most pupils are strongly disadvantaged because of their lack of German language skills. Some immigrants gain admittance, however, to an AHS, and this tendency is increasing. In comparison with the schooling of immigrants, which poses a central problem to the school system, bilingual schools for ethnic minorities, e.g. Slovenians, are well integrated into the system.

Social status of the teaching profession

Teachers for the various levels of the Austrian school system are trained differently; training systems are divided into non-university-based and university-based strands. The training of teachers for primary schools (two years), secondary modern (three years), special needs education (three years), and vocational schools is non-univer-

sity-based and takes place at pedagogical academies (teacher training colleges). Teachers for the secondary general and secondary vocational/technical level are trained at universities, allowing those who teach theoretical or practical vocational subjects to receive their pedagogical training on the job. Plans exist to raise the non-university-based training schemes to the level of *Fachhochschulen* (universities of applied sciences) within the next few years.

Teachers' pay varies in accordance with the status of the different training schemes. At the beginning of a teaching career, Austrian teachers' salaries, assessed against purchasing power, are slightly above the average of the OECD countries. Salaries rise sharply from mid-career onwards, putting the highest salary brackets of all teaching sectors (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) about one quarter over the OECD average (OECD 2003). According to opinion polls, the teaching profession is held in relatively high esteem; in a survey conducted in 2002, 56% of the Austrian population rated the prestige of teaching between 1 and 2 on a 5-point scale. Only 8% considered the prestige of a teacher to be very low (grades 4 and 5). This relatively high social status of the teaching profession has remained constant for the last ten years (IFES, 2003). The prestige of teachers in polytechnic and secondary modern schools is the lowest, whereas that of university professors is the highest (SORA 2000, p. 136). Teachers themselves, compared with other employees in the public services, are relatively unhappy with their professional situation, especially with regard to their income, their in-service training opportunities, their career options, their working hours and the status of their school. The central factor, however, in teachers' dissatisfaction with their job is the low public prestige of the teaching profession.

School and the role of the family

Austrian school regulations provide for intensive co-operation between families and schools, granting parents 'the right and obligation' to participate in school life (SCHUG, §62, sec.1). The implementation of this co-operation occurs at different levels; on the one hand, families support school learning by supervising homework and organizing additional instruction; on the other hand, there are parent-school institutions, such as the school forum at primary and lower secondary level, and the school community committee at middle and secondary level. These bodies are primarily responsible for decisions relating to the inner life of a school, e.g. school rules and events, but they are increasingly gaining importance in the context of school autonomy; the introduction of school autonomous regulations, such as school-based curricula, requires their consent.

Results from representative surveys show that 52% of children in year four sometimes get parental support for learning, and 18% get it nearly every day. One can assume that the results for the previous school years would be roughly the same. Parental support is given extensively at secondary level, and then recedes sharply, mainly because many parents do not possess the necessary competences (Eder 1995). Overall, parents at primary and lower secondary level are intensively involved in school work.

In order to cope with transitions from one system to another, to secure the completion of high-quality educational careers, and to compensate for individual learning restrictions, parents organize and pay for additional instruction (private lessons) to a relatively high degree. In many instances the advice comes from teachers, who point out that the learning objectives could not be met otherwise. These private lessons, paid by parents, are already a feature in primary school education (to prepare for entry to a secondary general school), and continue with varying intensity throughout all school levels, being most widespread at secondary general level. Summarising various survey results, it can be concluded that currently approximately 15 to 20% of four-year school pupils, 10% of secondary modern pupils, 15 to 20% of lower secondary pupils, 20 to 25% of upper secondary pupils, and 5 to 10% of pupils in middle and upper secondary vocational schools are receiving private lessons in at least one subject.

With regard to parents' contacts with schools and parents' use of formal opportunities for participation in school life, an ambivalent picture emerges: Parents do use the one-off opportunities of open days and consulting hours to a relatively high degree; the regular contacting of schools, however, is characteristic of a minority only. With post-primary schooling, especially during the secondary years, the intensity of contact significantly subsides. Schools, however, rate parents' willingness to contact them relatively high; nevertheless, there is a wide-spread feeling of powerlessness and resignation among parents with regard to their ability to exercise influence on their children's schools. Parents believe to a very high degree (70%) that being frank in their contacts with teachers could be detrimental to their own child's education (Eder 1998, p. 89). Both schools and parents welcome the formal participation in school life of parents; practical difficulties arise, however, when parents are in fact included in opinion-building and decision-making processes (Specht 1997). According to teachers' perceptions, parents are only selectively interested in school participation, meaning that they primarily pursue their children's interests, and are not guided by general necessities (Eder 1998).

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, philosophy, and levels of governance

Austria has a long tradition of centralized educational administration, which places the question of a uniform educational system at the centre of attention. The result was a tendency towards precise legal foundations and regulations on the one hand, and a philosophy of monitoring and of emphasising the administrative review of how well laws and decrees are followed on the other. Because of the two thirds majority required in parliament for the passing of educational laws, there was a backlog of reform initiatives, and it became increasingly difficult to fulfil the expectations of employers and 'customers'. A certain amount of progress was made by using 'school experiments' as a reform tool that could be approved outside of Parliament. These trial runs also provided the legal basis for relatively long-lasting innovations within the school system, e.g. the experiments related to the 'new middle school'.

The last two decades saw a phase of deregulation and decentralization which led to the granting of autonomy to the individual school, linked with the principle of accountability (Altrichter and Posch 1992). Both movements were connected with the debate about autonomy, which began in the early nineties. Since then, a broad political consensus has arisen that future school developments should be professionally anchored in the context of the individual school, and that the necessary 'spaces of freedom' have to be provided for the following aspects of school governance:

- The administration of financial resources,
- The extended participation of the school community in decision-making,
- The implementation of a general curricular framework in a concrete way, and
- The organization of instruction regarding content and time schedules.

This means an increasing amount of self-responsibility for the school and its staff, leading to more opportunities for autonomous regional and local developments. On the other hand, increasing autonomy requires a larger degree of accountability, e.g. in the form of higher demands for quality assurance (Bachmann *et al.* 1996, p. 27).

Financing

Austria has spent around 5.7% of its GNP on education in the last ten years and thereby ranks among the upper third of the European nations. The relative proportions of the national budget given over to schools and culture decreased slightly (from 9.7% to 9.4%) in the years 2002 to 2004. The major part of the budget is taken up by disproportionately rising personnel costs for teachers, which are due to the age structure of the teaching profession. Teachers in state schools are paid by the government, which also covers the costs for overheads and maintenance of a school. For pupils attending state schools no costs accrue in principle. In recent years, however, a small amount of fees, e.g. for books, transport, and other material expenses, have been introduced at the level of individual schools.

The provision of financial means is a central monitoring element. The budget allocated to individual schools consists of two components: a basic 'value units' (*Werteinheiten*) component sufficient to cover the cost for the standard curriculum, and a second component through which schools can finance additional programmes, e.g. courses or compulsory activities. The financial cuts suffered by schools in recent years have led to a reduction in these additional activities. The promotion of school autonomy is achieved on the financial level by giving schools global budgets for their overheads. They are also allowed to earn money to a restricted degree by renting premises or selling advertising space.

Public and private schooling

Compulsory schooling in Austria lasts for nine years. During this period children and adolescents are obliged to attend a school, unless they opt for private instruction at home. The latter – only very few parents opt for it – allows children to be taught at home, provided that appropriate pedagogical supervision can be given. Children taught at home have to take state school exams that test what they have learnt through home tutoring.

In addition to state schools there is a small number of private schools which fall into three groups:

- Private schools, mostly run by confessional or economic institutions, the curriculum of which corresponds with that of a state school;
- Private schools that teach an acknowledged alternative curriculum, e.g. Rudolf Steiner Schools and the *Lycée français*; and
- Alternative schools following their own curriculum.

Confessional private schools have a legal right to claim their personnel costs from the Austrian government. For all other private schools it is up to the discretion of the government to provide financial support (Fischer-Kovalski *et al.* 1993). Currently, alternative schools and Rudolf Steiner schools are only minimally supported by public resources. Most of their running costs are covered by fees paid by parents. In general, the willingness of the Austrian government to support private schools, with the exception of confessional schools, is rather low. Dedicated teachers therefore occasionally try to implement alternative pedagogical concepts, e.g. Montessori pedagogy, in the mainstream system.

General standards of the school system

The desired uniformity of the Austrian school system is based upon two principles. On the one hand there are clearly defined regulations for the external organization, providing the distribution of subjects and the numbers of teaching hours a year per school; on the other hand there are the following regulations for instructional matters:

- Each type of school must have a curriculum which is valid throughout Austria.
- All books and materials used for individual subjects must have been authorized.
- Teachers must possess the required qualifications for the subjects that they teach.

The provision of school curricula and the authorization of instructional material is usually carried out by committees in which teachers are represented.

As a consequence of granting schools autonomy, schools are now allowed to replace centrally issued standardizations with local ones. Schools can – within limits – change the number of hours allocated for each subject taught, and they can develop their own curricula and concentrate on specific contents in order to specialize and build their own profile in competition with other schools. The reasons for the development of school-specific profiles may be regional demands or special qualifications of teachers at a particular school.

Since 1992, preparatory activities to introduce educational standards for German (native language), English (first foreign language), and maths have been conducted. For these subjects, basic competences are to be defined in a process of development and experimentation lasting several years. After a trial period, these standards are to be tested within a national monitoring system. This process is expected to provide a better orientation of school instruction towards basic competences, and to lead to increased sustainability of teaching and learning.

Quality management

Traditionally, the strategy for assuring the quality of the Austrian school system comprised the following measures:

- (1) To provide a good legal and content-specific base for both school instruction (curricula, teaching material), and school life, and to review its realization through school leadership and school inspectors.
- (2) To collect data about the school system and school success rates, and to record this data in the form of school statistics.

The criterion for educational success was the successful completion of a school year or the ending of a school career linked with entitlements. The latter was continuously recorded and published in the school statistics. The educational success, i.e. the acquired knowledge and know-how of pupils, was not subject to an external review, but was diagnosed by their teachers within the framework of performance assessments, and was conveyed to pupils in the form of a certificate at the end of a school year. Apart from the public oral exams for the *Matura* (the school-leaving examination, equivalent to A-levels), there were no means of assessing pupils' achievements beyond class level.

School statistics primarily contain the following data: numbers of pupils going to individual schools, differentiated according to gender; number of classes, schools and teachers; number of successful completions of a school year and of *Matura*. These statistics presumably form a sufficient basis for educational management to decide on the allocation of resources. They contain, however, little information that could be used for quality assurance and development.

Since the early nineties, Austria has been increasingly participating in international comparative studies. It first took part in the COMPED programme (Computers in Education 1992), the results of which showed that the computer knowledge of Austrian pupils was very good in comparison with other nations (Haider 1994; Haider 1997). With TIMSS, a new strategy was first used that combined internationally developed achievement tests with a national questionnaire. The objective was to find out how the tested achievements in schools originated, and to use the logistics of the tests for nationally relevant issues. Thus, it was possible to analyse unsatisfactory results and to launch developmental projects. It also led to intense discussions about the additional data collected through TIMSS. The new strategy of enriching international studies with national supplements was intensified in the current PISA programme (Programme for International Student Assessment).

Following the overall positive impulses from participation in TIMSS and PISA, the decision was made to take part in PISA 2003 and 2006, PIRLS (Progress in Reading Literacy Study), and in PISA for primary schooling. Thus, a process of externally comparable achievement tests was triggered off that will probably have a decisive impact on the elaboration of quality development and quality assurance within the system.

With respect to the instruments for quality development and assurance, Austria is in a phase of transition and decision-making. After the extensive conceptual work (Eder *et al.* 2002, Haider *et al.* 2003) carried out in recent years, the outlines of a

more output-oriented system have become visible. This contains the following components:

- The use of standards, as an improved way of defining given objectives and as a basis for measuring learning results across schools;
- The school programme concept, as a comprehensive internal strategy for school development;
- Feedback methods, to optimize the instruction of individual teachers; and
- System monitoring, through regular measurement of learning outcomes in crucial subjects, and of the attitudes of pupils, parents, and teachers towards schooling.

The introduction of these methods is to be accompanied by measures to strengthen the professionalism of heads of schools and of teachers.

Support systems

There are only a few institutions in the Austrian school system that support the further development of the education system. These are:

- The pedagogical institutes, serving as centres for in-service training of teachers. They are decentralized and are run by the local authorities.
- The Centre for School Development, run by the central school administration and dedicated to the development, implementation and evaluation of innovations.

Co-operation with academic and research institutions only occurs on the basis of individual projects.

The current school system

General structure

The Austrian school system differentiates between schools with regard to educational hierarchy (primary schools, secondary schools, academies) and with regard to educational content (general schools, vocational schools, institutions of teacher and educator training):

- Primary schools consist of the first four school years (*Volksschule*) and the equivalent years of special education.
- Secondary lower schools consist of the upper grades of primary school (only offered in schools in remote locations), of secondary modern schools (*Hauptschule*), of the equivalent years of special education, and of the first four years of secondary general schools (AHS = *Gymnasium*, *Realgymnasium* and *wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*).
- Upper levels of secondary schools consist of the upper levels of secondary general schools, of the polytechnic schools, and of the institutions for training kindergarten teachers and social workers.

Academies can be attended after *Matura* and provide a three-year programme leading to qualification for the following professions:

- Social worker (academy for social work),
- Teachers for primary and lower secondary schools (pedagogical academy), and
- Teachers for middle vocational schools (vocational pedagogical academy).

As part of the further development of the education system, the academies are in the process of being transformed into universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), and will belong to the tertiary sector of the education system. The former Academy for Social Work has already achieved this status. The responsibility for running schools is in the hands of different authorities, local communities being in charge of kindergarten and primary schools. Counties are responsible for secondary modern schools, while the federal government is responsible for middle and upper secondary schools, and for the academies in the tertiary sector. In all sectors there exists a modest but increasing number of private schools. These schools are subsidized to various degrees by the federal government.

The central characteristics of the Austrian school system are:

- Free access to all state schools.
- The principle of co-education, which is valid in all state schools.
- Continuous internal assessment of school achievement by teachers. Pupils' achievements are graded on a scale ranging from 1 (very good) to 5 (insufficient). A grade of 5 in a subject requires repetition of the year, unless the conference of class teachers lets the pupil pass, or the pupil passes a resit in the failed subject at the beginning of the new year.
- The retention of two types of schools for the lower secondary level (secondary modern and general).
- The relatively high percentage of young people opting for the dual system of vocational training (apprenticeship), which involves attending a vocational school and a place of work.
- The preservation of the eight-year system of the secondary general school, despite the fact that graduating from an alternative type of upper secondary school provides the same rights to university study.
- The significance of the very differentiated organization of the secondary vocational school system, especially with regard to entitlement to study at a university.
- The separate training of teachers for the lower secondary schools in different institutions; teachers for secondary modern schools are trained at pedagogical academies (in the future, colleges for educational professions), teachers for secondary general schools are trained at universities.

Pre-primary education

All children aged between two and six are entitled to attend a kindergarten. Its curriculum is not school-oriented, although fostering pre-school education is part of the kindergarten teacher's task. Kindergarten teachers are trained at institutions of kin-

dergarten pedagogy, which belong to the upper secondary level. The training lasts five years and the qualification gained allows entrance to university. In 2002, around 88% of all four-year-olds attended a kindergarten, and 94% of all five-year-olds attended institutions for child care, predominately a kindergarten (Statistik Austria, http://www.statistik.at/fachbereich_03/bildung_tab9a.shtml).

When proceeding from kindergarten to primary school, children have to undergo a school maturity test. If the required maturity is lacking, children have to attend a pre-primary preparatory class.

Primary education

Austrian children start school at the age of six in a four-year primary school, which is a comprehensive school. Nearly all children of school age attend the primary school of their catchment area, determined by the parents' place of residence. The task of a primary school is 'to provide basic education in the first four years for all children and to integrate handicapped children into the mainstream system' (SCHOG, § 9 (2)). If necessary, primary school is preceded by a preparatory year. Its task is 'to prepare those six-year-old children for the first primary year who do not possess the maturity required to attend a primary school, and those accepted at an earlier age but subsequently sent back because of a lack of primary school maturity' (SchOG, § 9 (1)). The number of children in a class must not exceed thirty. From an organizational point of view, the first two years of primary school form a basic unit of assessment (*Grundstufe I*), which means that no child can fail, thus avoiding the burden of a negative start at school. The third and fourth years form the second stage (*Grundstufe II*).

In *Grundstufe I* alternative forms of assessment (verbal assessment, a combination of verbal assessment and grades) can be used in addition to giving grades from 1 to 5. Grades, however, must be given in the second stage (*Grundstufe II*). On the basis of these grades, a decision is made at the end of primary school as to whether a child will continue his or her schooling in a secondary general or in a secondary modern school. Grades also determine the ranking of a child if there is a waiting list for a particular school. Instructional practice at primary level has been characterized in recent years by a more flexible handling of time schedules and an increase in open learning. Empirical studies of how ten-year-olds experience their school situation show that the social pupil-teacher relationship is good and that the overwhelming majority of pupils are very happy with their school. In addition to the traditional range of school subjects, a variety of practical topics, such as traffic education and health education, are offered.

Lower secondary education

After finishing primary school, Austrian children have two options:

- Secondary modern school (*Hauptschule*), and
- Lower level (four years) of secondary general school (*AHS Unterstufe*).

The logic of the education system as a whole sees the lower secondary general level as a school for more talented or higher achieving children who aspire to university study. According to the same logic, the secondary modern school is an institution for the remaining majority of children who are more practically, technically or vocationally talented. In regions where it is difficult to attend a secondary general school, the upper stream of the secondary modern school takes over the function of the AHS.

In extremely remote areas very few upper levels of primary school exist. The school for special needs, which starts at primary level, is continued at lower secondary level. Private schooling at home is also possible at this level.

The differentiation within the two types of school is realized in different ways; the secondary general school constructs its individual profile through a variety of branches offered at the beginning of a school career. These branches are elaborated throughout the eight years of schooling through concentration on special subjects (e.g. foreign languages and natural sciences). The various branches thus increasingly diverge from one another, but at the same time offer additional options. The branching concept is thought to provide an answer to the problem of meeting the different interests and talents of pupils. Within the branches, pupils are regarded as equally interested and talented, so there is no need for additional forms of streaming. If a pupil fails, he or she has to resit a whole school year, or transfer to a secondary modern school. At the end of the lower secondary level, a significant percentage of pupils change to middle and secondary vocational schools. Pupils are prompted to move partly to avoid the more difficult demands of the upper secondary level, but also because the vocational schools better cater to their interests.

Children from a secondary modern school are observed over a period of several weeks before they are allocated to one of the three streams in German, English and maths. From this moment on they are taught in homogeneous groups, following the same curriculum. Depending on their achievement, they can be upgraded or downgraded at any point during their four years of schooling. The openness and developmental nature of the streaming system is expected to minimize failure and to offer high-achievers the chance to progress to the upper secondary level.

The educational task of the secondary modern school

In order to be accepted at a secondary modern school (HS) a pupil only has to complete primary school. The task of secondary modern schools is 'to provide a basic general education and to enable pupils with different interests and talents to go to a middle or to a secondary school or to enter a vocational career' (SchOG, § 15 (1)). The secondary modern school comprises four years of instruction, with classes of a maximum of thirty pupils. In addition to the normal HS, there are special forms of secondary modern schools, concentrating on sport (Sport-HS), music (Music-HS), or other subjects, e.g. computer science.

Secondary modern schools are obliged to provide streams in German, English and maths (two to three streams), in order to cater to children with different abilities and levels of achievement. If a school integrates handicapped children with special needs into mainstream education, no streaming system is required. During the first

term of secondary modern schooling, children are allocated to the appropriate stream. Pupils who are unable to stay in an upper stream despite supportive measures can be downgraded, while pupils who achieve above average grades in a lower stream can be upgraded. Pupils in the first stream are entitled to go on to a secondary general school. The three streams are linked to different entitlements; the first stream is considered to be equal to the lower secondary general level, meaning that grades from 1 to 5 have the same values in both systems. This equality of grading is important for those pupils from remote areas who have no access to a secondary general school, but who want to continue with secondary general schooling.

Grades in the second and third streams are converted on the basis of an addition of two grades. Thus, a grade 2 (good) in the second stream corresponds with a grade 4 (satisfactory) in the first stream. Pupils from the first stream or those from the second stream with at least a grade 2 may enter the middle or upper secondary level without an entrance exam, provided that there are enough places. If there is a waiting list, the ranking of each pupil on the list is calculated with reference to his/her grades in the streamed subjects.

The task of the lower secondary general school (AHS Unterstufe)

Secondary general schools are required to 'provide pupils with an in-depth general education and to qualify them for a university education' (SchOG, § 34 (1)). In order to be accepted at a secondary general school a pupil 'must have successfully passed the fourth year of primary schooling and his/her grades in German, reading and maths have to be very good or good. In case of a grade 3 (average) in one of these subjects, a pupil can be accepted at a secondary general school, provided that the primary school's staff is sure that this pupil will very likely meet the demands of secondary general schooling, based on his achievements in other subjects' (SchOG, § 40 (1)). The lower secondary general level comprises four years of schooling. Classes may be run in the form of all-day classes and must not exceed thirty pupils in size. The following options within the lower secondary general school are available:

- *Gymnasium* (grammar school),
- *Realgymnasium* (grammar school, concentrating on natural sciences), and
- *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium* (grammar school, concentrating on economics).

The same curricula - different teachers

Teachers with different qualifications and salaries teach at the lower secondary level. Teachers for the HS (and special education) are trained in a three-year course at pedagogical academies. Most teachers are qualified to teach one of the three main subjects (German, English, maths) and to teach several other subjects. The emphasis of the teacher training curriculum is on the humanities (pedagogy, sociology, and psychology), didactics, special didactics, and school practice, in contrast to the dominance of pure academic education for the university-based training of secondary general teachers. Instruction at the lower secondary general level is given by

teachers educated at universities. They are trained in two subjects of their own choice. The training is highly specialized with pedagogical-psychological training, instruction in special didactics, and school practice being comparatively short. Having completed their university education, teachers must complete a probationary year at a school in order to be fully qualified for a teaching post as an employee of the federal government.

The segregation of teachers during initial teacher education continues throughout in-service training. Primary and secondary modern teachers are trained at different pedagogical institutes, as opposed to the in-service training of secondary general teachers. Organization, finances and course programmes for both institutes also differ.

In order to guarantee a smooth transfer from one system to the other and to secure the comparability of the systems, the curricula for both schools at lower secondary level (HS and AHS) are the same. As a consequence of schools' being given more autonomy to develop specific curricular profiles, differences between the curricula of schools and classes can be significant. Although schools have to adhere to the framework of a new curricular architecture which differentiates between core subjects and expandable subjects, moving between schools becomes more difficult as the difference between the two types of schools increase. The education authorities intend to introduce standards to measure the actual differences between schools more accurately, in order to enhance the chances of levelling out these differences.

Different learning cultures?

As a corollary to the differences in teacher education and the curricular framework, lower secondary general (AHS) and secondary modern (HS) schools develop different learning cultures. To date, however, little research has been done on the nature of these different learning cultures. AHS pedagogy follows the structure of each subject more rigorously, provides a strictly-defined range of lessons, and is more oriented towards describing and depicting knowledge than acquiring it. It also emphasizes the academic competence of teachers. Pupils are frequently left to themselves to cope with the demands of schooling. As a consequence, extensive private tutoring is necessary. New forms of learning, such as open learning, are only gradually becoming more popular (Hofmann 2000). HS pedagogical culture is more pupil-oriented, emphasizing support, practice, and the pursuit of thematic contexts across subjects. The streaming system with its up- and downgrading principle prevents pupils from having to resit a year. Alternative forms of learning and teaching, such as open learning, team teaching, and project work across the subjects, are mostly tested and evaluated in so-called 'school experiments' (*Schulversuchen*).

Shared problems

The lower secondary level is fraught with problems that are specific to this phase of schooling, but that also affect the school system as a whole.

Achievements and grading

Pupils' achievements are assessed by their class teachers exclusively. Grades significantly deteriorate compared with those given in primary schools (Haider 1997, p. 169). Compared with international test results, pupils' achievements at lower secondary level lie in the middle range. There are, however, significant regional differences in the achievements in maths and natural sciences. Secondary modern pupils from rural areas are much better achievers on average than pupils from urban areas; the reason for this lies in the development of pupils' allocation to schools.

School behaviour and well-being

The transition from primary to lower secondary school is marked by a drastic deterioration in children's well-being in both types of schools. The fear of going to school increases, and the self-image and self-confidence of pupils is affected in a negative way. Simultaneously, the joy of going to school and the satisfaction acquired from being in school decreases continuously right up to the end of the lower secondary period (Eder 1995; Haider 1997, pp. 159ff.). In the last ten years, an increase in behavioural problems at this school level has also been reported. Pupils' disruption of lessons, anti-social behaviour, and occasional acts of violence are on the increase (Eder 1996). Overall, these are phenomena that are not so much connected with types of schools as with the social location of a school; most behavioural problems occur in city schools (Eder and Mayr 2001).

Parents' motives for choosing schools

Parents tend to send their children increasingly to a secondary general school, irrespective of their children's talents and interests, because they consider this school to be career-linked and to provide more entitlements and security. Parents also demand a high level of achievement in both types of school in order to guarantee entry to secondary level, often to the disadvantage of low achievers.

Competition between teachers

Lower secondary teachers, trained and remunerated differently, struggle to keep their pupils and their jobs. Secondary general teachers secure their jobs by accepting as many pupils as possible, many of whom leave school at the end of lower secondary level or change to a vocational career. Thus, the upper secondary level often consists of only half of the initial classes. Secondary modern schools in the cities are mostly attended by low achievers, pupils with special needs, and foreign pupils.

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary schools can be differentiated with regard to duration of schooling, educational level, and curricular content. Education in these schools can last one year (e.g. polytechnic schools), two to three years (vocational schools, technical colleges), four years (upper secondary level of general schools) or five years (all secondary vocational schools qualifying for university education). With regard to the educational level, schools can be divided into compulsory education schools

(polytechnic and vocational schools), middle schools (technical colleges), and upper secondary schools (leading to university education).

A highly diversified range of schools

With regard to content, a distinction can be made between general and vocational schools, the latter subdivided into commercial and technical schools, schools for economics, schools for social work, and agricultural and forestry schools.

The following table shows a summary of the schools:

Table 1: Upper Secondary Schools

Duration (Years)	General educational schools	Vocational schools					
		Compulsory vocational schools	Commercial schools	Technical business and arts schools	Schools of economics	Teacher and educator training schools	Agricultural schools
1		Polytechnic schools					Domestic science schools
1-3		Vocational schools	Commercial schools	Technical colleges	Technical college for tourism	Technical college for age care	Technical college for forestry
4-5 (<i>Matura</i>)	AHS-Eight years; AHS-Special upper secondary		Secondary business schools	Secondary technical schools	Secondary commercial schools	Academy for Social work	Secondary forestry commission schools

The central characteristic of the upper secondary level is the addition of vocational education. In addition to the general educational school (AHS), there is a variety of types of school offering a combination of general and vocational subjects and providing a fully qualified vocational education. A secondary business school, for example, offers a fully qualified commercial or business education together with unrestricted access to university education.

The political intention behind this school structure is on the one hand to create special schools for a diversified range of interests, and on the other to signal that all secondary schools lead to equal educational chances. In 1980, 65% of all secondary school leavers came from the general educational sector. In 2001, the figure dropped to 44%, while 56% graduated from the vocational sector, the majority from secondary technical and commercial schools.

While the AHS is geared towards providing study skills for a university education, and thus has little interest in economic and technical innovations, the vocational school system attempts to meet the demands posed by economic and technical

development through the foundation of new types of school. This development is leading to an increased number of types and special forms of school run on the basis of their own curricula, and is becoming increasingly incoherent. Despite this development, the vocational system, with its good vocational job prospects, is still attractive to parents and employers.

Specific problems

The transition from compulsory schooling

Until 1966 the entrance to vocational middle and secondary schools was regulated through exams. These were replaced by the final grades from lower secondary school. However, the large regional and school specific differences, which were not reflected in the grades, caused two problems. Firstly, pupils selected on the basis of their average grades varied widely with regard to the preconditions for educational achievement. Secondly, able pupils were rejected by secondary schools on the basis of unjustifiably high regional educational standards.

Grading and school success

Currently about 40% of pupils finish their school career with *Matura*. This number puts Austria below average among the EU-countries. Therefore, attempts are being made to raise the percentage of *Matura* significantly. Despite hard work that often exceeds the weekly working hours of adults, pupils' success rates in middle and secondary schools are relatively low. Most grades in key subjects are poor, falling between 3 (average) and 5 (unsatisfactory). Only 70 to 80% of secondary pupils manage to finish *Matura* within the allocated time. Success rates in middle vocational schools are even worse, and for a variety of reasons: a lack of basic competences from previous schooling, a poor match between the school chosen by parents and the child's personality, scholarly demands that are inappropriate for the achievement potential of individual learners, and instruction that does not provide enough differentiation and support (Herber 1983). There is a specific reason for the poor success rates of secondary modern pupils in their first upper secondary year; many go to upper secondary schools with insufficient educational prerequisites in order to avoid having to go to a less desirable polytechnic school.

Austrian pupils achieved very poor results in the international advanced maths and physics test (TIMSS 1995), but did well in basic knowledge and routine tasks in the same subjects. The results from the first participation in PISA showed a controversial picture; on the one hand, the overall results were satisfactory, with Austria in the middle field of the OECD countries. On the other hand, 14% of sixteen-year-olds had a reading competence of only level 0 or 1. This means that these pupils can hardly extract information from texts and understand them. Middle and upper secondary schools – except for the eight-year AHS – cannot be blamed for these poor reading skills. The results point to the fact that a substantial number of pupils enter secondary school without having acquired sufficient competences during compulsory education.

Changes in educational careers

More and more pupils, having successfully attended a secondary vocational school, opt for a university education. In some branches this figure reaches 50%. This has a significant impact on the curricular orientation of the secondary vocational schools, the consequences of which are still unclear.

Special education schools

Younger and older pupils with special needs can at their parents' request attend a special needs school geared to their specific handicap. Alternatively, they can attend an integrative class at any ordinary school ('Integrative children', 'Integrative classes'). Special education is offered throughout compulsory education (for nine years); in most cases, handicapped pupils enter the system at primary level. The curriculum is based on that of a primary or secondary modern school, enabling pupils to attend lessons at upper or lower levels in accordance with their educational potential. The task of a special needs school is to foster children according to their specific handicaps. To support the education of special needs children, centres for special pedagogy have been established, mostly in connection with special needs schools. Their task is to provide and co-ordinate a wide range of special needs strategies for the best possible teaching of 'integrative children'.

In contrast to the fostering of special needs children, there are hardly any institutional efforts to support talented children, except for a few differentiating teaching strategies. A number of teachers have completed courses for teaching talented children (ECHA-coaches) and work across schools. In addition, regionally variable supplementary programmes are offered during the school year and during school holidays, especially in the field of languages and computer education.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Until the mid-1990s, the post-secondary education system consisted of three components: Universities, Colleges, and Academies.

Universities provided an academic pre-professional education based on a minimum of eight semesters' study, supplemented mostly by extramural practical modules, e.g. an internship for medical students, a court year for law students, and a probationary year for teachers. Universities saw themselves as research institutions, and this attitude was reflected in their study regulations.

Colleges, e.g. technical colleges or art colleges, provided study programmes of at least eight semesters in applied subjects that could be used immediately for a professional career. Academies provided a two- to three-year non-academic professional education that could also be used immediately for a professional career. Because of their non-academic status, they belonged to the school sector. In order to meet economic demands, one- to two-year tertiary courses were offered for advanced vocational education in narrowly defined professional areas, e.g. medical-technical assistants. Access to these educational institutions was based on *Matura*, usually acquired during upper secondary education. At the beginning of 1980, an alternative means of qualifying for a limited range of study programmes at tertiary institutions

was offered in the form of a 'professional maturity exam' for professionally experienced people without *Matura* ('second educational career'). The university reforms of the 1990s raised colleges to the status of full universities and introduced a variety of tertiary educational options:

- Colleges for pedagogical professions,
- Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), and
- University-based courses.

The existing pedagogical academies are to be transformed by 2007 into colleges for pedagogical professions, maintaining their task of educating teachers.

Universities of applied sciences are established for a limited time to meet a proven demand. Their study programmes have to be accredited and are subject to continuous evaluation. *Fachhochschulen* are vocationally orientated; they concentrate on lecturing, but are also engaged in applied research and theory-led developmental work. They are mostly run by regional sponsors (shires, local communities, private sponsors) and cater for a regional demand. They frequently co-operate with universities, especially with regard to lecturing staff. Since their launch in 1994-95, these institutions have developed rapidly, already providing 12.4% of all domestic graduations in the year 2001-02.

University-based courses are education programmes lasting several semesters that cater to the specific training needs of highly qualified professions, e.g. lecturing staff for the caring professions, or that meet the demand for new qualifications in business and economics. Fees are mostly paid by the students themselves or by their employers.

Parallel to the development of new organizational forms, there is a strong tendency towards university-based further education. Having started originally with post-graduate courses offered at individual universities, an institutionalization of post-graduate education is emerging, highlighted by the establishment of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Research and Further Education at Klagenfurt University, and of the Danube University in Krems. The latter specializes in post-graduate academic further education, offering a variety of Master's degrees in business and management, telecommunication, computer science and media, European integration, and other subjects.

The University Reform Act of 2002 allows the foundation of private universities; the first private institutions have been established in the medical field.

The number of students from a specific year of birth entering tertiary education can only be roughly estimated, as men and women begin their university education at different ages (men have to perform military service). The following figures can be taken as a realistic guide:

Table 2: Enrolments at Tertiary Educational Institutions (Domestic Students)

	First-year students	Percentage of a birth year ^{b)}
Universities and Fachhochschulen	24,282 ^{a)}	26.1
Vocational academies	1254	1.3
Teacher training academies	2868	3.1

a) average of the academic years 2001-02 and 2002-03.

b) average of the birth years 1981, 1982, and 1983; source: Statistik Austria.

According to these figures, around 30% of children born in a particular year enter tertiary education, and 26% begin a university degree. The data, however, are misleading, as an increasing number of students enter university education after a phase of professional experience. In 2001-02 around 15,000 Austrian students finished their university studies (first degrees). If the two figures are compared, a success rate of 64% is obtained, which is however slightly inaccurate because of the time difference of the collected data.

Current problems and future development perspectives

The current problems in Austria's education system are connected with three topics:

(1) Structural problems of school organization

The development of pupils attending the lower secondary level, especially the regionally very different accessibility of AHS and secondary modern schools, raises considerable doubts as to the wisdom of running two different types of schools that broadly overlap with regard to pupil intake. In the Vienna conurbation the majority of pupils of a year already attend an AHS; in some districts this proportion exceeds 80%. For the AHS this means that it can no longer fulfil its task of being a school for the higher achievers. The fact that the AHS also loses a lot of pupils at the end of lower secondary education discredits its claim to be able to offer continuous schooling. The modern secondary school, on the other hand, becomes a 'sink school' (*Restschule*) that is nevertheless obliged to run at least two streams.

From a wide perspective, the current shifts in school choice can be seen as creating a large inequality with regard to the relationship between achievements and entitlements. This means that pupils in rural areas have to achieve more in order to earn the same entitlements as pupils in urban schools. In addition, the existing dual structure of the lower secondary level is relatively expensive, as it requires two separate systems of teacher education.

It is difficult to predict how the distribution of pupils across these two types of school will look in the future. On the one hand, the increasing autonomy of individual schools encourages them to develop their own novel pedagogical programmes. On the other hand, concepts involving new structures, in the form of school experiments, have been initiated, such as the 'new middle school', a comprehensive school

in the form of a joint venture of secondary modern and AHS, or the 'co-operative middle school', in which lower secondary schools co-operate with upper secondary schools. These developments clearly show that the core problem of how to organize the school system is still waiting to be solved. At the moment, however, convincing and potentially viable solutions are not in sight.

(2) Concerns about school efficiency

Austria's participation in internationally comparative testing has yielded important insights into the school system's efficiency. Overall it was revealed that achievements were only mediocre and attained at relatively high costs. There are still too many young people with inadequate basic competences (the three R's) in spite of having attended school for a long time. Another important finding was that Austria belongs to those nations in which the influence of family background is strongest. This means that schools fail to compensate for disadvantages caused by an under-privileged social background. As long as the impact of the family situation cannot be mitigated (e.g. by establishing all-day schools), it will be difficult to raise the basic educational level. At the moment, hopes of reducing all these problems are pinned on quality development and quality assurance measures within the school system.

(3) The development of new forms of system monitoring

In the future, the traditional system of input monitoring will be supplemented by output oriented strategies. By calling individual schools at all levels of the system into account, the education authorities intend to regain the monitoring competence that was given away in the process of granting the individual school more autonomy. To achieve this end, educational standards are currently being implemented and a monitoring system has been established to evaluate this implementation.

The preparatory conceptual work for the further development of the education system was carried out by the *Zukunftskommission* (Commission for the Future), set up as part of the 2003 reform initiative. Its recommendations, together with other projects, are to be put into practice by 2010 (Haider *et al.* 2003).

(4) Professionalization of the teaching profession and school leadership

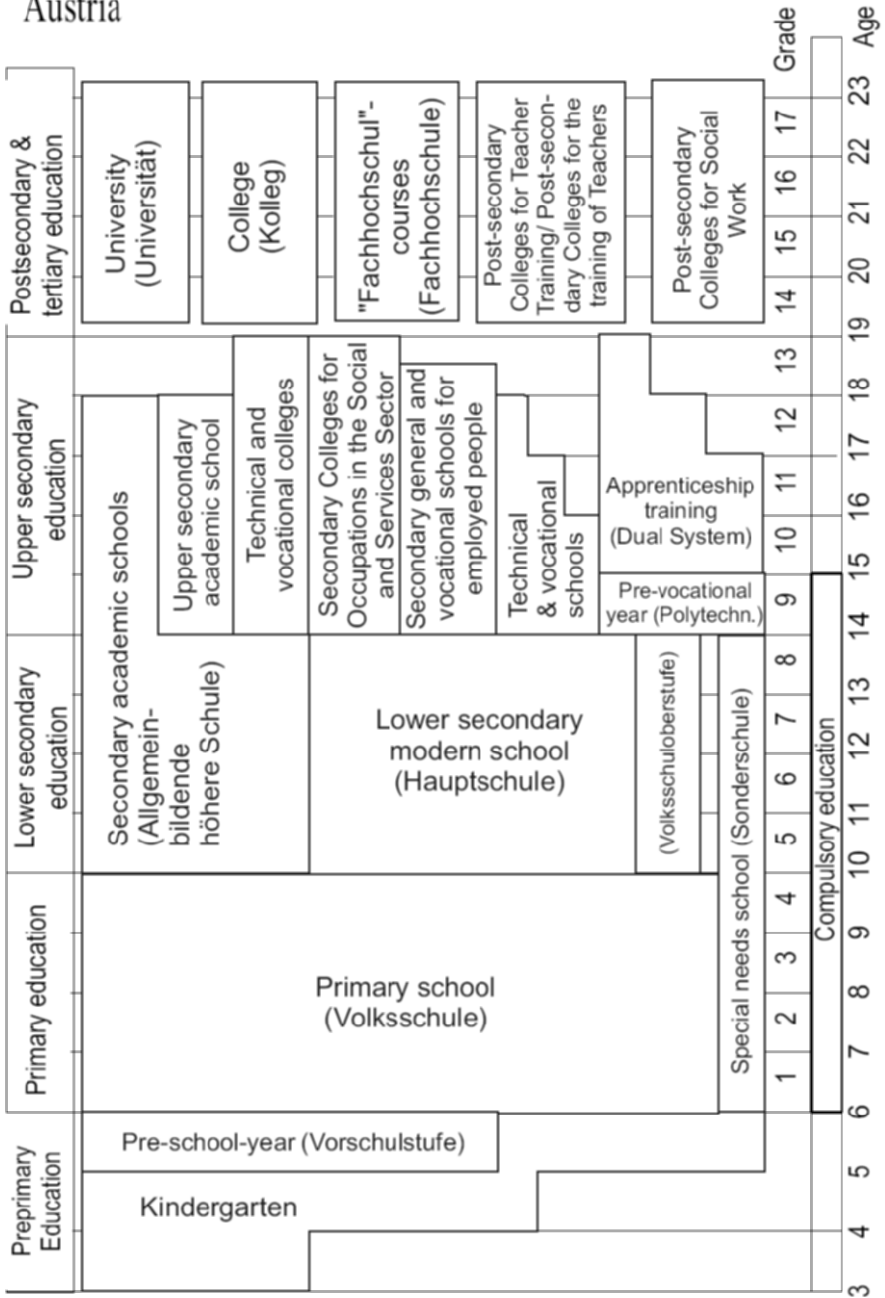
The professional quality of teachers is to be further developed through the following strategies: improving the quality of teacher education by raising the status of teacher training academies to universities of applied sciences, more performance oriented payment, more emphasis on in-service training, and more practice-related developmental projects. The increasing importance of school leadership for the development of school quality has also been recognized in recent decades.

On the political level, the abolition of the two thirds parliamentary majority required for passing school laws is being debated as a means to producing more flexibility for innovative further developments of the school system.

References

- Bachmann, H. u. a.: Auf dem Weg zu einer besseren Schule. Evaluation der Schulautonomie in Österreich. Innsbruck, Wien 1996.
- Eder, F. (Ed.): Das Befinden von Kindern und Jugendlichen in der Schule. Innsbruck 1995.
- Eder, F.: Die Schule in einer Welt veränderter sozialer Bezüge und Wertorientierungen. Bericht für die OECD-CERI Regionalkonferenz in Dresden. In: Lernen in einer dynamischen und offenen Gesellschaft - die Rolle der Schule. Wien 1996, pp. 107-135.
- Eder, F.: Schule und Demokratie. Untersuchungen zum Stand der demokratischen Alltagskultur an Schulen. Innsbruck 1998.
- Eder, F./Felhofer, G./Muhr-Arnold, S.: Schule als Lebensraum. In: Wilk, L./Bacher, J. (Eds): Kindliche Lebenswelten. Opladen 1994, pp. 197-251.
- Eder, F./Mayr, J.: Die Primadonna, das Aschenputtel und die Unschuld vom Lande. Vergleichende Befunde zu den Schulen der Zehn- bis Vierzehnjährigen. In: Eder, F./Grogger, G./Mayr, J. (Eds): Sekundarstufe I: Probleme – Praxis – Perspektiven. Innsbruck 2002, pp. 101-134.
- Eder, F./Posch, P./Schratz, M./Specht, W./Thonhauser, J. (Eds): Qualitätsentwicklung und Qualitätssicherung im österreichischen Schulwesen. Innsbruck, Wien; München 2002.
- Fischer-Kowalski, M./Pelikan, J./Schandl, H.: Kinder an Alternativschulen und Regelschulen. Ein Vergleich. Wien 1993 (Reihe Bildungsforschung Bd. 4).
- Haider, G.: Schule und Computer. Informationstechnische Grundbildung in Österreich. Ergebnisse der IEA-Studie Computers in Education. Innsbruck 1994.
- Haider, G./Reiter, C. (Ed.): PISA 2000. Nationaler Bericht. Innsbruck 2001.
- Haider, G. (Ed.): Indikatoren zum Bildungssystem. Fakten zum österreichischen Bildungswesen und ihre Bewertung aus Expertensicht. Innsbruck; Wien 1997.
- Haider, G./Eder, F./Specht, W./Spiel, C.: Zukunft: Schule. Das Reformkonzept der Zukunftskommission. Wien 2003.
- Herber, H.-J.: Innere Differenzierung im Unterricht. Stuttgart 1983.
- Hofmann, F.: Aufbau von Lernkompetenz fördern. Neue Wege zur Realisierung eines bedeutsamen pädagogischen Ziels. Innsbruck; Wien; München 2000.
- IFES: Bildungsmonitoring. Bevölkerungsbefragung zum Schul- und Bildungswesen 2003. Wien 2003.
- OECD (2003). Table D5.1. Teachers' salaries (2001). http://www.oecd.org/document/34/0,2340,en_2649_34515_14152482_1_1_1_1,00.html
- Picht, G.: Wettlauf mit der Katastrophe. München 1964.
- Posch, P./Altrichter, H.: Schulautonomie in Österreich. Wien 1992.
- STATISTIK AUSTRIA (2003). Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2004. <http://www.statistik-austria.at/jahrbuch/deutsch/start.shtml>. Kapitel 2 (Bevölkerung; <http://www.statistik-austria.at/cgi-bin/jahrbuch.pl?KAPITEL=02&SPRACHE=D>), Kapitel 4 (Bildung; <http://www.statistik-austria.at/cgi-bin/jahrbuch.pl?KAPITEL=04&SPRACHE=D>).
- Thonhauser, J.: Erziehung und Bildung. In: Mantl, W. (Ed.): Politik in Österreich. Die Zweite Republik: Bestand und Wandel. Wien, Graz und Köln 1992, pp. 620-644.
- TIMSS International Study Center: Highlights of Results from TIMSS. Boston Center, November 1996.
- TIMSS International Study Center: TIMSS Highlights from the Primary Grades. Boston Center, June 1997.
- TIMSS International Study Center 1998.

Austria



Rada Spasić

Azerbaijan

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones

The Azerbaijan Republic (*Azerbaijan Respublikası*) is located in the south-eastern area of the Caucasus, bordering the Caspian Sea, the Russian Federation, and Georgia in the north, Armenia and Turkey in the west, and Iran in the south. The capital and largest city is Baku. More than 50% of the population live in urban areas. The territory of Azerbaijan covers 86,600 sq. km, including the exclave of the Naxcivan Autonomous Republic and the enclave Nagorno-Karabakh, which is largely populated by Armenians. Since 1988-89 Azerbaijan and Armenia have been in conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which the Armenian military occupied, thus depriving Azerbaijan of nearly 20% of its territory and creating almost 800,000 refugees and displaced people, which is 10% of the country's population. A permanent peace agreement has still not been concluded between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Azerbaijan has 8,000,000 inhabitants and a majority Turkic Shiite Muslim population (Azeri 90%). Other resident ethnic groups are Dagestani (3.2%), Russian (2.5%), Armenian (2%), and others such as Lezghins and Kurds (2.3%) (cf. CIA 2005). Like most countries in transition, Azerbaijan is facing serious economic problems; the majority of the population has a low level of income and poor living conditions. The official language is Azeri, which belongs to the Western Turkic languages. During its history, the country was ruled by Persians, Arabs, Ottomans, and Russians. As a consequence, the Azeri language was first written in Arabic; in 1924 a modified Roman alphabet was gradually introduced. Later, in the 1930s, Soviet authorities promoted the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. For nearly seventy years Azerbaijan was part of the Soviet Union, but in 1991 it declared its independence. After independence, a gradual return to the Roman alphabet was decided upon (cf. Library Congress Country Studies 1994).

In the pre-Soviet period, the education system of Azerbaijan was dominated by Islamic religious instruction. From the age of five to twenty, students attended *madrasahs*, educational institutions affiliated to mosques. In major cities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *madrasahs* were established as separate educational institutions, but they retained their religious character. The first technical high school and the first high school for women were opened in Baku in 1865. In the late nineteenth century, secular elementary schools for Azeri students were introduced. However, the use of the Azeri language in secondary schools and in institutions of higher education for the Azeri population was forbidden during the Tsarist era. The majority of Azeri children received no education at that time. The literacy rate at the end of the nineteenth century was 4-5% (ibid.). During the Soviet era, in contrast, Azerbaijan had a centralized but relatively well-developed education system, and its

educational statistics place it in the ranks of middle-income countries and ahead of several former Soviet Republics (Baimova 2005a). The national census of 1989 showed a literacy rate of 99.6%. However, the standard of education has visibly declined since independence. This is due to the difficult political and economic situation of the country (World Bank 2004), which has been caused by the armed conflict with Armenia, the resultant loss of nearly 20% of the country's territory and large inflow of refugees and internal displacement of people, hyperinflation, transition to a market economy, and the loss of trading partners following the collapse of the Soviet Union (UNESCO 2005).

Reforms and innovations

Up to the early 1990s, when the country was under the control of the Soviet Union, the education system of Azerbaijan was determined by Soviet ideology and was based on massive state control over all educational institutions (Library Congress Country Studies 1994).

In this period, the responsibility for the educational sector was shared by three bodies: the Ministry of General Education (responsible for pre-school and school education), the State Vocational Education Committee (responsible for vocational education), and the Ministry of Upper and Higher Education (responsible for technical schools, institutes, colleges, and universities). In 1988 these bodies were combined to form a single Ministry of Education. Four years later, in 1992, the National Assembly passed a Law on Education which includes the following central goals: the decentralization of educational management, the creation of a private sector, and changes to the content of the school curriculum. In 1995 a series of new rules and regulations for the Ministry of Education followed. The President of Azerbaijan established a State Reform Commission in 1998 and a reform programme in education was initiated with the assistance of a loan of five million USD from the World Bank (UNESCO 2005). In the primary school curriculum, fundamental changes have been introduced which are mainly connected with the 'consolidation of students' sense of citizenship and patriotism' through a thorough teaching of national history, culture, and traditions (UNESCO 2005). Religious education has been reintroduced in Azerbaijan by some educational institutions. The state universities now also offer a course covering humanistic philosophy and the history of modern religions (UNDP 2005, p. 46).

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

The Constitution of Azerbaijan states that 'everybody has the right to receive education and the right to choose the form of education'. In legal terms, the State has implemented a democratic structure for the educational sector, but in reality the school system of Azerbaijan is confronted with a number of problems (Baimova 2005a). The collapse of the Soviet Union has caused political, economic, and social

instability. In addition to the economic difficulties brought by the process of transition, Azerbaijan has to face the consequences of the above-mentioned military conflict with Armenia, such as the displacement of a large proportion of the population, an increase in the number of children working in the streets (although employment of children under sixteen years is prohibited by law), orphans, and children with disabilities (United Nations Country Team Azerbaijan Republic 2001). With the loss of nearly 20% of its territory in the conflict with Armenia, the country also lost 616 general secondary schools and 300 other educational institutions. In 1999 some 85,000 children attended 700 temporary schools situated within refugee camps. 53,000 refugees and displaced people now live in school buildings. A World Bank study of 1997 classified nearly 60% of the population of Azerbaijan as 'poor' and one third of them as 'very poor' (UNESCO 2005).

All teachers in Azerbaijan have academic qualifications, but their social position is a poor one (UNESCO 2005). Budgetary difficulties are responsible for the fact that salary levels in the educational sector are very low, and that in the past teachers were paid infrequently. A teacher earns less than 30 USD a month, a vice-rector of a state university only 200 USD a month. As a result, one of the major problems in the educational sector after the collapse of the Soviet system has been corruption. The majority of students pay bribes to pass exams. As a consequence, the status of the teaching profession has decreased, so that the best teachers leave school for more lucrative jobs and qualified young people are not motivated to join the profession. Those teachers who stay seek opportunities to supplement their income, for example by offering special services like tutoring, special classes, and extracurricular activities for which students have to pay fees (Baimova 2005a; Baimova 2005c). These difficult work conditions brought about a dramatic decline in the number of male teachers, while the number of female teachers increased in the same period (UNESCO 2005). Women represent 65.5% of the total number of employees in the education sector, but the average wage paid to women is only about 70% of that paid to men (UNDP 1999, p. 42).

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

During the Soviet era, the Ministry of Education was responsible for all aspects of education. The Education Law of 1992 implemented a decentralized model for the education system. Since independence, the Ministry of Education has responsibility for the development and publication of curricula and syllabuses, textbooks, and methodological manuals; for the quality of education; for the initial and in-service training of teaching personnel; and for the attestation, accreditation, and licensing of educational institutions. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for allocating funds to schools, early childhood education institutions, and other educational institutions. The District Education Offices have taken over the competences of implementing educational programmes, and of monitoring and inspecting the education system. The chief of each District Education Office is appointed by the Ministry of Education.

The Education Law of 1992 gave more autonomy to schools. They are now allowed to hire and fire teaching staff and to propose changes in order to improve the curriculum and educational programmes. The new Law on Education provided for the creation of School Councils, which are composed of teachers, parents, pupils, and representatives of social organizations. Their competences include the strengthening of the material basis of schools, the provision of proposals for the solution of pedagogical and economic problems, and the facilitation of the introduction of a democratic system of school management (UNESCO 2005).

The education sector is funded through the national budget and local city or district-level budgets. Early childhood education institutions are funded primarily through local budgets, but in case of a deficit, financial subsidies can be provided from the national budget. Technical and vocational schools and higher education institutions are solely funded through the national budget. Each year, schools send their budget requests to the District Education Office, which passes them to the District Finance Office. The District Finance Office defines the individual school budgets. Afterwards, the District Education Office allocates the operational costs of the schools and the payment of teacher salaries to the schools (school directors/principals). It provides an annual budget report to the District Finance Office. Because of the difficult economic situation of the country, the educational budget runs a deficit, so that in reality there is no funding for the maintenance of school facilities and only insignificant funding for school supplies and learning materials. General education is free of charge for every citizen by law and there are thus no school fees. At the primary education level (grades 1 to 4), textbooks are provided free of charge to all pupils, while at the secondary education level (grades 5 to 11) pupils have to purchase textbooks (UNESCO 2005). Public expenditure on education has fallen to about half of that of the early 1990s, which has led to a substantial deterioration of the infrastructure, a shortage of textbooks and teaching equipment, and low teacher pay. In contrast, private spending on education, such as for uniforms, school materials, and transportation, has increased significantly (UNDP 1999, p. 41). The Constitution of 1995 confirmed that general education is free. Although the Education Law of 1992 proposed the creation of a private educational sector, Article 42 of the Constitution of 1995 affirms that 'the State provides every citizen with the right to a free and compulsory general secondary education'. As a consequence, private educational institutions only exist in Azerbaijan in the post-secondary sector. Early childhood education is also exclusively provided by public institutions (UNESCO 2005).

The current school system

In the school year 2004-05, Azerbaijan had 4553 schools and a total of 1,634,341 students. Formal education lasts for eleven years and is free and compulsory by law. In urban areas, the class size is twenty-five to thirty students, while class size in rural and remote areas is more flexible. Teachers are required to teach a minimum of twelve hours per week. The schools work typically in two shifts per day, some schools also in three shifts (State Statistical Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic

2005). The types of educational institution have not changed since the Soviet era, but links between schools and the labour market no longer exist (UNESCO 2005). The current school-system consists of three levels of general education: primary education (grades 1 to 4) and 'basic education' (grades 5 to 9), which leads to the certificate of primary education, followed by secondary education (high school), which lasts for two years (grades 10 to 11) and leads to the certificate of secondary general education. This course of general education from grade 1 to 11 is compulsory. Pupils who have completed basic and secondary education have the right to enter vocational schools. In order to attend a university, students must pass a national entrance examination (Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan Republic 2001).

Pre-primary education

Early childhood education is provided for children from three to five years of age in kindergartens and preparatory classes. Moreover, there are nursery schools for children of three years and younger. Some six- and seven-year-old children also attend kindergartens. Special preparatory classes exist for ethnic minorities (UNESCO 2005).

In 2001 there were 1794 pre-school institutions in Azerbaijan, in which 111,000 children were enrolled. 88% of them were aged three and over, and nearly 48% of them were girls. There has been, however, a noticeable decline in enrolment in early childhood education programmes. (State Statistical Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic 2002, p. 19). While in 1998 21.6% of all children attended pre-primary education institutions, their number fell to 13.9% in 1999 (Baimova 2005a).

Primary education

The formal age for entry to primary school is six years, but children who have not reached the age of six by September have to wait until the next school year. In the Soviet era, the age of school entrance was seven years, and some families still follow this regulation (UNESCO 2005). Primary education lasts four years (grades 1 to 4) and is compulsory. The national Education for All 2000 Assessment showed an enrolment rate of 96.3% in primary education. In general, the internal efficiency of primary education is very high, with low drop-out and high continuation rates (UNESCO 2005).

Lower secondary education

After completing primary education, pupils proceed to the first level of secondary education, compulsory lower secondary education (so called basic education), which lasts five years (grades 5 to 9). According to available statistics, enrolment in basic education has also fallen, from 87.8% in 1989 to 86.8% in 1999 (Baimova 2005). The graduates of the basic level of education can continue their education in the following streams: specialized occupational education, which consists of technical occupational education (one to three years); specialized secondary education (two to three years); and specialized higher education (four to five years, available after

general secondary education or completion of three years of technical education (UNESCO 1997).

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education lasts for two years (grades 10 to 11) and it is also compulsory. However, as in all other levels of the educational sector, the enrolment rate in upper secondary education institutions has declined, namely from 62.8% in 1989 to 42.7% in 1999 (Baimova 2005a). Graduates of the secondary level of general education have the right to enter vocational school. In order to attend a university they have to pass a national entrance examination (UNESCO 1997).

Special education schools

The government is required by law to take responsibility for the medical, pedagogical, and psychological care of children with disabilities. The official number of children under sixteen years of age registered as disabled in 2001 was 7524. Special groups for children with disabilities have been established in general pre-school education institutions, but there are also special pre-school training institutions exclusively for children with mental and physical disabilities who are unable to attend general pre-school education institutions. Secondary, vocational, and higher education for children with special needs is also offered in general or specialized educational institutions. Furthermore, children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive home schooling or to attend boarding schools (State Statistical Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic 2002, pp. 3-4). In 2001 there were 5353 children with poor health who received special education. Only twenty specialized general education schools existed nationwide, in which 4789 children with special needs were educated. Furthermore, 564 children with disabilities were educated in special classes of general education schools. Finally, ninety-one children with handicaps received education in general day schools. A severe limitation of the system is that all schools for children with special needs are located in urban regions; fifteen are in Baku city, three in Sumgayit, one in Gandja, and one in Lenkoran (*ibid.*, pp. 18-19). The UNDP's Human Development Report of 1997 shows a figure different from the official one. It reports a figure of 28,954 children under sixteen years of age with mental or physical disabilities. The low level of public funding for special institutions and for food and health care has made this sector increasingly dependent on private charity and on assistance from international organizations (United Nations Country Team Azerbaijan Republic 2001). Since 1989, gifted children have also had the opportunity to attend special classes and special schools. Moreover, they are allowed to skip years and to complete compulsory general education in fewer than eleven years (UNESCO 2005).

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The training of workers for various sectors (agriculture, construction, light industry, trade, mechanical engineering, electronics, and oil) is carried out by technical-vocational schools and colleges. The most frequently chosen specialization is agriculture.

All citizens under thirty years of age have the right to attend technical and vocational education institutions for full-time study. Part-time study is available to every citizen without any age limit. In 1995-96 there were 172 technical-vocational schools with 27,700 students (UNESCO 1997).

Azerbaijan has forty-seven higher education institutions, including thirty-one state and sixteen non-state higher schools. Among the public higher institutions, five have a special profile (police academy, higher schools with a military profile, etc.) and six are self-governing institutions. The tertiary higher education institutions include twenty-five universities, eleven academies, four institutes, two higher colleges, one seminary, one conservatory, and three other institutions with higher education status. State and non-state tertiary education institutions offer bachelor's and master's degrees. They are attended by 81,380 students, 37,116 of which are funded by the State and 44,264 of which pay tuition fees. 62,607 students are full-time students, 18,632 are part-time students and 141 are evening students. About 6000 students are enrolled in master's courses. A total of 9,702 professors and teachers are employed in this sector. Since the implementation of the new Law and Reform on Education, higher education institutions have the right to choose their approach to the multi-level education of specialists, determine the assessment of this education, and establish plans for its disciplines. The Law on Education guarantees the right to autonomy, which includes independence in financial and management matters (International Association of Universities, 2002).

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The new Law on Education has abolished the centralized model of the Soviet era and has established new democratic principles in educational practice. Unfortunately, the economic reality caused by the process of transition is inhibiting the full implementation of these principles. Azerbaijan has to master the problem of how to preserve the positive achievements of the education system of the Soviet era during the transformation of the country into a democratic, open, and market-oriented society. The military conflict with Armenia has led to the complete destruction of the educational structures in the occupied and war-torn areas, and to the loss of adequate schooling opportunities for the displaced population.

The current education system faces the following major problems: a massive decline in budgetary resources for education in relation to other government expenditures, a deterioration in the quality of education resulting from the decay and destruction of school buildings, a lack of textbooks and other educational materials, and a deterioration in the quality of teaching. Enrolment and attendance rates have dropped at all levels of education (Baimova 2005b). The government and the international community have begun to search for solutions to these problems through the implementation of a new Law on Education and an educational reform. However, intensified efforts and increased financial resources are needed to preserve and develop the educational sector of Azerbaijan and make its services available to all members of society.

Azerbaijan seems to be moving towards a better economic future following the signing of a number of international oil contracts for the oil reserves being discovered in the Caspian Sea. It is to be hoped that this will lead to the well-being of society as a whole, and that it will allow the implementation of the educational reform and participation in education on the part of every citizen.

References

- Baimova, N.: Primary and Secondary Education Reform. Final Research Paper. 2005a. http://www.policy.hu/baimova/Policy_Research.html
- Baimova, N.: Primary and Secondary Education Reform. Project Proposal. 2005b. http://www.policy.hu/baimova/projekt_proposal.html.
- Baimova, N.: World Bank Education Sector Development Project in Azerbaijan. 2005c.
- BFUG: Reports from New Members of the Bologna Process. Republic of Azerbaijan. 2005.
- CIA: The World Factbook: Azerbaijan. 2005. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/-factbook/geos/aj.html>
- International Association of Universities: Structure of Education System in Azerbaijan. 2002. <http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/azerco.htm>
- Library of Congress Country Studies: Azerbaijan. 1994. [http://lcweb2loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:Qfield\(DOCID+az0034\)](http://lcweb2loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:Qfield(DOCID+az0034))
- Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan Republic: Reaching the last few: Girl's Education in Azerbaijan. Baku 2001.
- State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan Republic: Children and Disability in Azerbaijan. Baku 2002.
- UN-United Nations Country Team: Azerbaijan Republic. Common Country Assessment Azerbaijan Republic 2001.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme): Azerbaijan Human Development Report 1999. Baku 1999.
- UNESCO: Technical and Vocational Education in Azerbaijan. 1997.
- UNESCO: Azerbaijan Report. 2005. http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/azerbaijan/-rapport_1.html
- UNICEF: Youth at Transition Period in Azerbaijan Republic. Baku 2000.
- World Bank: Azerbaijan Poverty Assessment. 1997.
- World Bank: Azerbaijan Republic Education Reform Project. 2004.

Wendelin Sroka

Belarus

History of the school system

History of the school system and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

Political sovereignty was not achieved by Belarus until the twentieth century. In the Middle Ages, the territory first belonged to the Kievan Rus. Later, in the thirteenth century, it was included in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, from 1569 to 1795, it was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As a result of the three partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, the territory was eventually incorporated into the Russian Empire.

Until the nineteenth century, schooling in Belarus was largely limited to the nobility and to the cities. During the Renaissance, the written Belarusian language, promoted by scholars like Francišak Skaryna (1486-1541), flourished. But this movement did not last long. Jesuits' colleges, which played a major role in the education of the local elites in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, preferred to use Latin and later Polish as the language of instruction. During the Tsarist era, Russian-language public primary and secondary schools were created. Once again, access to schools was largely limited to the urban population, and until the beginning of the twentieth century illiteracy remained a prevailing feature of Belarus and even more so of the Belarusian-speaking rural population.

It was in the wake of the Russian October Revolution in March 1918 that Belarus declared its independence as the Belarusian Popular Republic. When, in 1920, the western area was reassigned to Poland's second *Reszpospolita*, the territory of the Belarusian State covered the eastern and central parts of today's Belarus, and the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR) was proclaimed. Two years later, the BSSR joined the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and was officially regarded as one of its founding members.

In the 1920s, Belarus experienced both restricted cultural independence and an expansion of the education system, including the establishment of schools with Belarusian as the medium of teaching, the implementation of compulsory nation-wide schooling, and the provision of a network of part-time general education facilities for young people and adults. From the late 1920s to the beginning of World War II, the political centralism of the Soviet Union shaped the education system in Belarus. Thus, the school system was built on the model of the Soviet comprehensive school, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and governed by Moscow as part of the integrated education system of the Soviet Union. At the same time, Belarus took advantage of the processes of modernization. The creation of the Belarusian State University in 1921 and of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus in 1929 were important steps in the promotion of education in the country. Attendance of the four-year

primary school became universal, and an increasing number of young people attended general secondary schools. Whereas at the end of the nineteenth century the literacy rate of the population in the territory of Belarus had been only 26%, illiteracy was largely abolished in the course of the 1930s (Zaprudnik 1998, p. 103).

After the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi-German troops in June 1941, Belarus was administered by the Germans as the 'General District White Ruthenia', part of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. During the Nazi occupation, the Jews (some 12% of the pre-war population) were systematically exterminated. More than two million inhabitants of Belarus, a quarter of the entire population, died as a result of war actions and Nazi genocide among civilians. German authorities supervised schooling, which was organized on a small scale. At the end of the War, in 1944, the country was devastated and the school network had experienced immense damage.

At the end of 1944, the education system in Belarus was re-established under Soviet rule. In the following years, this system was marked by reconstruction, expansion, and Russification. Starting in the late 1940s, the percentage of children attending 'incomplete middle school' (grades 5 to 7) or 'complete middle school' (grades 5 to 10) rose. As a result of economic development, higher education establishments in the capital and in big cities served an ever-increasing student population by providing courses both for full-time on-campus students and part-time correspondence students, the latter mostly adult learners.

Like the other Republics of the Soviet Union, the Belarusian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic had its own Ministry of Education and its own educational administration. However, in contrast to other Republics of the Soviet Union, especially to the neighbouring Baltic Republics, the features of the education system of Belarus were more or less identical to those of the Russian Soviet Republic. Whereas other non-Russian Republics made use of their legal right to organize teaching in their national languages at both school and tertiary level, the Russian language, which according to Soviet doctrine had to be treated as the 'second mother tongue', was the common language of instruction in the education system in Belarus. Only in rural areas, where the Belarusian language was deeply rooted in the population, did a minority of schools continue to rely on Belarusian as the medium of instruction. The resulting low prestige of the national language, which was seen as the language of peasants, has turned out, along with current official policies, to be a major and enduring hindrance to the revival of the language in society and education.

Reforms and the general situation of education since independence

When the Soviet Union collapsed in late 1991, Belarus was declared the Republic of Belarus, and thereby attained political sovereignty for the first time in its history. However, the direction of reforms in politics and in the economy remained undecided. The impact of the Belarusian national movement on politics was generally weak both before and after 1991, with the exception of the cultural sphere in the first half of the 1990s. In this context, a new language law (*zakon ab movach*) was adopted in December 1990, declaring the Belarusian language to be the only official

language. At the same time, a reform of the education system was initiated, aimed at establishing a 'real national general school' (Andreev 1995, p. 58). As a consequence, the number of schools and classes with Belarusian as the language of instruction rose considerably in these years. Furthermore, private schools as well as private higher education establishments gained a small share of the market.

In July 1994, Alyaksandr Lukashenka was elected President of the Republic of Belarus. He dissolved Parliament in November 1996, established an authoritarian regime, suppressed the political opposition, began to strive for the creation of a union state with the Russian Federation, and led the country into political isolation within Europe. Today, Belarus is the only European country without full membership of the Council of Europe. Under the conditions of a 'presidential democracy', a 'market socialism' propagated by the central authorities, and a predominantly state-owned economy, Belarus has the least reformed economy of the CIS countries and is experiencing an economic crisis which is also heavily affecting the education system. However, neither academic publications nor official documents on education sufficiently reflect this situation. Instead, a tendency to turn to propaganda is widespread, and the reporting of empirical data often has considerable weaknesses, to say the least.

The new government ended the short period of Belarusization of society, making way for re-Sovietization. In this context, the number of Belarusian-language schools diminished considerably. All textbooks in humanitarian subjects published between 1992 and 1995 had to be withdrawn in 1996. They were replaced first by the old Soviet textbooks and eventually by textbooks complying with the new political ideology. A reform of the public school system was started in 1998. At the centre of the reform, which is supposed to be fully implemented by 2010, is the transition from a nine-year to a ten-year compulsory education programme called general basic education (*obsšee bazovoje obrazovanije*), and the introduction of a twelve-year programme of 'general secondary education' (*obsšee srednee obrazovanie*). The mechanism to achieve this goal is the gradual provision of schooling for all six-year olds, whereas before the reform the school entrance age had been either seven or six. Since 1998, pupils entering the school system have been mostly taught under the new programme. Its implementation is designed as a rolling reform. Thus, the first group of pupils in the ten-year programme will leave the school system in 2008.

In the framework of the reform, timetables and curricula are being modernized, the number of compulsory subjects is being reduced, and new forms of learning provision (including the use of modern information technologies) and skills assessment are being introduced. Moreover, pupils are being given more choice with respect to courses, especially at the upper secondary level. Here, profiles are intended to prepare the pupils for their future learning tracks in higher education. The old marking system, based on five grades, was recently abolished, making way for a new ten-grade scale, which is supposed to do more justice to the performance of pupils. The effectiveness of the new system is doubted, however, by segments of the teaching profession. Lastly, the reform aims at implementing a five-day academic week, leaving Saturday for sports and other out-of-school activities.

Despite these reform initiatives, the political authorities see the education system as an important sphere for the promotion of ‘Belarusian national ideology’ as designed by the President. In this context, Soviet-style methods of ideological education were re-introduced into schools, higher education establishments, and enterprises, and important parts of the education system as well as their leading figures were made subject to the direct control of the presidential administration.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

According to the current ‘National Strategy for Sustainable Development’ of the Republic of Belarus, the education system has to ‘meet the requirements of individuals, society, and State; create conditions to develop these further; and prepare new generations for life and work in a civil society with an extensive people-centred market economy’ (National Strategy 2004, p. 30).

The Law on Education (Art. 1) makes reference to the importance of the national-cultural foundations of education and to the priority of its humanitarian and scientific character. In fact, in the current political and economic situation of Belarus, the education system fulfils a variety of functions. Thus, educational institutions have to educate and train young people and adults so that they are able:

- To cope with present and future social, economic, and scientific challenges;
- To promote the economy and the statehood of Belarus; and
- To function as citizens of Belarus, of the Union of Belarus, and of the Russian Federation and the Community of Independent States (CIS).

By tradition, knowledge acquisition is a central function of schooling in Belarus, and this fact is reflected not least in the contents of teacher training, in the design of the curriculum, and in the learning culture within schools and classrooms. Nevertheless, the tendency towards a less cohesive society as well as the demands of the economy have affected this traditional approach. As a result, the public school system is today expected to provide a common foundation for all pupils, regardless of their social background, and reforms are being considered to look at learning as competence development. At the same time, a system of patriotic and moral education was introduced throughout the sphere of education, based on values propagated by the political leadership (MARB 2004b).

Socio-economic context

On 1 January 2005, the population of Belarus was 9.799 million, down from 10.043 million in 2000 (MSRB 2005, p. 150). Belarus has experienced a decline in the birth rate since the 1970s, resulting in a decrease in the total population since the early 1990s. At present, the average number of children per family is around 1.2. The demographic trend is reflected in the declining number of pupils in general education schools: whereas in 1994 1.51 million pupils were enrolled in the system, ten years later the number was 1.26 million (GIAC 2004b). The low birth rate has led to the closure of schools, especially in rural areas. The provision of schooling for chil-

dren and young people living in small settlements is an increasingly difficult challenge for educational policy. Projections show that the decline in the number of school-age children will be particularly sharp from 2007 onwards.

Belarus is a polyethnic country with more than 100 nationalities. Census data for 1999 report the composition of the population by nationality as follows: 81.2% Belarusians, 11.4% Russians, 3.9% Poles, 2.4% Ukrainians, and 1.1% other nationalities (MIDRB 2005a, p. 10). The country is free of national conflicts. Nevertheless, language and minority issues do play a certain role within the education system.

In 1990, a new law on languages was enacted, declaring the Belarusian language the exclusive official language of the country. Furthermore, the new Act on Education, passed in 1992, guaranteed the right to choose between Russian and Belarusian as the language of instruction in educational institutions. Therefore, Belarus has schools with Russian and with Belarusian as the medium of instruction, and there are also schools which run classes of both types.

In the early 1990s, the Belarusian language gained popularity, and the number of educational institutions using it at least in part as a medium of instruction soared. In the capital, the percentage of first grade pupils attending 'Belarusian' classes went up from 19.2% in 1991-92 to 58.0% in 1994-95 (Sadowski 1998, p. 367). However, upon the initiative of the new President, a referendum was held in May 1995, the outcome of which put Russian on a par with Belarusian. Since that time, as a result of a variety of official measures, Belarusian is once more in decline in state institutions, including schools. In Minsk, the percentage of first-grade pupils in Belarusian classes was down to 19.5% in 1995-96 (op. cit.), and was as low as 3.8% in 2001-02 in the preparation classes (Languages of instruction 2002, p. 4).

The provision of instruction in minority languages is limited, although Belarus is home to considerable numbers of people belonging to national minorities – around 400,000 Poles, 291,000 Ukrainians, 100,000 Roma, and 18,000 Lithuanians. In the 1990s, two Polish-language and two Lithuanian-language schools were established. In addition, minority languages are taught in a number of schools with one of the state languages as the medium of teaching. In 2001-02, the number of minority pupils attending mother tongue classes was 8774 for Polish, 441 for Hebrew, 119 for Ukrainian, and 72 for Lithuanian (op. cit., p. 7).

Today, migration affects society and education in two ways. One is emigration, often of qualified young people. The other is immigration, mostly of refugees from countries of the former Soviet Union, many of them with a Muslim background, including Chechens. With the support of non-governmental organizations, pilot projects have been started in some schools to enhance inter-ethnic education (Zagoumenov/Zahumionau 2005).

Social position of the teaching profession

Traditionally, the great majority of teachers in general education are female. In 2004 the percentage of female teachers was 85.6%, up from 81.4% in 1994. Female teachers also represent the majority in other areas of education: 61% in vocational schools and 55% in higher education institutions (GIAC 2004a). However, despite

the fact that female teachers are in the majority, leading positions in educational institutions are usually occupied by men.

Teacher training is organized both at post-secondary (non-tertiary) and at tertiary level. Initial training of pre-primary and primary school teachers lasts three to four years. It is provided by teacher-training schools and teacher-training colleges. Secondary school teachers receive their training at pedagogical universities and at universities. Here, study programmes last four to five years. In 2004-05, after the formal integration of teacher training colleges into the tertiary system, 84.8% of general education teachers were classified as graduates from higher education institutes.

Salaries of teachers depend primarily on their qualifications and professional experience. The remuneration system for school teachers is based on a structure of four categories (third, second, first, and highest). In 2004-05, 43.8% of teachers in general education were in the first category. Nevertheless, the attractiveness of the teaching profession is hampered by the fact that the salary for newly qualified teachers is below the average salary of industrial workers. Inadequate remuneration has contributed considerably to the low prestige of pedagogic professions and is seen – besides difficult working conditions – as a major reason for the decline in the number of teachers. The lack of teachers is particularly acute in vocational schools. Often, retired teachers are hired to fill otherwise vacant positions in schools. Recently, the central government and, in some instances, local governments, have started to increase teacher salaries (GIAC 2004b). Overall, the social position of teachers in Belarus has become more differentiated since the early 1990s, and it has clearly deteriorated for the majority of the profession.

School and the role of the family

According to the Law on Education (Art. 51), parents have the right to choose schools and educational tracks for their children. Furthermore, they may homeschool their children. Parents of children attending public schools have the right to participate in the school's self-administrative bodies. At the request of parents, schools are obliged to provide them with information on examinations concerning their children's physical, psychological, and educational development.

Today, the disintegration of parts of society, including the rising number of children neglected by their parents; social differentiation; and the high proportion of students with health problems all contribute heavily to the challenges of school education in Belarus. According to Latysch/Andreev (1997, p. 13), almost every third child of school age suffers from health problems, some of them as a long-term effect of the Chernobyl accident. The educational achievement of pupils depends more and more on the level of support provided by their parents. Today, at pre-school level, there is a variety of educational practices, ranging from parents sending their children to expensive pre-school classes to parents not willing or not able (as in some rural areas) to provide their children with pre-school education. The reform of the pre-school sector includes measures to encourage the participation of parents in the educational process. At the same time, the school system is trying to react to the needs of specific groups of pupils with less favourable family backgrounds by providing education through a differentiated system of educational establishments,

including institutions of special education. Finally, families often play a particularly crucial role when students enter tertiary education.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

Formally, the education system is based on the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and on a number of laws. They include the Law on Education (*Zakon ob obrazovanii*), the Law on Vocational Education (*Zakon o profesional'no-techničeskom obrazovanii*), the Law on the Education of Persons with Special Features in their Psychological or Physical Development (*Zakon ob obrazovanii lic s osobennostami psihofizičeskogo razvitija – special'nom obrazovanii*), the Law on Languages, the Law on National and Cultural Minorities, and the Law on Children's Rights. In the absence of the separation of powers, the highest level of decision-making, responsible for the formulation of state policy, is represented by the President and his administration on the one hand, and the Council of Ministers on the other. Decrees issued by the President and by the Council of Ministers have the force of law. This principle also applies to educational matters.

The education system in Belarus can be regarded as a 'national education system'. The national character of the system is first and foremost based on highly centralized mechanisms of governance and control of educational establishments at all levels by the State. Thus, local control of educational institutions and the role of private learning providers in the system are very limited, and the system of educational administration and control follows a strictly hierarchical model, modified in part by direct interference through the powerful presidential administration.

The Law on Education, passed by Parliament in 1991 and enacted with changes and amendments by the Lukashenka government in March 2002, stipulates that the Ministry of Education (*Ministerstvo obrazovanija Respubliki Belarus'*) has overall responsibility for the condition and for the development of the education system. Thus, the ministry develops and implements state policy in most areas of education. At the same time, most educational establishments, all other levels of educational administration, and all support services (including research and training institutes) are subordinated to the Ministry (MARB 2004b). Sectoral Ministries play a certain role in vocational and higher education, where they share responsibility for certain institutions with the Ministry of Education.

For general education establishments, a detailed educational plan is passed by the Ministry of Education on a yearly basis (MARB 2004a). The plan regulates schooling in great detail. Other major players in the governance of the education system at national level include the Department of Quality Assurance of the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Education, the National Institute of Professional Education, the National Institute of Higher Education, and the Academy of Post-Diploma Education.

In the framework of a clear top-down model of decision-making, school administration in Belarus has a three-tiered structure, encompassing a) the national, b) the regional (*oblast*), and c) the district and town level. Below the national level, each of

the seven regions – Minsk city as well as Minsk, Vitebskaja, Mogilovskaja, Gomel'skaja, Brestskaja, and Grodnenskaja *oblast* – has its own Department of Education, with responsibility for pre-school and school education. Direct control of pre-school and school establishments rests with the Departments of Education of the district and town administrations.

Financing

Article 53 of the Law on Education regulates the main principles of the financing of education in public institutions. In accordance with these regulations, the two main sources of funding are the central budget and the budgets of the municipalities (local budgets). Direct funding by the State, in most cases exercised by the Ministry of Education, applies to the majority of higher education establishments and most post-secondary (non-tertiary) institutions. The municipalities, and in some areas the regional (*oblast*) authorities are responsible for basic funding of pre-school institutions as well as general education and vocational schools.

The constitution of the Republic of Belarus declares education to be a legal entitlement of its citizens; thus, general and vocational education have to be made available free of charge. Furthermore, the Law on Education provides a benchmark for the public financing of education. It rules that the share of public expenditure on education must be at least 10% of GDP. However, government data report the share at 6.6% in 2003 – 0.2% less than the year before.

Over the years, municipalities have found it more and more difficult to finance their schools. In order to improve the situation, the national government has, through decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers, introduced supplementary central funding for specific programmes, e.g. for acquiring textbooks, for supporting school meals, for teacher remuneration, and for financing the current reform of the school system. Furthermore, since the early 1990s public educational establishments have been allowed to earn money for additional educational and other services. The share of extra-budgetary funds is rising, particularly in vocational and higher education. Institutions are entitled by law to attract additional funds through the expansion of their activities, including the sale of products made by pupils and students. Furthermore, under conditions defined by the authorities, educational establishments can enrol fee-paying students in addition to students who are provided free education. Since the late 1990s, the number of fee-paying students has increased tremendously, especially in higher education. In the face of the growing importance of extra-budgetary funds and the pressure on the management of institutions, there is some concern among parents and educators that financial interests may come to dominate pedagogical ones.

Public and private schooling

Educational law in Belarus allows for the establishment of private providers at all levels of the education system. Nevertheless, because of the national character of the education system in Belarus, schools are, with very few exceptions, organized as public schools, maintained by local authorities and subordinated to the structure of the state administration. In the academic year 1998-99, Belarus had sixteen private

schools, most of them gymnasiums. By 2004-05, this number had decreased to twelve, lowering the share of private schools to a mere 0.1% of the student population (World Bank 2004). A similar trend can be observed in higher education. On the other hand, private enterprises have started to take over a limited role in providing professional training, often in co-operation with public schools. Furthermore, the number of privately-maintained colleges has increased in recent years (Review of vocational education 2004).

General standards of the school system

General standards are documented in the central educational plan and in the state curriculum. The educational plan is issued annually by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Act on Education (Art. 11) makes reference to a system of 'state educational standards' covering the levels and the duration of training, the types of education providers, and the classification of specializations, qualifications, professions, and the certificates of the various types of educational institutions.

An important instrument for defining standards in the general education system in Belarus is the timetable provided by the Ministry of Education as part of the educational plan. The timetable basically defines the subjects to be taught and the number of lessons per week. It consists of a mandatory 'state component', and a 'school component' which comprises optional subjects defined by the school. At the primary school level, the 'state component' currently encompasses between nineteen lessons (grade 1) and twenty-two lessons (grade 4) per week, whereas the 'school component' does not exceed two lessons. The 'state component' reaches a maximum of thirty lessons per week at the upper secondary level, supplemented by a 'school component' of up to four lessons. As part of the reform of the school system, the introduction of curricular profiles and a reduction in the number of subjects is planned for this level.

The subjects of the 'state component' as well as those of the 'school component' are taught on the basis of the national curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education in co-operation with the National Institute of Education. At the secondary level, the curriculum is organized to include the humanitarian cycle, the science cycle, the aesthetic cycle, physical training, and labour education. The subjects of the humanitarian cycle are Russian and Belarusian languages and literatures, foreign language, history of Belarus, world history, and humankind and society, whereas the aesthetic cycle covers music, fine arts, and world artistic culture. Overall, the formerly eminent role of the science cycle at secondary level decreased in the 1990s. The number of taught lessons in physics, for example, was reduced by up to 30%.

As in other countries of the former Soviet Union, textbooks are seen as the most important means to implement the curriculum in the classroom. The National Institute of Education is the agency responsible for textbook development. In curriculum as well as in textbook development, the top-down approach does not leave much room for the involvement of teachers, parents, or other stakeholders in the education process. Starting with 2004-05, a new standard curriculum is gradually being introduced in secondary schools. So far, attempts to reduce the curriculum load and at the

same time to open up the curriculum to new areas of learning have achieved only modest results.

Quality management

A system of input measures – ranging from directives of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus and of the Belarusian Ministry of Education over nationwide compulsory curricula and licensed textbooks to a highly regulated initial and in-service teacher training system – is supposed to contribute to high quality of learning output. In addition, attestation and accreditation mechanisms were introduced in the 1990s. Today, every educational establishment in Belarus has to undergo a procedure of external evaluation on a regular basis as a condition of its continued operation.

Overall responsibility for all the procedures of attestation and evaluation of educational institutions rests with the Department of Quality Assurance of the Ministry of Education. The department recruits ‘independent evaluators’, usually from universities and research institutes, who form an expert commission and visit the institution. After the visit, the individual members of the commission write an evaluation report, each member covering his or her field of expertise, and hand it in to the Department. The Department uses the reports to compile a draft of the final decision, which at a later stage is made by special authorities of the Ministry of Education. Normally, successful institutions receive a license which is valid for a period of five years (MARB 2004b).

At school level, continuous knowledge assessment and final exams at the end of lower and upper secondary education serve as important means of quality management.

Support systems

In order to secure a high level of knowledge attainment and of school quality, support systems exist both at individual school level and at the level of the school system. At both levels, support is closely linked in Belarus to control; these two functions thus apply to the corresponding institutions as well as to individuals in them. At the school level, the director, who has no teaching obligations, is responsible for ensuring good learning conditions for the pupils. Class and subject teachers are supposed to provide basic support for the pupils’ learning process. In addition, schools have support staff. However, because of a lack of funds there has been a decline since the 1990s in the number of psychologists and nurses available for pupils and educators.

The network of out-of-school institutions can be regarded as an additional support system for pupils. The services, ranging from handicraft, music, and sports to life skills courses, are provided mainly in the afternoon, on Saturdays, and during holidays. These institutions also arrange courses designed to enhance the abilities of pupils with specific talents. Within the school system, the tradition of Olympiads, where gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded for outstanding performance in tests in individual subject areas, have been preserved and further developed. Olym-

piads are held annually at regional and national level, and pupils from Belarus continue to be successful in international Olympiads, especially in science subjects.

In-service training is seen as the most important form of support for administrators, teaching staff, and other educational personnel. At the national level, the Academy of Post-Diploma Education (*Akademija psolediplomnogo obrazovanija*) is the leading institution for the improvement of qualifications and the retraining of 'educational workers' in all areas of education. With a teaching and research staff of around one hundred persons, organized in six faculties, the Academy focuses on the areas of educational management, information technologies in education, pre-school education, psychology, cultural studies, philology, and others. In these areas, the Academy also contributes to research and to curriculum development. Furthermore, the Academy oversees the work of the in-service teacher training institutes run by the educational authorities of the district. In-service training within the public sector is provided free of charge.

The current school system

General structure

The present education system in Belarus is described as a system of lifelong learning (*sistema nepreryvnogo obrazovanija*), with general secondary education (*obščee srednee obrazovanie*) as the main element of the entire structure. The education system in Belarus covers ten main areas:

- Pre-school education,
- General secondary education,
- Out-of-school education,
- Vocational education and training,
- Secondary professional education,
- Higher education,
- Post-graduate education,
- Adult education and continuing training,
- Self-education of citizens, and
- Special education (for special needs pupils and students).

The system of general secondary education has three levels: in the framework of the current reform, the first level comprises grades 1 to 4 (primary education), the second level spans grades 5 to 10, and the third level will consist of grades 11 to 12. As from 2008, when the entire system of reformed basic education will be implemented, compulsory schooling will cover ten years. Nevertheless, the organization of the three levels in individual schools depends on traditions and local circumstances. The typology of general education schools includes the primary school (*načal'naja škola*, usually grades 1 to 4), the basic school (*bazovaja škola*, grades 1 to 10), the middle school (*srednaja škola*, currently grades 1 to 11, but after completion of the reform grades 1 to 12), the grammar school (*gimnasija*, grades 1 to 11/12 or 5 to 11/12) and the lyceum (*licej*, grades 10 to 11 and 11 to 12 respectively). In some cases, general education schools are organized as boarding schools.

In 2004 Belarus had 4744 general education schools, 15.8% of them primary schools, 22.6% basic schools, and 58% general secondary schools, including grammar schools and lyceums (MIDBR 2005b). Table 1 shows the distribution of general education schools according to school type and administrative district. The small number of primary schools in the capital reflects the fact that primary schools are primarily located in rural areas. Furthermore, accessibility to gymnasiums and lyceums is distributed unevenly across the country, resulting in disadvantages for children and young people in rural areas wishing to attend these schools.

Table 1: Distribution of general education schools in Belarus according to school type and administrative district (oblast), 2003

	primary schools	basic schools	general second. schools	gymnasiums, lyceums
Minsk	7	5	190	32
Minskaya Oblast	63	161	531	26
Vitebskaja Oblast	124	191	401	13
Mogilevskaja Oblast	54	106	350	16
Gomelskaja Oblast	53	138	468	9
Brestskaja Oblast	93	149	432	28
Grodnenskaja Oblast	53	165	325	18
Total	447	915	2697	142

Source: MARB 2004b, p. 15

Pre-primary education

Pre-school education in Belarus is considered ‘the first sub-system of general secondary education, the basic educational establishment of society and State, characterized by professional work with children’ (Latysch/Andreev 1997, p. 43). Since the end of the Soviet Union, pre-primary education has been characterized by several developments. Firstly, the structure, maintenance, and profile of educational establishments have been considerably diversified. The number of nursery schools (for two- to three-year-olds) and kindergartens (for three- to six-year-olds), which were traditionally maintained by enterprises, has declined considerably since the mid-1990s. At the same time, new play groups, day-care centres, pre-school institutions for special-needs pupils, and pre-school facilities attached to schools have been founded. Between 1998 and 2005, the number of ‘educational kindergarten-school combinations (*učebno-pedagogičeski kompleks detskij sad – škola*) has increased from 247 to 726 (MARB 2005). Secondly, the proportion of children below school entrance age attending pre-school facilities has declined in line with the rise in fees. Official data on current attendance rates of pre-school children (three- to five-year-olds) in pre-school education vary from 67.7% (MIDRB 2005, p. 2) to ‘about 80%’ (MARB 2004b, p. 14). At present, access to pre-school education in Belarus is particularly restricted for children born in no- and low-income families, and for children living in rural areas. Thirdly, concerns about financial and quality issues of pre-school provision have brought forward the design of a new model called the ‘open kindergarten’ (*otkrytyj detskij sad*). In this model, parents are involved in the educa-

tion process as teacher assistants and leaders of interest circles (MIDRB 2005b, p. 2). Fourthly, the introduction of schooling for six-year-olds as part of the current reform of the school system has been organized in such a way that the preparatory course (grade 1) is located either in a pre-school establishment or in a school, depending on the local infrastructure. In 2005 55% of all first-graders were taught in a pre-school establishment (MARB 2005).

Primary education

Primary education covers four years of schooling, including the one-year preparatory course which can be organized either in a pre-school institution or at school. Therefore, primary education at school can encompass either four years (grades 1 to 4) or three years (grades 2 to 4). As noted above, primary schooling can be organized in different ways, either in a separate primary school (*načal'naja škola*, usually grades 1 to 4), or in a basic school (*bazovaja škola*, grades 1 to 9), or in a middle school or gymnasium (*srednaja škola, gimnasija*, grades 1 to 11). Separate primary schools are often situated in rural areas. In the last ten years, as a result of the decline in the number of children, hundreds of primary schools in rural areas have closed.

By law, primary education can begin with either Belarusian or Russian as the medium of instruction. In both cases, the second language has to be taught, starting with one lesson per week in grade 1 and reaching three lessons per week in grade 4. Primary schools may, in addition, offer a first foreign language, usually English. In the context of the school reform, schools are encouraged to offer either English, German, French, or Spanish as a first foreign language from grade 2 (MARB 2005).

Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education (grades 5 to 9) is part of compulsory schooling and provided by basic schools, secondary schools, and gymnasiums. The majority of pupils of the respective age group attend basic schools (ending with grade 9) or secondary schools (ending with grade 11). Gymnasiums may begin at either grade 1 or grade 5. They differ from secondary schools in that they offer education 'at a higher level' (Latysch/Andreev 1997, p. 49). They have a specific profile, mostly in either maths and science, humanities, or arts, and compared to secondary schools they also have a higher number of lessons per week. To enter grade 5 of the gymnasium, pupils must pass an entrance exam. This also applies to pupils who have attended the primary stage of the gymnasium.

The timetable for lower secondary education is characterized above all by its uniformity. History classes start in grade 5, with history of Belarus and world history as separate subjects. Science subjects are introduced gradually, starting with geography in grade 6, biology and physics in Grade 7, and chemistry in grade 8. A foreign language is taught as a compulsory subject from grade 5. In most cases, the foreign language taught is English, followed by French, German, Spanish, and – mainly in the West of Belarus – Polish. Here, the number of lessons per week varies between two and five. Half of the basic and secondary schools also offer initial vocational training.

At the end of grade 9, pupils of all types of general education schools providing lower secondary education have to take a final examination, and graduates receive a certificate of basic education.

Upper secondary education

Successful completion of upper secondary education qualifies pupils to apply for a place in higher education. Upper secondary education is offered by both general and vocational education establishments, although the majority of pupils complete secondary education in the general education system. Within this system, the main types providing upper secondary education are secondary schools, gymnasiums, and lyceums. Whereas roughly half of all secondary schools offer, in addition to general education, initial vocational courses (*načal'noe professional'noe obučenie*), academic profiles are pursued in gymnasiums. Lyceums, on the other hand, are upper secondary education establishments with a focus on high-level specializations, and they usually provide high-quality education, not least by hiring university professors to teach specialized subjects. They are organized either as separate establishments or as components of higher education institutions. The economic prospects of higher education graduates have contributed to the attractiveness of completing upper secondary education, mostly in secondary schools. Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of secondary school graduates seek to enter the labour market directly. These young people often lack the skills necessary for working life. The current school reform aims to respond to this situation by reducing the number of taught subjects, by improving the quality of initial vocational training courses, and by developing profiles which should help graduates not only to proceed to higher education but also to find a job.

Vocational training, as provided by professional-technical schools (*professional'no-techničeskie učilišča*), has experienced a decline in public esteem and in attendance rates. At the same time, the reform of vocational training has reduced the number of specializations. Among the providers of vocational training, colleges and technical colleges offer programmes that include courses leading to 'complete' upper secondary education.

Special education schools

Belarus has a wide range of special education schools, many of them organized as boarding schools. They include schools for children with developmental and health impairments, boarding schools for orphans, and 'colonies' for delinquent children and adolescents. In addition, homeschooling is organized for pupils unable to attend school for health reasons. In 2004-05, more than 4000 children were homeschooled on this basis (GIAC 2004a).

According to the Act on Education, the system of special schools in the narrow sense comprises schools for mentally handicapped children; for children with speech, hearing, and visual impairments; for physically handicapped children; and for children with multiple disabilities. In 2004-05, twenty-one sanatorium schools, sixty-five special boarding schools and twenty special schools were in operation in Belarus (GIAC 2004a). Based on medical indications, handicapped pupils and stu-

dents are admitted to vocational schools, middle schools, and higher education institutions.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The Belarusian typology of educational levels does not include any post-secondary, non-tertiary educational establishments. Nevertheless, institutions under the heading of 'secondary special education' (*srednee special'noe obrazovanie*), primarily colleges (*kolledži*) and technical colleges (*tehnikumy*), may rightly be assigned to this type, not least because most programmes in these establishments demand graduation from a vocational school as an entrance qualification. In 2004 155 state and seven independent secondary special-education institutions provided courses for around 140,000 students in 156 professions (MIDRB 2005b). These professions include pre-school and primary school teaching.

Higher education is provided by universities, specialized universities (e.g. medical universities and pedagogical universities), academies, and other tertiary level institutions. In 2003 there were forty-two public (state) and thirteen independent (private) higher education establishments. As a general rule, permanent residents and citizens of the Republic of Belarus and of the Russian Federation can apply to study in public higher education institutions. To do so, they must have a general or specialized secondary education certificate. At present there are no alternative routes of access to higher education in Belarus. Study programmes in higher education usually last four to five years. In order to graduate from a public higher education institution, students have to pass a state exam; successful students are awarded the diploma of higher education (*diplom o vyšem obrazovanii*) after successful completion of their studies. Students who have obtained good marks are eligible to have their diploma supplemented by the bachelor's degree (*bakalavr*). In addition to this first degree level, the university system has three more levels. The master's degree (*magistr*) can be awarded after successful completion of a one- to two-year advanced study programme. A move by legislative bodies in winter 2004 that would have introduced a clear two-tier system in accordance with the Bologna Process was opposed and vetoed by the President in 2005.

The two postgraduate levels comprise scientific degrees, and the corresponding programmes are designed to train scientists. Postgraduate courses in an *aspirantura* programme qualify students to prepare a thesis for the degree of candidate of sciences (*kandidat nauk*). Holders of this degree may continue with a *doctorantura* programme in a higher education institution or research institute, leading to a doctor of sciences (*doktor nauk*) degree.

Since the early 1990s, higher education has become more and more attractive for young people. This primarily applies to state institutions, as the state diploma obtained there provides its holders with better opportunities in the labour market. In addition, the future of some of the private universities is anything but secure. In 2004, about 280,000 students were studying in public higher education institutions and about 40,000 students in independent ones. In order to cover the costs of the expanding higher education system, fees have become common in the majority of

programmes in public institutions. This is especially true for the highly attractive programmes in economics and law faculties.

A specific feature of higher education in Belarus – both public and independent – is its strong and direct control by the political authorities. For example, the influential Higher Attestation Committee (*Vysshij Attestatsionnyi Komitet* – VAK) is directly subordinated to the presidential administration. The VAK's remit covers, amongst other things, the validation of scientific degrees, and it has, in the course of the last few years, rejected a number of doctoral dissertations for political reasons. Furthermore, starting in 2004, higher education institutions had to include the mandatory course 'foundations of ideology of the Belarusian State' in the curriculum. The course consists of sixteen hours of lectures and eight hours of seminars, and it was introduced on the initiative of the President. Special training for the teachers of these courses is provided by the Academy of the Presidential Administration and by the Republican Institute of Higher Education (Rich 2004a).

Today, a lack of academic freedom, isolation from the international academic community, low wages, and outdated equipment are major weaknesses of higher education in Belarus. These problems are contributing to a serious brain-drain of top-quality scientists to Western countries, especially mathematicians, physicists, chemists, and computer programmers.

Current problems and perspectives for development

The specific challenges faced by the education system in Belarus may be seen as arising from a combination of adverse socio-economic conditions, a lack of resources, structural weaknesses of the education system, the low status of the teaching profession, and political pressure exerted on institutions and individuals. In particular, the education system is faced with the consequences of demographic decline, with a high youth unemployment rate, with corruption, and with constant political interference in the education sector.

Underfunding is a feature of the great majority of less prestigious educational institutions, from pre-schools to higher education establishments. It affects, amongst other things, the provision of schools with modern equipment, especially computers and software. According to official figures, one computer was available for every 120 pupils at secondary level in 2002. A decree on enhancing information technologies in the school system, adopted in March 2002 by the Council of Ministers, established the aim of providing one computer per twenty to twenty-five secondary school pupils by 2007 (*Informatizacija sistemy obrazovanija* 2002). Given the pace of implementation, it must be seriously doubted that this aim will be fulfilled.

Youth unemployment in Belarus is high, thus contributing to falling morale among adolescents. At least part of the high unemployment rate of young people must be attributed to the fact that vocational training is either unavailable or of poor quality for a considerable part of this age group (UNDP 2003). Furthermore, through underfunding and a lack of effective control, corruption has appeared in the education system in Belarus, particularly in higher education. It affects the transition from

secondary to tertiary education as well as grades and leaving certificates, and it devalues the grades pupils may have honestly achieved in secondary education.

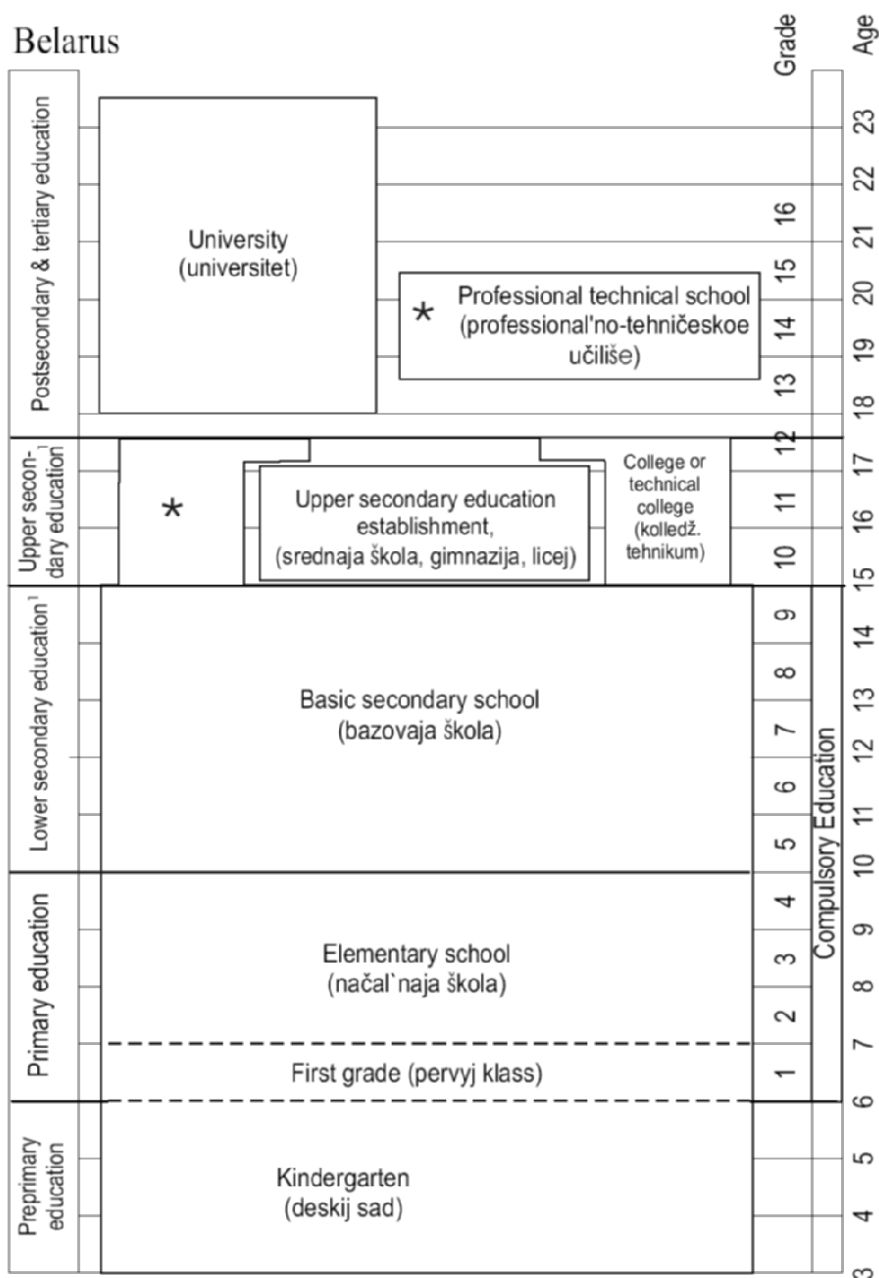
Lastly, direct intervention of the political leadership in the education system has led in recent years to a number of scandals that have demonstrated the authoritarian character of the regime, prevented educational institutions from participating normally in international contacts, and not least discouraged those who are trying to promote the country's development. This is particularly true for the closure in May 2003 of the Jakub Kolas National Humanities Lyceum, the last school in Minsk teaching its curriculum in the Belarusian language, and of the privately-run, Minsk-based European Humanities University in July 2004 (Rich 2004a). There is therefore no doubt that the future of schooling and education in Belarus will heavily depend on the political fate of the country.

References

- Andreev, V: Die Bildungsreform in der Republik Belarus – Entwurf und Realisierung [The educational reform in the Republic of Belarus – design and implementation]. In: Schmidt, G. (Ed.): *Bildungsentwicklung nach dem Zerfall der Sowjetunion: Kasachstan, Belarus, Litauen, Russische Föderation*. Frankfurt am Main 1995, pp. 44-60.
- GIAC: Glavnyj informacionno-analitičeskij centr Ministerstva Obrazovanija Respubliki Belarus': Professorsko-prepodavatel'skie rabotniki vyssich učebnych zavedenij Ministerstva obrazovanija Respubliki Belarus' [Teaching staff in higher education establishments of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus]. Minsk 2003.
- GIAC: Glavnyj informacionno-analitičeskij centr Ministerstva Obrazovanija Respubliki Belarus': Osnovnie pokazateli razvitija otrasli obrazovanija, formiruemye Glavnyj informacionno-analitičeskij centr Ministerstva obrazovanija Respubliki Belarus' [Basic indicators of the development of the educational branch, compiled by the Principal Centre for information and analyses of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus]. Minsk 2004a.
- GIAC: Glavnyj informacionno-analitičeskij centr Ministerstva Obrazovanija Respubliki Belarus': Pedagogičnyja kadry agul'naadukacyjnych škol sistěmy Minadukacyi pa stanu na 1 kastyčnika 2004 goda [Educational staff in general schools of the system in the remit of the Ministry of Education, as of September 1, 2004]. Minsk 2004b.
- Languages of instruction in schools of general education in the Republic of Belarus. Information compiled by T. Mackievič on the basis of data provided by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus. Unpublished Manuscript. Minsk, 2002.
- MARB: Ministerstva adykacyi Respubliki Belarus': Vučebny plan ystanoj, jakija zabjaspečvajuc' atrymanne agulnaj sjarednjaj adukacyi, na 2004/2005 navučal'ny god [Educational plan, worked out for general secondary education for the academic year 2004/05]. Minsk 2004a.
- MARB: Ministerstva adykacyi Respubliki Belarus': Education in Belarus. National Report of the Republic of Belarus, provided by the National Institute for Higher Education. Minsk 2004b.
- MARB: Ministerstva adykacyi Respubliki Belarus': Spravka o chode reformirovanija obsčebrazovatel'noj školy v Respublike Belarus' [Communication on the course of the reform of the general education school in the Republic of Belarus]. Minsk 2005.
- MIDRB: Ministerstvo inostrannyh del Respubliki Belarus': Nacional'nyi sostav naselenija [National composition of the population], 2005a. Online publication, retrieved February 22, 2005 <http://www.mfa.gov.by>

- MIDRB: Ministerstvo inostrannyh del Respubliki Belarus': Nauka i obrazovanie [Science and education], 2005b. Online publication, retrieved February 22, 2005b <http://www.mfa.gov.by>
- MSRB: Ministerstvo statistiki Respubliki Belarus': Statističeskoe obozrenie za 2004 god [Statistical overview for the year 2004]. Minsk 2005.
- National strategy for sustainable development for the period to 2020 of the Republic of Belarus. Key Provisions. Minsk 2004.
- Rich, V.: Higher Education – Lukashenka Style. In: *Belarusian Review* 16 (2004) 1.
- Rich, V.: Clampdown on education continues. In: *Belarusian Review* 16 (2004) 4.
- Svirina, L./Zaleskaja, G./Midzvedz, J.: Woman-Physicist in Belarus. 2005. Online-publication, retrieved February 22, 2005 <http://www.if.ufrgs.br/iupap/belarus-poster.html>
- Tomiak, J.: Erziehung, kulturelle Identität und nationale Loyalität in neu entstehenden Staaten. Die Fälle Ukraine und Belarus [Education, cultural identity and national loyalty in newly created states. The Ukrainian and Belorussian cases]. In: *Bildung und Erziehung* 46 (1993) 4, pp. 393-409.
- UNDP: Human capacity of Belarus: Economic challenges and social responses. National human development report 2003. Minsk 2003
- Worldbank: Summary Education Profile: Belarus. 2005. Online publication, retrieved February 27, <http://devdata.worldbank.org/>
- Zagoumenov, J./Zahumionau, J.: Community-based curriculum for inter-ethnic education and violence-prevention. In: *Revista Electrónica Iboamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación* 3 (2005) 1. Online-publication, retrieved April 3, 2005 <http://www.ice.deusto.es>
- Zakon Respubliki Belarus' "Ob obrazovanii", ot 29 oktjabrja 1991 g. N 1202-XII, v redakcii zakona ot 19 marta 2002 g. n° 95-3, c izmenenjami i dopolnenjami, vnesennymi zakonom Respubliki Belarus' ot 4 avgusta 2004 g. N 311-3 [Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Education", dated October 29, 1991, N 1202-XII, under the redaction of the law of March 19, 2002, n° 95-3, with changes and amendments as registered in the code of law on August 4, 2004, N 311-3].
- Zaprudnik, J.: *Historical Dictionary of Belarus.* (= *European Historical Dictionaries*, No 28.) London 1998.
- Zaprudski, S.: Linguistic Policy of the Republic of Belarus in the 1990s. In: *East European Democratic Centre (Ed.): Belarus – The Third Sector. People – Culture – Language.* Warsaw; Minsk 2002, pp. 33-40.

Belarus



¹ As from 2008, basic secondary education will cover grades 5 to 10, and from 2010, after completion of the current school reform, general upper secondary education will be provided in grades 11 and 12.

Belgium

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

At the time of independence (1830), Belgium had over 4000 public schools that were attended by 239,000 students out of a population of three and a half million. The proclamation of freedom of education by the Constitution of 1831 had a somewhat unexpected effect. Many municipalities, for which schools were a heavy burden, closed their schools. Two thousand schools disappeared. The Church, on the other hand, took advantage of the opportunity provided by the State to establish new schools with State financial support. However, private-sector initiatives were insufficient. The situation soon became catastrophic. To remedy this situation, the Parliament passed the first law organizing primary education (1842). In return for financial support from the State and the Provinces, every municipality was required to maintain at least one public school or adopt a private school. At that time only half of all students attended school free of charge. Truancy was widespread.

In 1879, under a liberal ministry, an innovative law was passed: each municipality had to have its own neutral and secular primary school, inspected by the State. Teachers in municipal schools were required to be graduates (at the time, only 60% of teachers were graduates). Curricula and textbooks had to be approved by the newly created Ministry of Public Instruction. It was at this time, following a strong reaction from Catholics, that the first 'School War' erupted. It would last ten years. Parents who sent their children to public schools were excommunicated. In 1887, a law defined the structure of secondary education. At the end of the nineteenth century, some 30% of the population were illiterate. In 1890, only 4% of children attended school for six full years. On the eve of World War I, a law introduced compulsory education for all children aged six to twelve. It also required that the teaching staff be Belgian and have a diploma from a Belgian training institution for teachers or from a board of examiners established by the Government. It generalized free schooling in subsidized schools for all children, regardless of their parents' financial resources. This law also prescribed the neutrality and secularity of state schools. The full effects of this law would not be felt until 1919.

After 1918, opinions on education became radicalized. Ideological rivalries and battles for influence strongly marked the 1950s. The second 'School War' broke out between supporters of secular public schools and supporters of private, mainly Catholic, grant-aided schools. It would last seven years (1951 to 1958). On 20 November 1958, a pact (*Pacte scolaire*) established 'school peace' through a broad-based compromise agreement amongst the three major Belgian political camps: socialists, Christian democrats, and liberals. It applied to all levels, from pre-primary

to non-university tertiary education and social advancement schools. It standardized the relationships between the different school types and guaranteed the real right to a free choice for families. The State had the right to create all levels of schools where there was a need. Subsidies to private grant-aided schools were generalized. In public schools, a religion course had to be organized alongside an ethics course. The same rules and regulations were applicable to all types of school.

Belgium soon created a specific and well-structured educational structure for children who were 'entirely able to receive an education but unable to attend an ordinary school'. A 1970 framework law established this type of education, known as 'special education'.

Reforms and innovations

Beginning in 1970, the Constitution was reformed in several steps. As a consequence, the political, legislative, and administrative structures of the State evolved towards a federal system. In this federal system, there are now three authority levels, each with its own legislative and executive bodies: the Federal State, the communities and the regions. The Federal State has a national parliament and national government. The three communities – the Flemish, the French and the German-speaking communities – are responsible for cultural and personal-related matters within a certain linguistic area. There are four linguistic areas: a Dutch-speaking area (the language spoken in the Flemish Community), a French area, a German area, and a bilingual area (Brussels). There are three regions: the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region and the Brussels Region. They are responsible for all matters fully or partly related to their respective area. In Flanders, the Community and the Region coincide politically and there is one Flemish parliament and one Flemish government.

As a consequence of recent state reforms, the educational responsibilities of each community are vested in its own education minister (executive power) and the community itself (legislative power by means of acts). Since January 1989, each community has had, except for a few restrictions, full autonomy in the area of education. The Federal Government only has competence for the pensions of the staff of educational establishments, for imposing compulsory education, and for determining the minimum conditions for gaining a degree. The Flemish system is responsible for 58% of school-aged children, the French system for 41%, and the German system for less than 1%.

Socio-cultural context of the school system

Educational targets and general function of school

The fundamental educational concept, as established by Jacques Delors (1996), of 'learning to do, learning to live together, learning to be' provides a framework for the actual mandate over key issues in education policy. This mandate, structured around knowledge, skills, and attitudes must also be differentiated and adapted to socio-economic diversity. Quality education should therefore teach and develop

values that promote a tolerant, caring, and humane society in which misunderstanding, intolerance, and isolation are abolished. Tolerance and solidarity should be stimulated, as well as critical citizenship. The general function of school has been set out as follows:

- To promote self-confidence and the development of each student as an individual;
- To enable all students to assimilate knowledge and acquire the competencies that qualify them to learn throughout their lives and assume an active place in economic, social, and cultural life;
- To prepare all students to be responsible citizens, capable of contributing to the development of a democratic and pluralistic society that is open to other cultures; and
- To ensure equal opportunities for all students.

Socio-economic context

From the beginning of the last century until 1970, the number of immigrants was relatively stable. Indeed, for a long time Belgium sought workers from outside its borders, particularly for the traditional industries in the French-speaking part of the country. A wave of immigration between 1970 and 1981 increased the total number of foreigners by more than 25% and brought many Turks and Moroccans to Belgium. Their children now account for half of the non-native Belgian population under the age of fifteen. Currently allochthones represent 9% of the total Belgian population (4.2% in Flanders, 11.3% in Wallonia, and 29.4% in the Brussels Region).

Several measures have been taken to promote positive integration based on mutual respect. In order to combat the high degree of school failure amongst the immigrant population, education policy makers have opted for an approach that is predominantly oriented to the micro-level. Two examples: schools are allowed to organize special courses to adapt to the language of instruction for the benefit of pupils of foreign nationality. In the Brussels Region, schools can even apply for extra teaching support.

Although empirical research shows that this procedure is successful, a number of shortcomings still remain: social inequality results from a number of different causes and consequently demands a broad, integrated approach. The information obtained by the schools about the pupils' background is still limited and appears inadequate to allow vigorous action against inequalities. Furthermore, teacher training pays too little attention to the issue of restricted opportunities and to the skills needed to deal with them.

Social position of the teaching profession

Salary

Salaries depend upon various factors, such as the position held, the applicable statute, the administrative situation, the required credentials, the nature and the volume of work, family circumstances, and seniority. Compensation seniority varies ac-

ording to the pay scale. Periodic pay increases (annual or biennial) are granted to a maximum amount. The maximum salary is attained after twenty-seven years of service. OECD indicators (Education at a Glance 2003) show that Belgian teachers receive a salary which is for all levels and all career moments above the average in the European Union. In 2002 salaries accounted for 68.9% of total spending on education. This percentage is higher than in most other countries of the EU. Nevertheless, the time has come to start thinking about upgrading the role of teachers, especially when it comes to salaries. The malaise now emerging in education is partly caused by the growing gulf between teachers' salaries and those of employees with similar qualifications in the private sector.

Prestige of the Profession in Society

Although press releases regularly focus on the 'malaise' in the teaching profession, TIMSS 1999 data (<http://timss.org>) show that more than 75% of the Flemish maths and science teachers report that education was their first professional choice. Only 12% of all maths teachers and 15% of all science teachers would quit education if they had the opportunity to do so. In comparison to other TIMSS countries, the Flemish teacher is very motivated. She/he is convinced that her/his profession is highly appreciated, even more by her/his pupils than by the society in which she/he operates. More recent research in the field (*Vlaamse Onderwijsindicatoren, editie 2003*) confirms the TIMSS data.

School and the role of the family

A recent survey (*Vlaamse onderwijsindicatoren, editie 2003*) involving 2811 parents of primary and secondary pupils shows that the large majority of parents have a positive attitude towards their children's schools. Most of all, they like the way schools communicate about achievement results. They also appreciate the kind of interactions between teachers and pupils. The safety regulations could, however, be improved. Furthermore, appropriate measures should be taken against teasing and bullying. The younger the children are, the more their parents feel involved in what happens at school and vice versa. Parents primarily contact the school to discuss learning problems. Less than 10% of the parents are active members of school-related councils (the School Council and the Parents Council) in which they can make formal recommendations on problems related to education and teaching. Nearly all these members are highly educated parents. A rather unexpected finding is that only 50% of the parents know about the existence of these councils.

What does the school expect from the parents? In TIMSS 1999, school principals from the lower secondary system described what they expect from parents: nearly all the schools would like the parents to ensure that children complete their homework. Schools would not like to see parents serve as an aid to teachers in the classroom, nor would they appreciate their presence in school committees which select personnel or review finances.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

Compulsory school attendance

The Belgian Constitution decrees that everyone has a right to education. In order to guarantee this right for all children, there is compulsory education. The 1983 Compulsory School Attendance Act obliges parents to send their children to school for twelve years: compulsory education starts on 1 September of the year in which the child reaches the age of six, and lasts twelve full school years. From the age of fifteen (in some cases sixteen), young people can opt for part-time education and part-time work. However, the majority of these pupils continue to receive full-time education. Compulsory education finishes at the end of the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of eighteen or when she/he has gained the Certificate of Secondary Education (irrespective of age).

All children who reside in Belgium are subject to compulsory education, i.e. also children of foreign nationality. Children who reside in the country illegally also have the right to be enrolled at a school. They have the same rights as 'legal' pupils. Compulsory education does not, however, mean compulsory schooling: children do not have to go to school to learn. They can also be educated at home. Parents who opt for this procedure (in practice there are very few) must inform the Department of Education. The authorities check that all pupils who are subject to compulsory education are actually complying. If this control reveals that a particular child is failing to comply with the rules, the parents can be punished by the courts.

The Belgian Constitution also decrees that access to education be free of charge up to the end of compulsory education. Primary and secondary schools that are funded or subsidized by the Government are therefore not permitted to demand fees. Access to nursery (non-compulsory) education is also free of charge. Moreover, for secondary and for higher education, there is a system of study allowances for parents on low incomes.

Freedom of education

One of the most important principles governing the system is freedom of education (1831, Article 17 of the Belgian Constitution). This means that the organization of educational institutions may not be submitted to restrictive measures. In other words, every natural person or legal person has the right to organize education and to establish institutions according to her/his wishes. Nevertheless, if officially acknowledged certificates and diplomas are to be awarded, and if subsidies from the communities are to be granted, legal stipulations and rules must be observed. Parents also have freedom of choice regarding the type of education or the school they select for their children.

Levels and philosophy of governance

A consequence of the constitutional freedom of education is the diversity of educational networks that exist. An educational network may come under the authority of the communities, province, municipalities, or other public institutions, as well as

under the authority of private persons or associations. Traditionally, there have been three networks:

- Community education, which comprises schools that were originally set up by the State but are now the responsibility of the communities. The Constitution states that community education must be neutral, meaning that the religious, philosophical, and ideological convictions of parents and pupils must be respected.
- Subsidized publicly run schools, which comprise municipal education organized by the municipalities and provincial education organized by the provincial administrations.
- Subsidized privately run schools, which provide education organized by a private person or private organization on private initiative. The governing body is often a non-profit-making organization. Privately run education mainly consists of catholic schools. Furthermore, protestant, Jewish, orthodox, and Islamic schools are also permitted. In addition to these denominational schools, there are also schools that are not affiliated to a particular religion. Examples of these are the Freinet schools, Montessori schools and Steiner schools, which practise their particular educational methods, and are also known as ‘method schools’.

Education organized for and by the Government (community education and municipal and provincial education) is known as publicly run education; education provided by the third network is known as privately run education. In Wallonia privately run education is less common than in Flanders, where publicly run and community education are more strongly represented.

Financing

Since 1959, the basic principle has been that the State, and now the communities, must provide all funding (in the form of a block grant) for the schools within their jurisdiction. The grants issued to the subsidized networks are intended to cover teachers’ salaries and the running, maintenance, and replacement costs of equipment and buildings. For several reasons, education in Belgium is not cheap. One of the main reasons is undoubtedly the freedom of education, which results in very dense school and discipline coverage, particularly in secondary and higher education. Different networks often offer the same discipline, and within the networks the coverage of disciplines is very similar. Controlling the education budget will remain a priority in the coming years.

General standards of the school education system

Attainment targets are replacing the traditional syllabi established for each school subject and each grade. The underlying educational philosophy is that the minimal expectations of the communities regarding education must be visible. This is indeed necessary to guarantee the quality of education and to legally protect those providing education. Attainment targets are minimum objectives that the majority of pupils should achieve at a particular level in a particular discipline. They concern knowledge, attitudes and skills. The targets are subject-related and cross-curricular. Every

governing body or school board must incorporate the attainment targets in the curriculum. A curriculum contains a systematic inventory of the objectives and contents that are to be achieved in a subject or discipline, and describes the educational methods used for this purpose.

The legislation states that the minimum objectives must be in line with societal expectations. To achieve this goal, a balanced procedure has been established in four phases:

- 1) The Department for Educational Development (DVO, see also 3.6) designs the minimum objectives.
- 2) During the advisory phase, a public debate leads to a number of formal recommendations, on which
- 3) The political administration takes the appropriate decisions.
- 4) The final version of the attainment targets is sent to Parliament for ratification.

The minimum objectives are regularly revised (every five years after implementation). It is important to mention that during the advisory phase, every citizen who wants to respond to the minimal objectives has the right to do so. In order to facilitate the implementation of the attainment targets, the Government provides supplementary information for teachers, school principals, and organizing authorities.

Quality management

The education system is very unusual in that there are no compulsory external examinations during either primary or secondary education. In 95% of schools, examinations and the transfer from one grade to the next are school-based. The award of certificates and qualifications, including those for university entrance, is also the sole responsibility of the schools themselves. Each school organizes an autonomous examination for each subject in the curriculum, which is taken by all students every trimester or semester. During the year, results of formative tests that occur on an ongoing basis are used to determine the final assessment. The instruments used in testing are constructed by the teacher and are nearly always open-ended.

The Belgian education system employs a number of means, however, to achieve the best match between the intended and the implemented curriculum. Quality control and monitoring in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education are based on three pillars:

- The attainment targets: a framework of reference for quality with a clear social basis.
- The inspectorate: a professional system of external supervision. The members of the inspectorate examine whether the attainment targets are being achieved, and whether other organic obligations are being properly observed (e.g. the application of a timetable based on the core curriculum). They act as a team and inspect the entire school/centre. All establishments are audited once every six years. The results are published in a report, and made available to the public. Every year an overall report is presented to the Parliament of Flanders.
- The educational advisors: professional internal support.

These advisors operate in their respective networks at the request of the schools for whom they provide professional internal support. They are responsible for matters like innovation projects, self-evaluation projects, and support initiatives. Every year they submit a report to the Government to justify their actions.

Another means to help ensure the alignment of intended and actual educational practice is the development of instructional materials, including textbooks, instructional guides, and ministry notes that are tailored to the attainment targets. Participation in large scale surveys like TIMSS and PISA provides the opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of the educational system in comparison to other countries, to detect strong and weak points, and to make appropriate monitoring decisions.

Quality management and monitoring in higher education

Quality control in higher education differs significantly from the procedures used in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools. Internal quality control obliges each institution to monitor its own education and research activities. Colleges of higher education and universities are also evaluated by external visitation committees. This takes place in partnership with other Belgian or foreign institutions.

Support systems

One of the pillars in the system created to maintain high quality in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education is the Department for Educational Development (DVO), founded by the Decree of 17 July 1991 (Flemish Community). Its mission is to advise the Flemish government and the Minister of Education on five important issues:

- The formulation of proposals concerning attainment targets for all schools in pre-primary education, primary, and secondary education;
- The development of instruments to analyse and evaluate schools;
- The development of criteria for the approval of curricula and individual educational plans;
- The development of criteria for the approval of curricula and course structures; and
- The development of proposals for occupational profiles and specific attainment targets for teachers.

The DVO also operates an integrated framework of educational indicators. The purpose of such a framework is to monitor the system as a whole. The indicators report has been published since 1998 on a yearly basis. Along with Flemish indicators concerning context, input, process, and outcomes of the school system, they also contain international indicators from TIMSS and PISA. The Homologation Committee (French Community) has access to all student documents, thereby enabling verification that:

- The curricula being taught are consistent with those established and approved by the Minister of Education or equivalent,
- Subjects are being taught to the proper level, and

- Students are meeting the legal requirements regarding length of courses and admission.

The Committee is responsible for accrediting upper secondary school certificates. It is composed of an equal number of members from public and private grant-aided schools.

A recent evolution: the European dimension in school programmes

Belgium has always participated in European school programmes. This participation was, however, never perceived as an obligation to comply with European benchmarks, targets, or standards. Since May 2003, however, the implementation of the European action plan related to the reference levels of European average performance in education and training has been considered a high priority in Belgium. Five aspects will be taken into consideration:

- 1) Early school leavers;
- 2) Mathematics, science, and technology;
- 3) Completion of upper secondary education;
- 4) Basic skills; and
- 5) Lifelong learning.

For each of these aspects, education indicators will be developed on the basis of empirical research to enable comparison with European benchmarks and to monitor the system accordingly (*Vlaamse onderwijsindicatoren, editie 2003*).

The current school system

General structure: overview

In Belgium there are three levels of education: elementary (ISCED 0 + ISCED 1), secondary (ISCED 2 + ISCED 3), and tertiary (ISCED 5 and ISCED 6). Elementary education consists of nursery (non-compulsory) education and primary education.

Although there are a number of differences in the organization of the Dutch, French, and German education systems, these are in general rather small, and mainly occur at the secondary level. In Wallonia, two types of secondary education, the comprehensive type 1 and the traditional type 2, still co-exist, while in Flanders the unified secondary structure (a compromise between traditional and comprehensive education) was introduced in 1989.

The scheme shows the structure of the education system in the Flemish Community and in the French Community. There is also special education for mentally or physically handicapped children and adolescents who require special care. From the age of fifteen or sixteen, pupils can receive training in part-time vocational secondary education. Tertiary education consists of university education (provided by the universities) and non-university education (provided by the colleges of higher education). Adult education is also provided.

Pre-primary education

Belgium belongs to the front runners in this field, with participation in pre-primary non-compulsory education from a relatively young age. The first 'nursery school' was opened in Brussels in 1827. During their first phase, the nursery schools were intended for children whose parents worked outside. The primary concern was the child's moral well-being and health. Later on, nursery education was considerably influenced by innovators like Fröbel (Germany), Montessori (Italy) and Decroly (Belgium).

The fact that children can go to school at an early age compared to other countries means that children from under-privileged backgrounds have greater opportunities. Although nursery education is not compulsory, the participation rate is extremely high: nearly all children (more than 95%) are enrolled in the three learning groups (from two and a half to four, from four to five and from five to six). Very few countries have such a high enrolment. Structurally, nursery and primary education function as separate entities, but the aim is to realize a fluent transition between the two educational levels. Teaching is organized around 'experience-related' education, meaning that the personal experiences of the child are the central focus. Full attention is given to positive and negative experiences, and free initiative is stimulated. Self-realization is set as a target. The following minimum subject areas are taught: physical education, expressive education, mother tongue, environmental studies, and initiation into mathematics. Wherever possible, an attempt is made to interrelate the various learning areas. Since September 1998, educational standards have been implemented in nursery education.

Transition from nursery school to primary schools

In pre-school education, pupils are mainly evaluated by observation. This kind of evaluation has a predictive function: transition to the following phase of the nursery school or transition from the nursery school to the primary school. It also has an evaluative function (what does the child know in comparison with her/his peers?) and a diagnostic function (to understand why development is inhibited or why certain learning processes do not occur).

Special programmes

In addition to the fact that since 2000 child carers can be engaged to assist nursery teachers, a programme (known as category 10) is currently in place for children who live in less favourable economic and cultural circumstances. The idea is to work on learning difficulties that may cause problems in the transition from pre-school to primary school. Additional teachers, schools for special education, and pupil guidance centres work closely together with the pre-school teacher. Attention is paid to general language proficiency, social skills, prevention and remediation of learning difficulties, socio-emotional problems, and co-operation with parents. Another programme (known as category 14) has been developed for the specific needs of smaller target groups: the pre-school children of travelling employed populations (circus workers, bargemen, showmen, etc.) and gipsy children.

Primary education

Primary education is aimed at children from the ages of six to twelve and comprises six consecutive years. The start of primary education normally coincides with the start of compulsory education. Primary schools account for approximately one third of the total compulsory population. For children of foreign nationality who have recently arrived in Belgium for immigration purposes, compulsory education officially starts from the sixtieth day after registration. Primary schools usually work with the year/class system, whereby each group has its own class teacher, who does most of the teaching. For religious/moral instruction and for physical instruction a special tutor can be designated.

In primary education, the educational provision covers the same areas as in nursery education; the mathematical introduction is replaced by actual mathematics. 'Learning to learn' and 'social skills' are provided as cross-curricular themes. Since September 1998 education standards have been in force. After completing the sixth year, a certificate is given to pupils who have achieved the curriculum targets.

Transition from one grade to another in the primary schools

In the primary school the teacher has to develop tests which are given at the end of each learning phase to evaluate the realization of the educational objectives and to test the effectiveness of the learning process. A school report provides the pupils and their parents with a regular overview of the results, the progress made, the learning behaviour, and the development of the personality of the pupil. Formative tests can be supplemented by more extended summative tests.

In the Flemish Community, the legislation on basic education obliges the primary schools to provide a school plan reporting the evaluation procedures used in their pedagogical project. It is, however, imperative to pursue the officially stipulated final standards. The French Community is experimenting with a regulation to evaluate pupils every two years. This means that the transition from grade 1 to 2, from grade 3 to 4, and from grade 5 to 6 occurs automatically. After the completion of each cycle of two grades, the question is asked as to whether the pupil can transfer to the next cycle. By 2005 all schools should have implemented this reform.

Special programmes

Primary schools may employ a remedial teacher (category 11), whose task consists in helping children with temporary learning or developmental difficulties. The guidance takes place individually or in small groups within the regular classroom, according to the pupils' needs. The languages of the immigrant population are not legally recognized as minority languages. To facilitate the social integration of immigrant school entrants who do not speak the native language, specific introductory classes are organized (category 13). After completion of this special programme, the pupils can enrol in regular education (at primary or secondary school level). The main objective is to encourage the active integration of the immigrant entrants into school life.

A policy has also been instituted within the educational system to provide for adequate learning opportunities in schools with a significant number of immigrant or refugee children. Schools must develop an educational approach (category 12) with special attention to the teaching of the school language, intercultural education, the tackling of learning and developmental problems, and co-operation with immigrant families.

Because of the many cultures and languages in the Brussels Region, a more favourable teacher/pupil ratio is applied when compared with schools in Flanders and Wallonia (known as category 16). Temporarily home-based education (known as category 9) applies to both ordinary and special primary education. Two conditions have to be satisfied: an illness or an accident causing an absence of over twenty-one calendar days and a written request from the parents (plus a medical certificate) asking the school for temporarily home-based education.

Children placed in a sheltered home by a juvenile court are weighted 1.5 instead of 1 to determine the special number of teaching periods in the schools (category 15). Category 10, mentioned above as a special programme for nursery education, also applies to primary education.

Lower secondary education

The Flemish community

Since 1989, full-time secondary education has been organized in accordance with a unified system in which a great deal of importance is attached to the core curriculum. This uniform system comprises stages, types of education, and study disciplines. The majority of teaching periods in the first stage (Grades 7 and 8) are devoted to the core curriculum and consists of Dutch, French and possibly English, Mathematics, Geography, Education in the arts, Sciences, Technology, Physical education, and Religion or ethics. The definitive choice of subjects is postponed until the second stage (grades 9 and 10).

Transition

The class committee decides whether or not a pupil has passed; in other words, whether a pupil has achieved the objectives of the curriculum to a sufficient degree. The class committee consists of the head teacher and all the teachers who teach the pupil concerned. Every year has a corresponding certificate. The governing bodies can choose their own evaluation methods. With the exception of a few basic rules, the education authorities do not impose any norms with regard to pupils' assessment. The inspectorate controls the quality of the evaluation in the school audits.

Special programmes

Many special programmes have been designed both for primary and secondary education. Reference is made to the categories 12, 13, 15, and 16 already described under the special programmes for primary education.

Upper secondary education

The Flemish community

From the second stage (Grades 9 and 10) onwards, there are four different types of education and pupils can choose a particular course of study. A number of these

courses only start in the third stage (Grades 11 and 12). The four types of education are as follows:

- General secondary education (ASO), in which the emphasis is on broad general education, which in particular provides a firm foundation for entry to higher education. About 39% of pupils attend ASO (school year 2002-03).
- Technical secondary education (TSO), in which the emphasis is particularly on general and technical theoretical subjects. After TSO, young people can take up a profession or go into higher education. This form of education also includes practical lessons. About 32% of pupils attend TSO (school year 2002-03).
- Secondary education in the arts (KSO), in which a broad general education is combined with active art education. After KSO, young people can take up a profession or go on to higher education. Less than 2% of pupils attend KSO (school year 2002-03).
- Vocational secondary education (BSO), which is a practical type of education in which young people learn a specific vocation in addition to receiving general education. About 27% of pupils attend BSO (school year 2002-03).

In the second and third stages (Grades 9 to 12), there is a common and an optional part. In the optional part, the core curriculum is supplemented with a broad range of possible subjects. In the third stage, however, the specific educational content can be further narrowed down with a view to the ultimate choice of profession or possible study programme in higher education. Pupils can also opt for a seventh year after Grade 12 (technical, artistic and vocational) or for a fifth year after four years of vocational education. A pupil gains the Certificate of Secondary Education after successfully completing six years of ASO, TSO, or KSO, or seven years of BSO. With a Certificate of Secondary Education from any school, type of education, or course of study, a young person has unrestricted access to higher education.

In Wallonia and in the German community: the traditional (categorized) and the comprehensive types still co-exist

In Wallonia, so-called type 1 comprehensive education and type 2 traditional categorized education still co-exist. Comprehensive education is by far the most common form in Wallonia. Only in Brussels are there still a number of schools that offer the traditional type 2.

The structure of type 1 education is as follows:

- a) Three cycles of two years:
 - Cycle 1: the observation cycle.
 - Cycle 2: the orientation cycle.
 - Cycle 3: the determination cycle.
- b) Four educational forms:
 - General education,
 - Technical education,
 - Artistic education, and
 - Vocational education.

- c) Two kinds of main streams:
Transition and qualification.
In both streams there are different study options.
- d) Specialization years:
At the level of the second and the third cycle specialization years are offered.

Type 2 education – traditional categorized education

The structure of type 2 education is as follows:

- a) Two cycles of three years:
A lower cycle and a higher cycle.
- b) Educational forms:
General education, and
Technical and vocational education (only in the higher cycle).

In contrast with the comprehensive type of education, the type 2 pupil does not have the opportunity to put together her/his own study programme. The determination of her/his educational form can also not be postponed, as she/he has to make her/his choice immediately after primary schooling.

Transition

The transition rules are the same as in lower secondary education: a class committee decides whether or not a pupil has passed. Every year is officially completed through the award of an orientation certificate, a study certificate, or a diploma.

Special programmes

The special programmes mentioned under lower secondary education also apply to higher secondary education.

Part-time secondary education

Alongside full-time education, there is also part-time secondary education and part-time vocational secondary education. This form of education was introduced in 1983 together with the extension of compulsory school attendance from sixteen to eighteen. These alternative forms of education are organized in part-time educational centres or in retail training centres.

Special education

In the rather short international history of special education, Belgium has always been considered a trendsetter. Already as a pioneer in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also during the last century, many legislative decisions were made to provide appropriate education for special needs children. Special education is intended for children and adolescents who cannot attend ordinary education due to temporary or permanent pedagogic needs. They require special assistance. The main aim is to integrate the pupils into the world of education on the one hand, and into society on the other.

The four training programmes provided by special education correspond to well-defined educational aims:

- Social training focusing on integration in a protected environment,
- General and social training focusing on integration in a protected labour situation,
- Social and vocational training focusing on integration in a normal environment and work situation, and
- Training preparing for higher education and for integration into active life.

A distinction is made between special pre-primary education (from two and a half to six years of age), special primary education (from six to thirteen years) and special secondary education (from thirteen to twenty-one years).

Special nursery education is aimed at children who need special help, temporarily or permanently. This can be because of physical or mental disability, because of serious behavioural or emotional problems, or because of serious learning difficulties. 0.74% of all nursery age children are in special education. The transition to primary education can be postponed for two years. In primary education (mainstream and special education together) 5.92% of pupils are currently receiving special education. In a number of cases, these children can also gain a certificate. If so, the certificate is equivalent to a certificate obtained in mainstream education.

Special secondary education: in full-time secondary education 3.7% of pupils attend special schools. The years in special secondary education rarely coincide with the school years in mainstream secondary education. Indeed, a pupil only passes to the next 'learning stage' when she/he is ready for this.

Primary and secondary special education is structured according to different types, which correspond to the pupils' needs:

- Type 1: slight mental handicap.
- Type 2: moderate or severe mental handicap.
- Type 3: emotional disturbances.
- Type 4: physical disability.
- Type 5: protracted illness.
- Type 6: visual deficiencies.
- Type 7: hearing deficiencies.
- Type 8: serious learning difficulties (only in primary education).

About 4% of the overall school population receive special education. The so-called 'integrated education' of handicapped pupils in a regular school is also starting up. This integration is organized with the aid of experts in the domain of special education.

Transition

In special education, the evaluation is mainly formative. The class council and the guidance centre decide on the composition of the classes. This also implies that they decide whether a pupil remains in the same group or moves to a higher class or to another educational form. During the lessons, pupils from different mentally or

physically handicapped types can be grouped together. Each child receives individualized education, adapted to her/his specific needs.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Tertiary education consists of non-university education and university education. Transitions between the different levels in higher education are possible. In order to gain access to higher education, a student must possess a higher secondary education diploma, obtained upon completion of full secondary education (general, technical and artistic) or of a seventh year in vocational education. There is no *numerus clausus*, but there are entrance examinations for students who wish to take a degree in higher education in nautical sciences, a Master's degree in particular artistic disciplines, or a university degree in civil engineering, civil engineering and architecture, dentistry, or medicine.

Higher non-university education

Higher non-university education includes a range of possibilities. They can be divided into eight main categories:

- Technical education,
- Education in economics,
- Education in social sciences,
- Artistic education,
- Paramedical education,
- Education in agriculture,
- Pedagogical education, and
- Nautical education.

Both short-term (three years of study) and long-term (four or five years of study) programmes are provided. Short-term higher education aims to enable students to acquire professional skills and to find a job upon completion of their training. Practical apprenticeships are also provided. Long-term higher education is 'academic' education. Students are trained to apply the results of scientific research in the everyday reality of their occupations.

University education

A university is an institution that is active in the fields of academic education, research, and scientific activities in the interests of society. The universities inform the Government about their achievements and policy options. There are six universities in Flanders and three in Wallonia. Academic education is based on basic research and contributes as a whole to general education, preparing the student to independently practise a scientific discipline or apply scientific knowledge. Students can enter into full-time or part-time university education.

Universities can offer basic courses in eighteen disciplines. The basic courses are divided into two cycles. The first cycle concludes with a candidate's first degree and lasts two years. For medical and veterinary courses, the first cycle lasts three years.

The second cycle usually lasts two years. However, for some courses the second cycle lasts three or even four years. Most courses conclude with a Licentiate's (Master's) degree. In the light of the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations, the current structure will certainly be modified. Discussions on the specific application of the principles in the Declarations are currently taking place. Advanced academic courses comprise supplementary courses and specialist courses. A supplementary course is aimed at supplementing or extending one or more academic courses in the second cycle. The course finishes with the academic degree in the supplementary field of study. Academic teacher training concludes with a 'qualification for upper secondary school teaching'. Students in the second cycle of a university basic course can receive this academic teacher training, but the 'qualification for upper secondary school teaching' can only be awarded when the student has gained the degree for the second cycle. A doctoral programme is focused on the preparation of a doctoral thesis. The doctoral course concludes with a degree. A doctorate based on a thesis concludes with the academic title of 'doctor' after a public defence of the thesis.

Adult education

In our rapidly changing society, regular retraining and in-service education have become a necessity in all sectors. A number of students within the regular school system make study choices for which they are not suited. In later life, these groups are confronted with reduced opportunities on the labour market. Adult education is aimed at remedying this problem. The education departments therefore organize education for social advancement, part-time artistic education, distance learning, basic education, and second-chance education to cater to this need. Adult education is also organized by the Economics Department, Employment and Home Affairs, as well as by the Welfare, Public Health and Culture Department.

Special programme

The centres for adult education organize courses in both Dutch and French as a foreign language for adults.

Transition to higher education

In higher education evaluation is based on an examination at the end of the year and on a dissertation. In a number of cases, the individual dossier of each student is also taken into consideration, mainly to assess his or her practical skills. Currently more initiatives are being taken to also introduce some forms of formative evaluation, which would facilitate the assessment of the teaching process during the year.

As mentioned above, the different levels of higher education have their own structures, specific objectives, and educational methods. Currently, however, more and more agreements are being made between schools of the same or different levels. The aim is to abolish the rigid traditional divisions between the educational levels. Interpenetration becomes possible. An example: students with a diploma of higher non-university education get some credits (exemption for a part of the compulsory courses) when they enrol at a university.

Teacher education in higher education

In Belgium teachers are trained on three educational levels:

- University training.
In addition to their university diploma, university students can acquire a diploma in ‘aggregate secondary education’. The first part of the programme is a theoretical introduction. The second part provides a practical initiation: the student observes a number of lessons in the class and also teaches under the supervision of a mentor. To obtain her/his diploma, the candidate is invited to present two (public) examination lessons. If she/he succeeds, she/he is qualified to teach in the upper grades of secondary education.
- Full-time training in higher non-university education (short type).
In these institutes, teacher training is organized for pre-primary (nursery) education, primary education, and the lower level of secondary education. The students in this form of education choose one or two subjects for which they will be qualified. This three-year training programme is available to students with a diploma in secondary education.
- Part-time training in pedagogical education for social advancement.
For teachers responsible for vocational practice (secondary education), and for teachers for whom no training programme is available in higher non-university education, specific training is provided in education for social advancement. It is always part-time education, organized in the evening or at weekends. This study programme also includes a theoretical and a practical part.
After passing a test, the candidates receive a Certificate of Pedagogical Competence, which allows them to teach technical courses in the lower and higher secondary grades of vocational, technical, and artistic education.

A distinction is made between teachers employed on a ‘temporary basis’, and ‘nominated’ teachers. To be nominated, teachers must have senior status. They must also possess the required pedagogical diploma or, in the case of a teacher shortage, a diploma classified as providing a sufficient qualification. As a temporary measure in emergency situations, a third type of qualification can be accepted. Only the first two types of qualification mentioned above can lead to nomination. The Government subsidizes a teacher training course in Islamic studies.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Problems of the teaching profession

Statistics already show that the teaching profession is becoming less and less attractive. Possible underlying factors are the longer duration of teacher training (from two to three years), the very long period of temporary appointment without a guarantee of nomination, and the lower wages in education compared to the private sector. The question is:

How can we cope with the teacher shortage and make the teaching profession more attractive?

The Government aims to provide a sufficient number of competent and motivated teachers for schools in the short and the medium term.

Realization strategies

In order to remedy the teacher shortage in the short term, a number of new measures have been introduced since September 2000:

- In the future, it will be more rewarding for teachers to work overtime; there will also be a more flexible arrangement for returning to a job temporarily from leave or retirement.
- The teacher replacement pool creates a better status for supply teachers; the pool provides job security and a secure income in exchange for regional deployment to replace absent colleagues.

Because of the enormous shortages on the labour market, a number of additional measures were recently taken, entering into effect from 2001. The aims of these measures were as follows:

- To provide additional support for teachers and school management teams from sectors where there are still sufficient reserves of labour;
- To encourage students to opt for teacher training (this aim was promoted by means of a recruitment campaign in the media);
- To provide a premium for teachers who work in Brussels, and who pass the language examination;
- To introduce longer uninterrupted periods of teaching practice (two months) for students in their last year of teacher training; and
- To draw up formulae to train (unemployed and employed) nursery teachers and physical education teachers to become primary teachers.

In order to make the teaching profession an attractive and valued job once again in the medium term, a coherent and co-ordinated action plan was introduced with various policy projects:

- In 2000, teacher training visits started. Stakeholders are the users of teacher training, i.e. the clients and providers, and other experts. The result of this evaluation will indicate the line to be taken for the revision of initial training and in-service training.
- In 2000, the Government concluded the Collective Employment Agreement V. This agreement places an emphasis on improving the working conditions of teaching staff, and mainly consists of investments to improve working conditions with additional support and a reduction in planning load.
- Discussions in 2001 resulted in the Collective Employment Agreement VI, which applies to 2001 and 2002. In addition to a general salary increase, the CEA VI comprises a significant reduction in workload. With regard to salary conditions, the Government has commissioned a study to compare teaching salaries with salaries in other sectors and in other countries, and to determine the direction of the new salary policy for Flemish teachers.

- Professional school management: the Government of Flanders Act on the legal status of schools will be amended so that schools have the scope, instruments, and capacities to fulfil their role as employer as well as possible, and to implement a personnel policy which develops, monitors, coaches, and values teachers.
- With regard to the plan of action for rewarding teachers, the minister has initiated a broad social debate. In 2000, the teaching profession was on the agenda during the hearings of the Education Commission of the Parliament of Flanders. The social debate and the evaluation of teacher training will result in an overall idea of the teaching profession and related policy proposals.

Target-group policy

The Belgian government devotes particular attention to the educational problems of specific target groups. Therefore, different projects have been established in the last ten years, both at and across specific educational levels. These projects differ markedly with regard to objectives, administrative management, and methods of funding, supervision, and monitoring.

Realization strategies: Additional periods and support

The educational priority projects (focusing on children with immigrant backgrounds in primary and secondary education) and the extended special needs provision projects (focusing on educationally deprived children in primary education) give schools an opportunity to apply for additional periods. Schools that are given additional periods can make use of different supportive measures. There are educational advisors across networks who can supervise schools. They usually work free of charge for the schools involved. In addition, schools in Brussels can apply for extra support for the implementation of educational priority and for the extension of special needs provision. Finally, there are a number of projects focusing on particular target groups. For example, there is a nursery class in Antwerp for the young children of bargemen, and a school network is being built up which these children can attend when they are travelling with their parents. In tertiary education, the Government is subsidizing a teacher training course in Islamic studies.

A number of training courses are co-operating in a project aimed at promoting both the intake and the transfer of immigrant children, and at ensuring that the training itself responds better to recent developments in the educational field in terms of educational priority and the extension of special needs provision. For non-Dutch speaking newcomers, e.g. under the age of eighteen, reception classes are organized both in primary and secondary education. The quick acquisition of sufficient language skills (whether Dutch, French, or German) is central to the successful participation of these children in the ordinary education system. Centres for adult education and centres for adult basic education organize courses in both Dutch and French as a foreign language for adults.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Since 1996, the Government has implemented a policy of promoting ICT in education. It aims to encourage schools to integrate ICT in their lessons by means of information and awareness raising campaigns, in-service training, subsidies for infrastructure, and project funding. Pupils learn what ICT is and how to use it while they acquire the content of various subjects and disciplines.

Realization strategies

The policy of promoting ICT is based on five strands:

- Providing the necessary basic infrastructure. The original aim was to provide one PC for every ten pupils by 2002 in the three highest grades of primary education, and in all the secondary grades. In addition, the Federal Telecom Act ensured that schools have an opportunity to be connected to the Internet cheaply with ISDN technology.
- In order to support schools in the introduction of ICT, various projects were set up. The publication of an ICT step by step plan should enable schools to draw up their own policy on ICT.
- Teachers must be convinced of the added value of using ICT. They are also expected to be sufficiently competent in the field. Therefore, in terms of training, policy makers must work at two levels at the same time. First and foremost is the training of the next generation of teachers. Attention to the implementation of ICT in teacher training is a policy priority in the short and medium term. Secondly, it is necessary to work with the current generation of teachers by providing in-service training. In Flanders, there are currently five regional expertise networks that are actively involved in helping teachers to catch up by providing in-service training for ICT at the educational, technical, and organizational level.
- Many European countries are faced with similar needs and problems regarding the introduction of new media into education. Therefore, the establishment of a joint international platform where experiences can be exchanged and initiatives can be drawn up together was by no means an unnecessary luxury. The European School Network was established in 1998 as a framework for networking and for the exchange of information and projects.
- ICT policy must be underpinned by research and will have to be regularly evaluated. In December 2000, a three day ICT forum was organized in this context where teachers, school management teams, youth workers, industry, and policymakers scrutinized ICT policy. Following this forum, a new policy plan will be developed with new emphases, such as the expansion of the infrastructure programmes, the improvement of ICT applications, attention to safe internet use, the creation of a new educational portal site, etc.

Lifelong learning

Learning is a process that encompasses a whole lifespan. The desire to learn can be stimulated by the Government by providing learning contents and learning situations

from primary to higher education that promote the skills for lifelong learning and make them useful for the future. Self-monitored learning and thinking in a problem-solving manner are skills that could be taught in the basic education of all young people. This process requires challenging attainment targets, sometimes across the different subjects, as well as basic skills.

Realization strategies

The centres for adult education are responsible for making lifelong learning for adults a real possibility. Continuing education is currently structured in a transparent way, and follows on from secondary education. In the short term, it needs to determine how adult education can be made more attractive to skilled and experienced teachers. The creation of a complete electronic learning platform is another important element in facilitating lifelong learning for adults. The development of combined education in the centres for adult education also fits into this framework. Adults can also have learning experiences outside the formal education system, for example during their work experience. In the future, these competencies acquired outside work will also be valorized. This target has a place in a European perspective.

References

- Monseur, C./Brusselmans-Dehairs, C.: Belgium. In: Robitaille, D. F. (Ed.): National Contexts for Mathematics and Science Education. An Encyclopedia of the Education Systems participating in TIMSS, Vancouver 1997, pp. 50-61.
- Brusselmans-Dehairs, C.: Belgium-Flemish. In: Robitaille, D. F./Beaton, A. E./Plomp, T. (Ed.): The Impact of TIMSS on the Teaching and the Learning of Mathematics and Science. Vancouver 2000, pp. 22-27.
- Brusselmans-Dehairs, C.: Belgien. In: Döbert, H./Hörner, W./von Kopp, B./Mitter, W.: Die Schulsysteme Europas. Baltmannsweiler second ed. 2004, pp. 32-48.
- EURYDICE: Lifelong Learning: the contributions of educational systems in the Member States of the European Union. Results of the EURYDICE Survey. Brussels 2000.
- Jeuris, M.: Studeren in Wallonië. Brussel 1998.
- Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap: Vlaanderen gepeild. De Vlaamse overheid en waardenonderzoek. Brussel 1998.
- Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement onderwijs, afdeling begroting en gegevensbeheer: Vlaamse onderwijsindicatoren in internationaal perspectief – editie 1999. Brussel 1999.
- Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement onderwijs, afdeling begroting en gegevensbeheer: Vlaamse onderwijsindicatoren in internationaal perspectief – editie 2003. Brussel 2004.
- Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement onderwijs, afdeling begroting en gegevensbeheer: Statistisch jaarboek van het Vlaams onderwijs 2002-2003. Brussel 2003.
- Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department: Education in Flanders. A broad view of the Flemish educational landscape. Brussels 2001.
- OECD: Education at a Glance. OECD Indicators. Paris 1998.
- OECD: Education at a Glance. OECD Indicators. Paris 2003.
- UNESCO: World education report. Oxford 1995.

Vanderpoorten, M. (ed. Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, administratie Kanselarij en Voorlichting): Beleidsnota Onderwijs en Vorming 1999-2004. Brussel 2000.

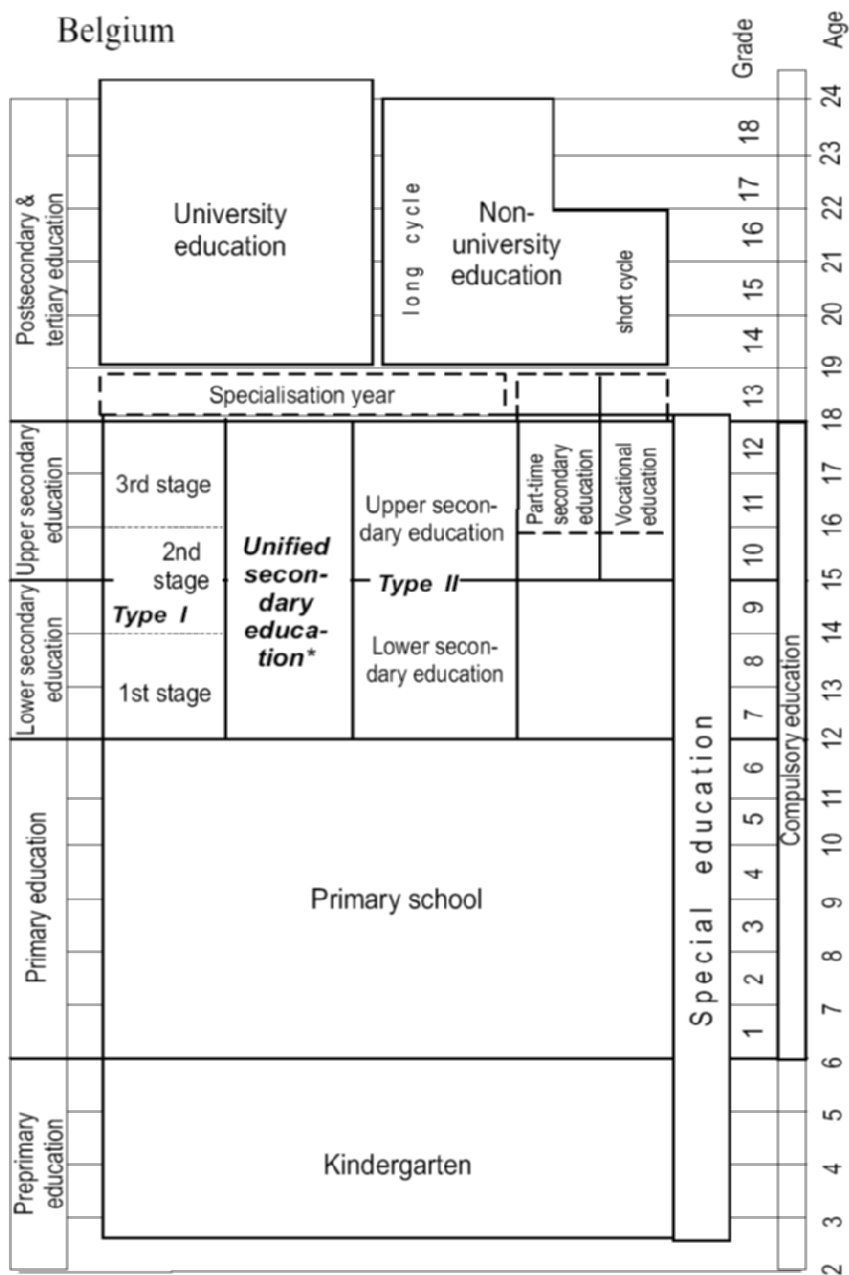
Wielemans, W.: Het onderwijs in België. Onderwijs in de Europese Unie: eenheid en verscheidenheid. Open universiteit. Leuven-Apeldoorn 1996.

<http://www.Euridyce.org>

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be>

<http://www.restode.cfwb.be>

<http://www.timss.org>



* The unified structure (introduced in the Flemish community 1989) reflects a compromise between the traditional (Type II) and the comprehensive education (Type I)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of school education

The institutionalisation of a modern education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) goes back to Austro-Hungarian rule in the late nineteenth century. Having noticed that about 97% of the population was illiterate, the provincial government launched a programme for establishing a network of public schools (Russo 2000, p. 950). In addition to these public institutions, there were private schools maintained mostly by the religious communities. This structure persisted after the fall of the Habsburg monarchy in 1918, and the foundation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which lasted until World War II. The War severely damaged educational institutions, which meant that post-war Yugoslavia had to rebuild schools and totally restructure the school system. Especially the new Head of State Josip Broz Tito considered education a key aspect of the reconstruction and development of the country, and he placed high political priority on educational issues. As in other communist countries, the education system was deeply influenced by Marxist and atheist ideology:

The nation-wide system of free compulsory education helped to serve as a mortar that bound the multi-ethnic Yugoslav Republic together with a communist-socialist ideology, as the schools were open to all children regardless of their religious, ethnic, or social background (Russo 2000, p. 951).

However, 'socialist values and ideology were not aimed at promoting critical thinking and analysis'; instead of this, 'brotherhood and unity' were promoted (Perry 2003, p. 20). All private and religious schools were abolished. Another typical feature was the centralized structure of the planning, financing, and administration of educational institutions.

The first step was to establish basic education in the whole of Yugoslavia. Only a small number of pupils continued their education at secondary level. In the 1950s, there were primary schools of four, six, and eight years' duration. The General Law on Primary Education of 1958, however, made eight years of primary school education compulsory. This structure persisted in BiH until 2003.

Reforms and innovations

The Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, which significantly decentralized social and political life, affected education as well, particularly in terms of management and financing. In 1987, the first 'all-Yugoslav' core curriculum was introduced (Perry 2003, p. 21).

The improvement of the education system resulted in nearly complete enrolment of all children of primary-school age by the beginning of the 1980s. At that time, about 70% of all pupils proceeded to secondary education. Before 1990, school governance, ownership, and administration; the structure of the school system; the curriculum; and teacher training in BiH were not substantially different from that in the other republics of the former Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. BiH differed only with respect to quantity and quality, for example in the number of school buildings or the teaching personnel's level of qualification.

The early 1990s saw some reform attempts aimed at bringing the education system of BiH closer to European standards. But these efforts ceased when war broke out in April 1992. Not only did military activities, together with war crimes such as massacres, rape, and criminal ethnic cleansing severely damage the educational opportunities of school-age children, but they also threatened their health and even their lives. 99% of Bosnian pupils witnessed shelling in their immediate environment, the homes of 72% came under fire, 52% saw a person killed, and 40% were targeted by snipers themselves. However, schools all over BiH continued to operate whenever possible, although with shortened school years and under deplorable material circumstances (Russo 2000, p. 954). During the war, 60% of all schools were damaged, destroyed, or requisitioned for military use; numerous university facilities and libraries were destroyed. Furthermore, the curricula were increasingly politicized by nationalist politicians representing the three main ethnic groups in BiH, creating cleavages that were difficult to overcome after the war (Perry 2003, pp. 22-23).

The Dayton Agreement of 14 December 1995 marked the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and established the two entities which make up the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS). Whereas the Republika Srpska is centrally organized, the Bosniak-Croat Federation comprises ten cantons which in turn include several municipalities. This also has implications for educational matters: while the education system in the RS is centralized under the control of a single Minister and guided by the Pedagogical Institute located in Banja Luka, authority over educational issues in the Federation was delegated to the ten cantons by the Dayton Agreement. Each of these has been endowed with its own Ministry of Education.

Thus, since 1995, out of the unified and highly centralized pre-war system have emerged three independent education systems and school curricula, driven by the desire to create Bosniak, Croat, and Serb identities, each of them with different languages, histories, and ethics (Lenhart 2000, p. 52). Until most recently (2003-04, see below) this was the prevailing pattern and, in some aspects, it continues to exist.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general functions of school education

The right to education, which is fixed in international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 26) and the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Art. 28 and 29), belongs in BiH to a wide spectrum of rights and freedoms promoted and guaranteed by the Constitution.

According to the FBiH Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport, education in primary school is required to promote normal child development with respect to individual, social, and cultural identity, and to greatly contribute to the formation of an out-going personality and to the pupils' acceptance of cultural values (Muratovic 2000, p. 22). The purpose of secondary education in the FBiH is 'to prepare secondary school pupils to further their education at institutions of higher education and/or to apply for jobs in different areas and fields with the opportunity for career development'. It should also 'offer training for the improvement of existing skills and in the acquisition of new skills and specializations, and vocational training of adults in various professions' (Muratovic 2000, p. 25).

Socio-economic context

In the FBiH, municipal institutions in mixed cantons have special competencies which enable them to offer lessons to pupils of the local national minority that are not dominated by the ethnic majority. This means, however, that ethnicization has reached the intra-school level.

The law that gives minority pupils 'the right to speak "one's own" language' states that when there are more than twenty-five minority students in a class, they can demand to be taught in their own language and according to their own curriculum. However, the reality in the classroom is different: problems with the politicization of education occur throughout the RS and the FBiH (Perry 2003, p. 29). At the beginning of the school year 2002, Bosnian Serb high school pupils in Drvar decided to boycott the school after the authorities denied their requests for the introduction of a separate curriculum and the right to study in the Serbian rather than the Croatian language (Perry 2003, pp. 35-36).

Further problems of discrimination occur among the children of the Roma minority, and pupils with special needs also face marginalization and hostility. Indeed, they are often completely excluded from education. Currently, very few Roma children are enrolled in the higher grades of primary and secondary schools. Equal access, the purchase of textbooks, Romany-language instruction, and better access to transportation are some of the major issues currently being considered by local and international education experts.

One of the first contributions of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) towards educational reform in BiH was the initiation of equal access to learning and non-discrimination practices. An 'Interim Agreement on the Accommodation of the Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children', which was developed by the OSCE in March 2002, guarantees returnee children instruction in their own 'national' subjects in schools. The Agreement has significantly raised

returnee enrolment in BiH. The number of returnee pupils in the school year 2003-04 was 27,145 pupils in the FBiH and 6269 pupils in the RS. The canton of Central Bosnia has the highest proportion of returnee pupils: 17.21%. In the RS, 3.21% of pupils are returnees. More returnee teachers have also been hired throughout the country: as of 2003-04, 1776 qualified returnee teachers had been employed in schools throughout BiH. The Central Bosnia and Sarajevo cantons also have the highest quota of returnee teachers in the FBiH: 15.08% and 14.52% respectively. The RS has a proportion of 1.41% of returnee teachers.

The bussing of pupils, i.e. their transportation to mono-ethnic schools long distances from their homes, sometimes passing a school only a hundred metres away, has declined as well: the number of children being bussed to schools decreased, for instance, by 81.48% in Posavina Canton in 2003. In the RS it has increased, however, by 3% (Statistical Report on the Interim Agreement 2003). In 2002 Roeders estimated that each day between five and ten thousand pupils crossed the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL - the border between ethnic entities) to go to school (Perry 2003, p. 30).

Current problems in the education system include: high non-attendance and drop-out rates; the decline of the teaching profession – both a cause of, and caused by, the inadequacy of teacher training and the lack of support offered to dedicated teachers; the difficult transition facing children returning to the BiH system after some time abroad; and the effect of brain-drain on the pupil population and teaching profession (Perry 2003, p. 40). In addition, about 400 schools do not have adequate heating; more than 750 do not have gyms. In about 500 schools, there are no libraries, and 600 schools do not even have a telephone connection (according to information provided by school headmasters to the OSCE Mission, Sullivan/OSCE-Magazine 2004, p. 16).

Social status of the teaching profession

Until 1990, almost 80% of state funding for the education sector was spent on the salaries of teaching staff. Teachers' income is very low, and personnel often receive their salaries several months in arrears. On average, a teacher earns the equivalent of 255 euros per month (OSCE-Magazine 2004, p. 10). The war resulted in numerous teachers migrating to other countries; many others changed their job, above all foreign-language teachers. In order to counterbalance this situation, the cantons decided to set up 'Pedagogical Academies' and Faculties in Mostar, Zenica, and Bihać. There are still many unqualified teachers, especially among lower-grade primary-school teachers, teachers of foreign languages (mostly teachers of English), mother-tongue language and literature teachers, and teachers of computer studies (Muratovic 2000, p. 19).

School and the role of the family

In addition to social and cultural activities in school, which are implemented through the joint efforts of pupils, teachers, and the local community, other forms of co-operation between the school and families exist in the FBiH. With the support of NGO initiatives in BiH and the cantonal Ministry of Education (MoE) of Tuzla, the

three-year project ‘Model for System Change in Secondary Education’, announced in March 2001, has been implemented. The aim was to introduce continuous in-service teacher training, increased community involvement through parents’ and pupils’ associations, and the democratisation of teaching and learning processes (Perry 2003, p. 75). A further project concerning the integration of children with special needs in pre-school and primary education aimed at the education of parents on how they can improve their children’s everyday lives. The activities offered included workshops on themes such as the role of the family, parents’ rights, and how to deal with specific difficulties that can arise (OSCE 2004).

Organizational context and management of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels, and philosophy of management

Article 38 of the RS Constitution states that ‘everyone shall be entitled to education under the same conditions’, that ‘primary schooling shall be compulsory and free’, and that ‘everyone shall have access, under the same conditions, to secondary and higher education’ (Perry 2003, p. 25/26).

The Constitution of the FBiH established the decentralization of education. It is the responsibility of the FBiH to guarantee and regulate the right to education. Cantons are authorized and required to determine education strategy, pass regulations on education, and provide education. Responsibilities which are established as special cantonal responsibilities for education can be delegated and transferred to the federal government or to the units of a local self-administration (Muratovic 2000, p. 9).

However, the interest in promoting real reforms is not very great, as numerous educators and school headmasters are held back by complicated political processes once a law on education is passed (OSCE/Sullivan 2004, p. 16). Education in the FBiH is administered at four levels:

- Federal: the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport; within the Ministry there is the Department of Education with an Educational Inspection Unit.
- Cantonal: on this level, Pedagogical Institutes are added as organizational units.
- Local, i.e. municipal: local executive authorities such as secretariats, departments, service offices, and units manage the education system at this level.
- School: management functions are entrusted to a management/school board; administrative authority lies with the school headmaster, while the supervisory board has a control function. School owners and parents’ representatives comprise the management board. Its main responsibilities are to approve working and school development plans and annual working plans, to prepare a financial plan, to deal with issues concerning the appointment and dismissal of a headmaster, to select teachers, and to discuss the feasibility of the curriculum (Muratovic 2000, p. 10).

Financing

Until 1990, educational funds were administered through socialist self-management interest groups, which existed on all levels of education and were later transformed into public bodies. During the war, various international organizations provided financial aid and relief supplies in order to safeguard the survival of the population. This aid included employees in the educational sector (Muratovic 2000, p. 11). Since the war, the financing of the school system has depended on contributions from the international community. According to Council of Europe (CoE) and World Bank figures, \$172 million were spent on education between 1996 and 1998; in the ensuing years, however, financial support for school reconstruction, training, and supplies, as well as expert assessment and consultation have declined (Perry 2003, p. 46). On the other hand, thanks to combined efforts in the field of financing within the Education Issue Set Steering Group (EISSG), the chances of achieving an efficient and transparent use of public resources for education have increased (OSCE 2004, p. 11).

Public and private schools

In the FBiH, pre-schools as well as primary and secondary schools can be publicly or privately owned. Secondary schools, as public institutions, are usually founded by municipal councils with the consent of the cantonal government or assembly. The operation of these schools falls within the responsibility of the cantonal Ministries of Education. Several private schools were opened recently by religious communities (Muratovic 2000, p. 25). In the school year 1998-99, there were two private pre-schools and three private primary schools in the FBiH. In 2000 six private secondary schools were added to this total. In the RS, only two private kindergartens existed in 1999-2000 (OECD/statistical review 2000).

General standards of school education

The development of curricula is the responsibility of educational institutions closely supervised by the Ministries of Education. Until the most recent reform, three different curricula were in use in BiH: schools in the RS used both the textbooks and the curriculum of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with some adaptations. In Croat areas, the programmes in use corresponded to the ones in force in the Republic of Croatia (RC), with several adaptations stated in an appendix. The textbooks of the RC were used. Finally, in Bosniak-controlled territories, a new curriculum and new textbooks were developed during the war (Lenhart 2000, p. 54).

In the school year 2003-04, work in the six working groups of the Education Issue Set Steering Group (EISSG) continued; on 8 May 2003, a first meeting of the Common Core Curriculum Steering Board and Working Groups was held in Banja Luka. The goal of adopting a country-wide core curriculum was accomplished (Perry 2003, p. 87). Unfortunately, however, the international community remains the driving force behind ensuring that the reform is applied to all pupils throughout BiH. Information on reform efforts is rarely transmitted from local authorities to school headmasters, teacher unions, pupils, and the general public (ERA, p. 4).

Funding through the international community remains the motor of the reform process. If it fails, the educational reform will stagnate.

The Common Core Curriculum was introduced in schools from September 2003 onwards, providing pupils across BiH with a significant number of shared features in all subjects. In science and mathematics, common elements make up more than 80% of the syllabi. Even in the national subjects, such as history or language and literature, some 50% of the topics taught are the same. The Common Curriculum requires educational experts to focus on similarities. Against the background of the BiH-wide educational reform, some twenty-five staff members of the OSCE Head Office met regularly in Sarajevo with headmasters, parents, teachers, and local authorities in order to implement the reform in individual schools (OECD/Blackwell 2004, p. 5). Beyond the already achieved objectives, BiH still has to set up a textbook commission and eliminate the remaining fifty-two instances of ‘two schools under one roof’, in which pupils within the same school building are segregated on the basis of ethnicity or religious belief (OECD/Bayrasli 2004, p. 12).

In the RS, three primary schools have had the status of experimental schools for three years. They have used a reduced curriculum with modern interactive teaching methods. From the school year 2004-05 onwards, all primary schools in the RS will adapt this new curriculum. The contents of individual subjects have been reduced by about 20%; in-service training and new interactive methods of teaching have been introduced (IBE 2003).

Quality management

In addition to the State Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, the CoE, UNESCO, UNDP, and the World Bank developed an Education Management Information System to collect and analyse data on BiH more systematically. These structural reform initiatives will help to construct a better educational infrastructure (IBE 2003).

Support systems

‘At every level of educational management, reforms are needed in finance and administration to lower costs and to develop a more harmonized system within which students can move and transfer without difficulty’ (Perry 2003, p. 28). To this end, an Agency for Standards and Assessment (ASA) was set up in BiH. It was established through a common accord by the governments of the FBiH and the RS in 2000, and is supported by the World Bank and the European Commission. The ASA provides specialized expertise and services to educators on various aspects of assessment. Its priority task is to define standards of learning achievements in specific subjects at different levels of education. These include, for instance, the collecting, processing, and publishing of data on learning quality and quantity in primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, they are to provide assistance to municipalities, cantons, and entities in projects on the assessment of education, as well as assistance in research on and the development of assessment procedures. One of the main activities of the agency is the analysis of data and the publication of reports for the authorities, schools, the general public, and education specialists (IBE 2003).

The current school system

During the war, the previously unified system broke up as the Republic was split into Serb, Croat, and Bosniak-controlled territories. For the education system in BiH, the new particularity arose of three different education systems in the two units of the FBiH and the RS. In the following section, therefore, the education systems of both the FBiH and the RS will be outlined. In particular, it is important to describe some special characteristics of the two systems within BiH.

The education system of the Republika Srpska (RS)

The RS is divided into seven regions. Education is more centralized; all schools and educators face the same problems and challenges (Perry 2003, p. 27). The Ministry of Education in Banja Luka exercises centralized control over the education system. The Minister implements the laws on education passed by Parliament and directs education policies, such as the establishment of new schools. The Pedagogical Institute in Banja Luka, which has a planning function, is also under the Minister's control. The school board, comprising school board representatives and parents, has local authority over the schools (Russo 2000, p. 957). A reform package of 1998, which was aimed at individualizing educational careers (Suzic 1998), has not been fully implemented because of a change of government.

The Case of Brčko.

This district, part of the Republika Srpska since 1995, is under international control. In Brčko, a special system is in force which is based on different legislation, and which features ethnically integrated classes. In autumn 2002, 'the international administration in Brčko consolidated four Bosniak schools, three Serb schools, and one Croat school into four premises' in which the first-year pupils were integrated, with the further goal of integrating all schools by 2005 (Perry 2003, p. 79).

The education system of the FBiH

The Federation of BiH is modelled on the Swiss system: there are ten decentralized administrative cantons, which are divided into municipal units. The Federation has a central Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport with a Bosniak Minister and a Croat Deputy Minister. The central location of the Ministry is in Sarajevo; the Croats hold a branch office in Mostar. The official function of the Ministry is the co-ordination and facilitation of the co-operation between the educational authorities and the cantons.

According to the Constitution, educational issues fall under the remit of the cantons. However, as cantonal Education Ministries usually do not have enough resources for administration, and the co-ordination of the greatly varying regulations is difficult, only a Bosniak and a Croat education system exist.

The quality and standards of education have suffered as a result of political interference in the education sector: curricula and textbooks differed from region to region and were informed primarily by ethnic concerns, and teaching materials featured strongly nationalistic contents and showed open hostility to the other two

groups. In addition, educators had not been trained in up-to-date teaching methods. Because of a lack of computer courses, critical thinking, and democratic rules in the classroom and in the school-yard, graduates were not equipped with the skills necessary in the twenty-first century (OSCE/Blackwell 2004, p. 4).

As part of the project 'Practising Democracy', pupils' councils are currently being set up throughout the country with the aim of helping pupils to change their mindset of being afraid to tell their teachers their opinion or to ask questions (OSCE/Sullivan 2004, p. 16).

General structure: overview

The general structure of the education system is similar in both parts of BiH and does not differ significantly from the one in place before the war. The system provides education at four levels: pre-school, primary, secondary, and higher education, including upper-secondary schools.

Pre-school education covers the period from the age of six months until primary-school age. Primary education is compulsory for all children from the age of seven to fifteen. Adolescents between the ages of fifteen and nineteen attend secondary schools. The latter exist in two varieties: general-education schools, where entrance examinations permit access to several educational profiles, and technical and vocational schools, which have a professional orientation and can be attended for two, three, or four years. While the structure has not been modified to a great extent, the educational contents, i.e. the curricula, have undergone more significant changes. Upper-secondary education can last between two and three years, and programmes offered by faculties and art academies (*fakulteti i umjetničke akademije*) between four and five years. Postgraduate study leads to a specialization (*specijalistički studiji*) and a master's degree (*magistarski studiji*). The doctoral degree (*doktorat znanosti*) is the highest degree awarded by faculties or academies.

Pre-primary education

There are no data available for the RS. Most cantons in the FBiH have passed laws on pre-school education. Pre-school institutions fall within the responsibility of the municipalities' social services. Pre-school education is not compulsory; enrolment of children varies from canton to canton depending on the available material resources. Generally, the supply of places in pre-school education lags behind demand. Pre-school programmes are often implemented in regular primary schools. While institutions of pre-primary education can be either publicly or privately owned, most of them have been established by the municipalities.

The founders of these institutions are responsible for their financing; in addition, parents are asked to contribute towards food and educational activities. Depending on the type of pre-school education programme and the duration of the care offered, pre-school institutions can take the form of baby-care (*jaslice*) or kindergarten (*dječiji vrtić*) establishments. Accordingly, various programmes are offered, such as: 1. regular care, upbringing, education, health and nutrition, and social care programmes; 2. programmes for children with disabilities; 3. programmes for specially gifted children; 4. programmes for early learning of foreign languages, and artistic,

cultural, religious, and sports programmes; and 5. further programmes according to the needs of children and the demands of parents. Kindergarten and health personnel, teachers, psychologists, and others experts participate in the implementation of these programmes (Muratovic 2000, p. 21).

Primary education

Primary education, which is mandatory for all children from the age of seven onwards, can be divided into two levels: grades 1 to 4 on the one hand, and grades 5 to 8 or 9 on the other. In the RS, compulsory primary school lasts nine years. The rest of the country is at present switching from an eight-year to a nine-year system (OSCE 2004, p. 10).

All cantons in the FBiH have passed their own laws on primary education. There are still two systems of primary education in the FBiH: a Croatian and a Bosniak one. They are characterized by a number of similar organizational structures, but they still differ with regard to their respective curricula. In primary school, classes are taught in the local language. In 2001 it became obligatory to teach both the Latin and the Cyrillic scripts in primary and secondary schools in both political entities, but implementation has not been consistent (Perry 2003, p. 35). Alongside special primary schools there are 'parallel primary schools' (*paralelne osnovne škole*) in both the RS and the FBiH. In this system, pupils simultaneously attend a music or ballet school (*baletske i glazbene škole*) and the regular primary school. Primary music and ballet school takes six years.

No detailed data on the characteristics of the education system of the RS are available. In the regular primary schools (*redovne osnovne škole*) in the FBiH, the tasks defined in the curricula are implemented for all pupils. Some schools offer tutorial classes for weak students. In addition, special classes for gifted pupils and optional classes for pupils who express interest in extra-curricular subjects are provided. Leisure-time activities, programmes on career opportunities and guidance, and counselling are also offered.

In grades 1 to 4 of primary school, one instructor teaches all subjects (class teaching – *razredna nastava*); in the higher grades, in contrast, different teachers teach different subjects (subject teaching – *predmetna nastava*). There are approximately 19,600 primary school teachers (Perry 2003, p. 26). The subjects offered in primary school are the mother tongue, social studies (history and geography), mathematics, local history and general knowledge, arts, music, sports, and, depending on the schools, religious education (Muratovic 2000, p. 23/24).

Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education in BiH is part of primary school and includes grades 5 to 8 in the FBiH and grades 5 to 9 in the RS. Different subjects are taught by different teachers. A second foreign language, biology, physics, and chemistry are added to the subjects taught in grades 1 to 4. A high number of subjects characterize the curricula, and lead to their overload; in grade 8 there are fifteen subjects.

Upper secondary education

Although (upper) secondary education is not compulsory, approximately 90% of all pupils continue their studies at secondary level after successful completion of primary school. Prior to enrolment, there is a public announcement in accordance with the rules of secondary schooling. There are approximately 9000 secondary-school teachers in BiH. A report of 2001 estimates the number of primary and secondary schools at 920, with a total of approximately 507,000 pupils. There are seven Pedagogic Institutes authorized by the cantonal and RS Ministries of Education to provide in-service teacher training (Perry 2003, p. 26).

Education in secondary vocational school lasts three or four years, while the training of unskilled workers takes two years. Other types of secondary school offer four-year programmes. There are six different secondary school (*srednja škola*) types:

1. General schools (*opće škole*) or grammar schools (*gimnazija*): these schools can be further divided into general, classical, and language grammar schools (further profiles in grammar schools are mathematics and computer studies, mathematic and sciences, pedagogy, sports, etc.). Grammar school programmes last four years; after that period, pupils are awarded high school diplomas.
2. Teacher training schools (*učiteljske škole* – only in the FBiH), which train kindergarten and lower-primary school teachers.
3. Technical and related schools: these cover a group of twenty-one school types, in which pupils can choose among fifty-one occupational titles. After acquiring a certificate from this type of school, a pupil can either enter the job market or continue his or her education at an appropriate institution of higher education.
4. Independent schools: art, music, and ballet schools (*umjetničke škole*).
5. Religious schools (*vjerske škole*).
6. Vocational schools (*tehničke škole i srodne* – in the FBiH), which last three or four years. Pupils in the FBiH can select among eighty-nine vocations taught in sixteen types of vocational school. A certificate from this type of school enables graduates to take up employment; it does not, however, entitle them to further education in tertiary institutions (Muratovic 2000, pp. 26-27).

Experts from the European Commission – Technical Assistance to Education Reform (EC-TAER) have pointed out that 70% of all secondary school pupils attend vocational schools (Perry 2003, p. 38). Since the end of the 1990s, the vocational education sector has been supported through the PHARE programme of the European Union. The following issues and barriers, however, have remained:

- An unsatisfactory information base on employment and labour markets. The cooperation between the Public Employment Service (PES), the political entities, and the schools is insufficient.
- The lack of a coherent, State-level long-term development plan for initial vocational education and training (VET) and adult education. Given the high levels of adult and long-term unemployment, much more emphasis should be placed on lifelong learning and the development of flexible employment skills, and

much less on narrow preparation for a specific occupation for life. The key issue is to have a strategy for lifelong learning.

- Weak social-partner contributions to vocational education reform.
- Inefficiencies in the VET system: too much specialization, too many teachers, and insufficient development (cf. OECD 2001, pp. 37-38).

In addition to PHARE, other projects in the area of VET have been introduced. Vocational programmes supported by the European Commission from 1999 to 2006 have been implemented in thirty-six pilot schools in both entities; the Commission is also supporting a programme of occupation-specific curricular development. Modernized curricula have thus been developed for six occupational profiles and implemented in thirty pilot schools. Furthermore, a complementary programme from 2002 to 2004 is seeking to address the educational needs of the labour market (Perry 2003, p. 72).

Special schools

Within the regular primary and secondary school system, there are autonomous special education schools (*specijalno srednje škole*) for pupils with all kinds of mental and physical disabilities. In addition, several projects have been introduced which further the integration of children with special needs into regular classes. One of these projects, 'Integration of Children with Special Needs in the Local Community', is organized by the Trebinje Social Welfare Centre and the Association of Parents of Children with Special Needs. They asked kindergartens to participate in the project as part of a long-term strategy to improve education for children with disabilities. The OSCE has been co-ordinating the organization of inclusive education round tables to educate school directors, teachers, parents, and communities about the benefits of inclusive education. The OSCE also actively participates in the Task Force on Inclusive Education (OSCE 2004).

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Higher education in BiH is organized at cantonal level in the FBiH and at entity level in the RS. In the academic year 1999-2000, there was a total of five universities in the FBiH, namely in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Croat Mostar, Bosniak Mostar, and Bihać, with sixty-two faculties. In order to enrol, students have to pass an entrance examination. In the RS there are two universities. Approximately 100,000 students are enrolled in BiH at present.

Many faculties operate in inadequate buildings with insufficient equipment; the professional development of university staff is widely ignored, as are research and development work. The level of institutional co-operation within BiH and with foreign institutions of higher education is low (Muratovic 2000, p. 29). Under international pressure, and with the aim of improving this situation, the Council of Higher Education for the whole of BiH was established.

The individual faculties in six of the seven universities in BiH are virtually autonomous and control their own funding, leaving little scope for the introduction of international standards of teaching, examination, and research. Students have

poor access to professors and lack democratic representation (OSCE/Blackwell 2004, p. 5).

Initiatives to reform university education in BiH include programmes run by EC-TAER, the Council of Europe, the World University Service (WUS) Austria, the PHARE Multi-Country Programme in Higher Education, Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED), and the NGO Civitas.

Within the framework of the efforts to improve the quality of university-level teaching and learning, the following achievements have been realized: projects supported by the international community are providing technical assistance towards the development of modern curricula and teaching methods, distance-learning centres have been established at the universities of Tuzla and Sarajevo, and an e-learning task force has been created (ERA 2003, pp. 13-14).

The focus of the OSCE effort on higher education 'is to push for the establishment of a State-level Framework Law to enable BiH to implement the commitments it signed up to in 2003 under the Bologna Declaration and the Lisbon Recognition Convention' (OSCE/Blackwell 2004, p. 5). In addition to a draft Law on Higher Education, the entity Education Ministers signed a joint letter to the Greek EU Presidency on 25 April 2003 to affirm their commitment to signing the Bologna Declaration (Perry 2003, p. 89). Although the drafting of the Law was completed in December 2003, its passage through the BiH Parliament is still uncertain due to politically motivated resistance (OSCE/ Blackwell 2004, p. 5). On 11 May 2004, the Higher Education Law failed to be passed within the agreed deadline. The consequences of this decision of the State Parliament will primarily affect students, who will continue their exodus and/or will not return because they will be unable to seek the due recognition of their foreign degrees and diplomas foreseen in the Framework Law (OSCE 2004).

Teacher training

Education of pre-school teachers is conducted both at secondary school and at tertiary level, such as at the Pedagogical Academy. Lower-grade primary school teachers are trained in teacher training schools and Pedagogical Academies in four-year and two-year courses. The Academies and teacher training faculties also train upper-grade primary school teachers through programmes of at least two years' duration.

Secondary school teachers have to acquire a university degree in their subject as well as in psycho-pedagogical subjects. Special education teachers are trained in the Faculty of Special Needs Pedagogy (Education for Special Educational Needs). The initial education of teachers focuses mainly on theory, but numerous faculties do not have enough staff to offer teaching methodology courses. After a practical in-service phase of one year's duration, prospective teachers have to sit professional exams. Programmes for a master's degree in the areas of teaching methods, planning in education, or inclusive education do not exist (Muratovic 2000, pp. 19-20). There are still teachers in many areas who have not been adequately trained; the 1999 report of the Commission of Europe and the World Bank noted that, in some areas, up to 25% of the teachers were not qualified for the level or grade they were teaching (Perry 2003, p. 32).

It is the obligation of every school in the FBiH and the RS to prepare a development programme as part of the annual work plan. Professional development is also carried out at Pedagogical Institutes and teacher training faculties. After 1995, this role was assumed by various international organizations (Muratovic 2000, p. 20) such as UNICEF. In addition to the development of 'Child Friendly Schools', UNICEF also supports the programme 'Foundations for Democracy', a three-year, \$1.3 million programme to support classroom reform through child-centred teacher training and the introduction of modern pedagogical approaches. Since 2002, more than 1200 teachers have attended these workshops (Perry 2003, p. 75). The Teacher Education and Professional Development Programme (TEPD), a co-operation between the governments of Finland and BiH, has provided special training on inclusive education; in May 2003, an anthology of inclusive-education theory and best practices was published (Perry 2003, p. 75).

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The co-ordination of the *de facto* three education systems was an urgent reform task. The curricula of the 'national' subjects were ethno-nationalistic, for example the sharp ethnic division in literature and language, and the ethnic perspectives in history (Näder 2001, p. 45). In May 1998, the educational authorities of the Canton Sarajevo agreed in consultation with the senior education adviser of the UNESCO field commission in Sarajevo and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to delete from textbooks those passages characterized by prejudice and racism. This was carried out by blacking out the offending passages. Since 1999, peace-building curricular activities have been initiated. In 1999 UNESCO assigned a research team from the Department of Education of the University of Heidelberg to analyse the approaches to socialization in and the technical usability of the curricula of the national subjects that were in use in the school year 1998-99. For the purpose of assessing their political intentions, the programmes of the analysed subjects were broken down into units. The units were grouped into four categories: desirable, tolerable, not acceptable, and neutral (Lenhart/Kesidou/Stockmann 1999).

'Not acceptable' were: objectives and content that do not prevent the violation of human rights, that are in favour of the withholding of civil rights from anybody, that approve of ethnic cleansing and of the destruction of the overall framework of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that are openly or latently aggressive, offensive, or discriminating against members of other ethnic groups (Lenhart 2000, p. 52). With regard to technical quality, all three curricula were overcrowded.

The results of the curriculum research were summarized and formed the basis of a national curriculum symposium for BiH conducted in February 2000. It was decided that parallel but co-ordinated curricula should be the basic pattern of syllabus organization. A co-ordination structure, consisting of the Ministries of Education, Pedagogical Academies, and international organizations was developed. Its main tasks were the mutual exchange of information on curricular changes, acknowledgment of certificates, and the regulation of the integration of returnee and minority students (Lenhart 2000). In addition, a Permanent Conference of the Ministers of

Education of BiH was established. In May 2000, they drew up a resolution on common activities and regulations (Näder 2001).

A further step in the educational reform was the introduction of the subject 'human rights and democracy' in the school year 2001-02. Another new subject, 'culture of religions', was introduced, but its implementation has progressed slowly because there are still misunderstandings between the different religious groups. Even the subject of history had to be reformed, because history teaching was characterized by an ethno-nationalistic perspective (Ergen/Lenhart 2004).

In addition to the overcoming of an ethno-nationalist split within the education system, modernization and quality development are needed. In the school year 2001-02, the project 'Towards a Sector Development Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina General Education' was initiated by the European Union and UNESCO. A plan for a 'Shared Strategy for the Modernization of Primary and General Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina' was developed (Roeders 2001, p. 2). Modernization needs to be effected in the following five areas of the education system: the curriculum, teacher training, school administration, inclusive and special-needs education, and legislation and support (Roeders 2001, p. 8).

All these plans and activities were in different phases of implementation when a change in the educational policy of BiH took place in 2002. In the context of the country's desire for membership of the Council of Europe, the OSCE was given the mandate on 4 July 2002 to fundamentally reorganize the education system, i.e. to facilitate and co-ordinate the educational reform effort. An Educational Department of the OSCE was established, and several regional education co-ordinators in Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Banja Luka were appointed.

The OSCE relies on the social groups in all three nationalities that place more emphasis on educational effectiveness than on nationalist idiosyncrasies. The promise of modernization and of improvement in learning outcomes, and the hope for financial support caused the entity and most cantonal authorities to co-operate. In 2002 a reform agenda, 'Reforming Education to Give BiH a Better Future', was developed. Many international experts worked on the production of an Education Reform Strategy, which was presented to the BiH Peace Implementation Council in Brussels by the BiH Education Ministers in November 2002. Following this, the BiH Parliament adopted a State-level Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in June 2003. The Law paves the way for a common standard of quality across BiH and sets out requirements for a Common Core Curriculum, nine years of compulsory education, the establishment of parents' and pupils' councils, and greater school autonomy (OSCE/Blackwell 2004, pp. 4-5).

According to the most recent data, as of 27 April 2004 the RS and most of the cantons of the FBiH had fully harmonized their Laws on Primary and Secondary Education with the State Framework Law. However, several cantons have not reviewed the drafts of these laws, ignoring their accountability to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly and the citizens of BiH. By passing the Law, the cantons give children from all cultural backgrounds equal access to education, and thus create equal respect for their cultural diversity (OSCE/Blackwell 2004, p. 5). Under the terms of the Law, all cantonal and entity authorities were obliged to implement the legislation

by the end of the year. One of the most important aspects of the legislation was the Agreement on the Common Core Curriculum. Creating the common curriculum was a difficult task, not least because it had required the elimination of a large amount of nationalist rhetoric from education materials. Textbook experts and Education Ministers from the Croat-Muslim Federation and the Republika Srpska had to review textbooks used for national subjects such as history and language, and agree to remove any content which could be viewed as controversial and inappropriate by either community. Experts also provided advice on how to ensure a more balanced and impartial coverage of all constituent peoples and to highlight the multi-national character of BiH. The agreement was signed by the Ministers of Education on 8 August (2003).

However welcome such a joint curriculum may be, many in Bosnia argue that these efforts are not sufficient, and that nationalism will still be a feature of education in the country. The management of many schools has remained in the hands of political ideologues. Education is still too frequently used as an ideological device to strengthen ethnic prejudices and intolerance. In many areas, children from different constituent peoples attend the same school, but are segregated in separate classrooms, with different teachers and school directors and even separate entrances. Unsurprisingly, in the fifty-two remaining such schools, called 'two schools under one roof', young people often demonstrate nationalist intolerance. The legal status of these schools is being changed to eliminate ethnic segregation, but this is being met with resistance. Nationalists claim that the creation of a harmonized education model threatens the identity of young people and the cultural variety of BiH (http://www.civilitasresearch.com/resources/view_article.cfm?article_id=48).

With respect to the phenomenon of 'two schools under one roof', the OSCE in the Canton of Central Bosnia, among others, is working to unify these schools with the aim of establishing multi-ethnic schools. Administrative and legal unification is necessary in order to accomplish this goal. This should have started with the beginning of the school year 2003, and would include, for instance, the appointment of a School Director of a multi-ethnic School Board (Perry 2003, p. 29/30). On 4 May 2004, the Central Bosnian Cantonal Board failed to adopt the decision on administrative and legal unification.

The Education Issue Set Steering Group (EISSG) has been established, consisting of agency heads from the OSCE, the Office of the High Representative (OHR), UNICEF, UNESCO, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Mission to BiH (UNMiBH), the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and the World Bank. The EISSG is organized into six working groups:

1. Education Access and Non-Discrimination (OSCE/UNESCO/UNHCR);
2. Quality and Modernization of Primary and General Secondary Education (UNICEF, UNESCO, EC TAER);
3. Quality and Modernization of Vocational Education (EC/EU VET);
4. Quality and Modernization of Higher Education (EC/ CoE);
5. Education Financing and Management (World Bank/OSCE); and
6. Reform of Education Legislation (CoE/OSCE) (OSCE 2004).

In addition, the OSCE launched an education campaign on 28 October 2002 to highlight model schools and to encourage open discussion on the reform process in six schools. In March 2003, an education dictionary was published, which includes information about schools using modern techniques and approaches in order to illustrate best practices. The campaign continued in the school year 2002-03, and was supplemented by the campaign 'This Year to School Together' at the beginning of the following school year (Perry 2003, pp. 86-87).

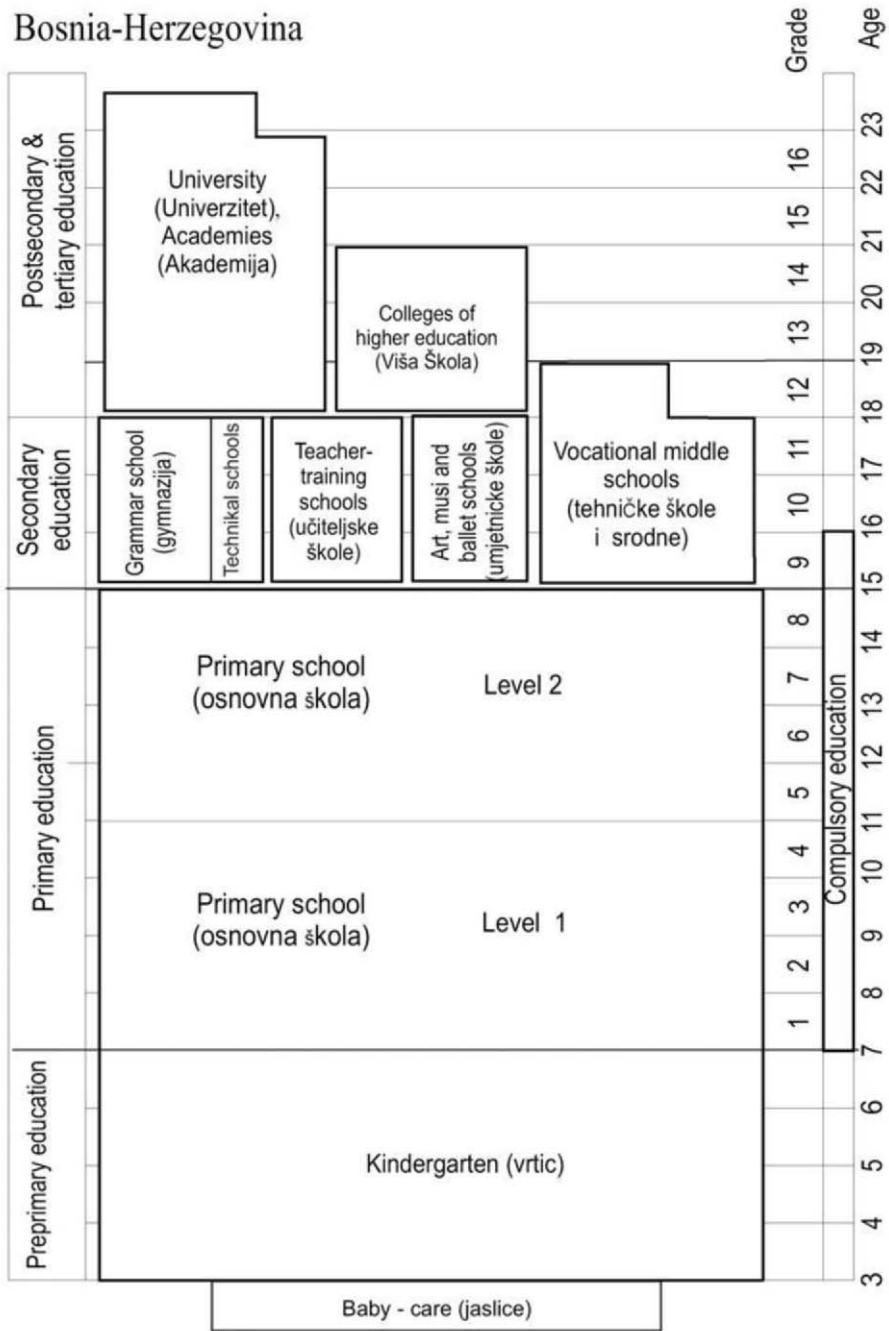
The OSCE, in close co-operation with the citizens of BiH, has made huge progress in its work since it took over the mandate for the education reform in 2002. However, Blair Blackwell, the Information Officer in the Education Department of the Mission to BiH notes that 'there is still a long way to go and efforts by some parties to politicize education continue, slowing the reform agenda and frustrating parents who are impatient to see tangible classroom improvements' (OSCE/Blackwell 2004, p. 5).

References

- Bologna Declaration Achieved Level of implementation and future activity plan (FBiH and RS). 2003. http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_bologna.htm download 12.02.2004
- Bosnia: Education reform takes a major step forward. http://www.civilitasresearch.com/-resources/view_article.cfm?article_id=48 download 15.4.2004
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (Summary): http://www.ibe.unesco.org/regional/SEE/-SEE.pdf/rep_VI_2.pdf download 24.09.2003
- Education Reform Agenda: An Update, June 2003. <http://www.oscebih.org/documents/36-eng.pdf> download 4.05.2004.
- Ergen, Ö./Lenhart, V. (Eds): *Konflikt und pädagogische Intervention [Conflict and Pedagogical Intervention]*. Frankfurt 2004, pp. 115-125.
- Institut für Entwicklungsforschung, Wirtschafts- und Sozialplanung GmbH. *Bildung und Ausbildung in Bosnien-Herzegowina [Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina]*. www.isoplan.de/mi/bh/bh3.htm download 16.04.2002.
- Lenhart, V.: *Bildungspolitischer Kommentar. Bildung für Versöhnung mit und zwischen den Nationalitäten des ehemaligen Jugoslawien [Commentary on Educational Policy. Education for Reconciliation with and between the Nationalities of Former Yugoslavia]*. In: *Zeitschrift für Internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik* 23 (1999), pp. 34-35.
- Lenhart, V.: *Peace Building Curriculum Reform Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. In: Overwien, B. (Ed.): *Lernen und Handeln im globalen Kontext [Learning and Acting in a Global Context]*. Frankfurt 2000, pp. 51-57.
- Lenhart, V./ Kesidou, A./ Stockmann, St.: *The Curricula of the "national subjects" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Report to UNESCO*. Heidelberg/Sarajevo 1999
- Muratovic, H. (Ed. for the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports): *Education in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo 2000.
- Näder, M.: *Ein Jahr in Sarajevo [A Year in Sarajevo]*. In: *UNESCO heute* (2001) 3, pp. 44-47.
- OECD, Centre for Co-Operation with Non-Members: *Thematic Review of National Policies for Education – Bosnia and Herzegovina*. 27. Sept. 2001. CCNM/DEELSA/ED(2001)3.
- OSCE- Mission to BiH. *Education Fact Sheet*. <http://www.oscebih.org/documents/75-eng.pdf> download 4.05.2004.

- OSCE Magazine: Blackwell, B./Sullivan, K., <http://www.osce.org/publications/magazine/download> 8.05.2004.
- OSCE (Press Statement): Primary and Secondary Education Laws Harmonization Update. <http://www.oscebih.org/public/default.asp?d=6&article=show&id=720> download 27.4.2004.
- OSCE (Bayrasli, E.): OSCE BiH Mission praises five cantons for adopting harmonized laws on primary and secondary education. <http://www.oscebih.org/public/default.asp?d=6&article=show&id=717> download 27.4.2004.
- OSCE (Press – Statement): Failure to pass the Higher Education Law betrays students. <http://www.oscebih.org/public/default.asp?d=6&article=show&id=736> download 11.5.2004.
- OSCE - Feature Story: "Kindergarten encourages education for all". Trebinje 3.3.2004 <http://www.oscebih.org/public/default.asp?d=6&article=show&id=646> download, 6.5.2004.
- Perry, V.: Reading, Writing and Reconciliation: Educational Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ECMI (European Centre for Minority Issues) Working Paper, Nr. 18. Flensburg 2003. Download: http://www.ecmi.de/doc/download/working-paper_18.pdf download 20.10.2003.
- Roeders, P.: Towards a Sector Development Programme in BiH General Education. Proposal for the elaboration of a "Shared Strategy" for a Modernisation of Primary and General Secondary Education in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Concept paper, final version. Sarajevo 2001.
- Russo, Ch. J.: Religion and Education in Bosnia: Integration Not Segregation. In: Brigham Young University Law Review. 2000, pp. 945-966.
- Suzić, N.: Strategy and Conception of Changes in the System of Education in the Republic of Srpska. Republic of Srpska. Ministry of Education Banja Luka. Banja Luka 1998.
- Stakeholders Consultation Structure. (OSCE-Documents) <http://www.oscebih.org/documents/27-eng.pdf> download 7.05.2004.
- Statistical Data for background purposes of OECD review – Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina. December 2000. See: http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/oecd_report-bih-enl-t01.pdf download 15.10.2003
- Statistical Data for background purposes of OECD review – Country: BiH – Republika Srpska. December 2000. See: http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/oecd_report-bih-enl-to1.pdf download 15.10.2003

Bosnia-Herzegovina



Nikolay Popov

Bulgaria

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

Bulgaria threw off the Turkish yoke on 3 March 1878 and gained its independence, thus establishing the beginning of the Third Bulgarian State. However, the Berlin Congress of July 1878 divided the country into the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia. The first law on education in the Principality of Bulgaria was the Provisional Statute on Public Schools (1878). The main principles of this Statute were: democracy and decentralization in the administration of education, three-year compulsory primary education, and the secular character of education. The Statute established the following structure for the educational system: three-year primary school, plus four-year basic school, plus four-year modern schools and gymnasiums (grammar schools). Only two years later, in 1880, a new Law on National Education changed the structure into four-year primary school, plus three-year gymnasium lower level (pro-gymnasium), plus four-year gymnasium upper level. A tendency to centralize the management of education appeared in 1881, when the Ministry of Education established school district inspectorates whose heads were appointed by the Minister.

In 1880 the Law on Primary Learning in Eastern Roumelia was adopted in this part of Bulgaria. The main principles of this law were: decentralization of the management and financing of education. The structure was as follows: four-year primary school, plus four-year secondary school lower level, plus three-year secondary school upper level (called gymnasium). The Union of Bulgaria was established on 6 September 1885. A very important act was the Law on Public Education (1891), which made three main changes:

- a) The centralization of the management of education by giving complete power to the Ministry of Education,
- b) The introduction of six years of compulsory education, and
- c) The establishment of kindergartens for children aged three to seven as the first level of the educational system.

The next very important act was the Law on National Education (1909). It was aimed at achieving a Western European level of education. The centralization of management became much stronger. The structure was changed as follows: four-year primary school, plus three-year pro-gymnasium, plus five-year gymnasium. This structural model remained for thirty-five years. Many two-year teacher training colleges were opened.

In 1921 a new law on education was passed. Its main principles were the vocationalization of secondary education, and the introduction of seven years of compul-

sory education. Three years later, in 1924, the vocationalization of secondary education was abolished and its general character was reinforced, putting the accent on classical education. The role of civic, moral, and religious education increased. The strongly centralized education management structure was maintained and extended.

The Communists came into power on 9 September 1944, ushering in the period of the Communist regime in Bulgaria. The new Law on National Education (1948) established the following structure: kindergarten for children from the age of three to seven; four-year primary school, plus three-year pro-gymnasium, plus four-year gymnasium; two-year vocational schools; and semi-higher and higher education. The idea of building a socialist system followed by a communist society found final expression in a law on education (1959) called the Law on Further Closer Links between School and Life and on the Further Development of Public Education. The main aim of this law was to prepare Bulgarian youth for life in socialist and communist society by connecting education with socially useful and productive work. That aim, which crippled the Bulgarian education system, was practically abolished at the end of 1989, and finally by law in 1991. The law of 1959 made two main changes to the structure. The duration of compulsory education became eight years, and the twelve-year secondary polytechnic school was established. The latter was divided into three courses – primary, middle, and upper – each lasting four years. Four-year technical colleges and three-year secondary vocational technical schools were formed after grade eight.

Reforms and innovations

In the early 1970s, the duration of the upper course of the secondary polytechnic school was reduced by a year, i.e. the structural model became 4+4+3. The communist period in Bulgarian education should be assessed from two perspectives. Undoubtedly, the negative aspect is that everything in education – aims, content, management, and structure – developed and functioned according to communist ideology. The educational process completely followed the examples and lessons of education in the Soviet Union. However, the positive aspect is that the State really cared about education. Thousands of kindergartens and schools were built. Many campuses, rest-houses etc. for children were also constructed.

Since 1989, political, economic, and social changes have given the educational system a new face. The transition period coincided with a three-part crisis which directly influenced education:

- a) Economic and financial crisis. From 1989-90 to 1997 there was a permanent crisis, with currency fluctuation, economic instability, and bankruptcies. Since 1997 there has been financial stability, but the economic situation has not yet improved.
- b) Social and demographic crisis. About two thirds of Bulgarians live in poverty, and about one third under the existence minimum. The birth rate is 7 per 1000, but the death rate is 14 per 1000.

- c) Crisis in values. While the other aspects of the crisis can be overcome in the near future, the deep crisis in human and social values will remain a heavy burden for years to come.

The most important positive aspects of the development of school education in the last fifteen years are as follows:

- 1) The abolition of all ideological, political, and party instructions in educational aims, management, and contents;
- 2) Attention to the freedom and initiative of the individual;
- 3) Efforts to meet the educational interests and needs of pupils;
- 4) Diversification of curricula;
- 5) The creation of possibilities to allow pupils to make their own choices; and
- 6) The establishment of private schools

At the same time, however, the following negative aspects, mostly in the field of national policy, cannot be omitted:

- 1) The lack of a clearly defined national policy in the field of secondary education. As a rule, education has not been among the priorities of any government to date.
- 2) Frequent changes of ministerial teams, leading to a lack of continuity among them.
- 3) Frequent changes of school directors and teachers.
- 4) On the one hand, an increase in management centralization, and on the other hand an increase in decentralization with respect to educational finance.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and the general function of school

Education in Bulgaria is a right for all citizens, the overall goal being to prepare individuals for responsible citizenship in a democratic society. Education in the country encompasses two main areas: developing the intellectual potential of pupils, and instilling a sense of values and patriotism that will foster thoughtful, active members of society. With this goal in mind, education seeks to provide basic skills and general education for all citizens from the age of six to sixteen years, to create strong ties between in-school instruction and preparation for life outside the classroom, and to encourage a sense of responsible citizenship and sensitivity to global issues.

The development of the education system is linked to the transition to a democratic society and a free market economy. These processes are reflected in a changing education system where educational institutions have more choice in defining their curricula and programmes. The expected results of this evolving system are: higher motivation on the part of pupils to obtain education, the creation of stronger links between class content and the labour needs of the country, proficiency in the use and teaching of current information technologies, and the development of more relevant

subject profiles in education according to the interests and abilities of the pupils. The main priorities in the future development of education are: upgrading the quality of education; ensuring basic education for all; mastering a minimum requirement of knowledge and skills for the social and professional self-realization of the pupil; extending opportunities for optional instruction; allowing for diversity, flexibility, and different ways of combining instructional content; raising the level of mother tongue and foreign language instruction of pupils as an especially important condition for successful social and professional communication and achievement; making adequate use of computer equipment and information technologies in school education; providing continuity of education in line with current technological developments.

Socio-economic context

In 2004 the Bulgarian population was 7.2 million. 6.4 million were aged eighteen and over, of which 2.6 million were aged sixty and over. The ethnic groups were Bulgarians - 80%; Turks – 10.5%; Gypsies – 6.5%; others - 3%. The illiterate population of fifteen years and over was 1.5%. Enrolment percentages by level of education were pre-school - 40%; basic education - 85%; secondary education - 70%; higher education - 35%. Approximately 35% of the population lives in urban areas. The birth rate was 7 per 1000 but the death rate was 14 per 1000. The infant mortality rate was 12 per 1000 live births.

The national language, Bulgarian, which is a South Slavonic language, is spoken throughout the country by 100% of the population. It is the official language of administration, public relations and services, instruction in schools, etc. Other languages that are used in the country by the above-named minorities are Turkish and Gypsy.

There are three main problems with regard to the socio-economic context of the Bulgarian school system:

1. The extremely low level of schooling among the Gypsy minority group - there are no reliable statistics on this problem, but it can be reasonably stated that only 4% of Gypsies finish secondary school and only 9% complete basic education.
2. The low level of completion of compulsory education – in each school year, nearly 15% of pupils do not complete compulsory education.
3. The high number of pupils who drop out - the drop-out rates are: 30% in secondary education, 15% in basic education, and as high as 5% in primary education.

Social position of the teaching profession

Teachers' salaries are among the lowest in Bulgaria. The average monthly salary for teachers is EURO 130. The average monthly salary in Bulgaria is EURO 200. The prestige of the teaching profession in society is very low. In the past fifteen years, no government has managed to do anything to increase teacher salaries, prestige, and

the social image of the teaching profession. The efforts of teacher trade unions have also failed in this respect.

School and the role of the family

There are obvious gaps between school and the family. Parents are usually not involved in school matters. The most common, and in many cases the only contact between schools and pupils' families is when parents are asked for money for various school needs that cannot be covered by the school budget. The Amendment Law to the Law on National Education (2002) has a special chapter on school boards of trustees. This chapter gives the school boards of trustees a large number of opportunities for participating in school life, assisting in teachers' activities, and supporting school needs. However, it is questionable if a school board of trustees can in practice take up these opportunities. It must also be said that school-family relationships predominantly exist in the field of primary education.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

Five laws on education, regulating pre-school, basic, and secondary education have been adopted by the National Assembly (Parliament):

- The Law on National Education (1991) (*Zakon za narodnata prosveta*),
- The Amendment Law to the Law on National Education (1998) (*Zakon za izmenenie i dopalnenie na Zakona za narodnata prosveta*),
- The Law on the Level of Education, the General Educational Minimum, and the Curriculum (1999) (*Zakon za stepenta na obrazovanie, obshtoobrazovatelnia minimum i uchebnia plan*),
- The Law on Vocational Education and Training (1999) (*Zakon za profesionalното obrazovanie i obuchenie*), and
- The Amendment Law to the Law on National Education (2002) (*Zakon za izmenenie i dopalnenie na Zakona za narodnata prosveta*).

Principles and objectives

All citizens in Bulgaria have a basic right to education. The overall goal is to prepare individuals to become responsible citizens in a democratic society. Education seeks to provide basic skills and a general education for all citizens aged between seven and sixteen, to create strong ties between in-school instruction and preparation for life outside the classroom, and to encourage a sense of responsible citizenship and a sensitivity to global issues. The reform of education is based on principles stemming from traditions in Bulgarian education, such as the guarantee of an equal start for everyone through general and compulsory education; the provision of secondary education for every citizen; free-of-charge instruction in the government-funded and municipal schools; equality and co-educational instruction for pupils of both sexes; the creation of links between comprehensive and vocational training, and between theory and practice; the effective combination of compulsory and optional instruc-

tion; the combination of in-class, group, and individual forms of work; the participation of parents and the community in school activities; and the provision of opportunities for further instruction to ensure various types of education and professional qualification without any age limitation. The objectives of school education in Bulgaria are: to develop the intellectual potential of each pupil; to foster individuality, independence, and a desire for continuous education; to instil national, cultural, and historical self-awareness; to ensure general and vocational training; to encourage self-education and a desire to participate in public activities under the conditions of a market economy.

Levels of governance

Governance of pre-primary education is performed at four levels: national, regional, municipal, and school. Governance of school education (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary) is performed at three levels: national, regional, and school. The following institutions are responsible for the governance processes of pre-primary and school education:

1. At national level - the Ministry of Education and Science (*Ministerstvo na obrazovaniето i naukata*),
2. At regional level - regional inspectorates of education (*Regionalni inspektorati po obrazovanie*),
3. At municipal level - educational departments of municipal administrations, and
4. At school level - directors and relevant school councils.

Philosophy of governance

The Bulgarian school system is centralized. Briefly stated, the functions of the above mentioned authorities are as follows:

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is a specialized body of the Councils of Ministers (the Government) for the determination and execution of government policy in the field of education and science. The MES:

- a) Plans activities connected with the development of education in long-term programmes, organizes and co-ordinates the work of the administrative units and educational institutions, and exercises control over the work of all types and levels of school and kindergarten in the country;
- b) Participates in the formation of national strategy and priorities in the development of education and science;
- c) Approves educational documentation and the educational network, and supervises the introduction of innovations, the supply of textbooks and manuals, and teaching staff;
- d) Conducts international activities in the field of education and science;
- e) Defines the unitary state educational standards;
- f) Organizes publishing activities in the field of education;
- g) Makes proposals and gives suggestions to the Government on education and science financing;

- h) Establishes, transforms, and closes state and municipal schools, and approves the establishment of private schools and kindergartens; and
- i) Appoints the heads of the inspectorates of education.

Regional inspectorates of education

There are twenty regional inspectorates of education. Each one of the twenty-eight regions in Bulgaria has its own inspectorate of education. The inspectorates act as specialized regional bodies of the MES for operative administration of the education system. They carry out planning and co-ordination, and control functions associated with the work of schools and kindergartens in the territory of the regions. An inspectorate comprises experts in school organization and experts in various subjects. The heads of the inspectorates appoint the school directors in the different regions.

The *Educational departments of municipal administrations* represent an element of the government territorial structure and take part in the realization of educational policy within the territory of municipalities. With respect to pre-school education, they are supporting and managing bodies. Directors of kindergartens are appointed by municipal mayors. However, with regard to school education, they are only supporting bodies. The educational departments of municipal administrations are responsible for:

- a) Compulsory education of pupils up to sixteen years of age;
- b) Extra-curricular activities, sport facilities, and recreation;
- c) Health care in kindergartens and schools;
- d) Financing, buildings, furniture, materials, and technical equipment;
- e) Canteen catering, hostels, and transportation; and
- f) Teachers' salaries, scholarships, and special grants for pupils.

The *School Director* (School Principal) and the *Pedagogical Council* are the administrative bodies of the school. The School Director organizes and is responsible for the all activities of the school. Specifically, the School Director:

- a) Follows state policy in the field of education;
- b) Represents the school before other institutions and authorities;
- c) Performs internal controls on the educational process and organization;
- d) Appoints teachers, assistant-directors, and other staff;
- e) Organizes the admission of pupils according to state requirements; and
- f) Chairs the Pedagogical Council.

The Pedagogical Council is a professional collective body comprising all full-time teaching staff. The Pedagogical Council:

- a) Discusses and approves school regulations,
- b) Approves the school curriculum,
- c) Promotes educational achievements and assesses results,
- d) Determines the admission procedure under consideration of legal requirements,
- e) Approves individual pupil programmes,
- f) Makes decisions on extra-curricular activities, and

- g) Discusses and makes decisions on important matters concerning pupils such as health, physical condition, achievements, inter-personal problems, etc.

As mentioned above, there is also another consulting, but not administrative, school body called the Board of Trustees. It comprises the Director, teachers, parents, public figures, businessmen, and artists. A Parents' Council, a Pupils' Council and a Class Council may also be set up to co-ordinate activities within the school. The administrative bodies of kindergartens are comprised of the Director and the Pedagogical Council. Their functions are the same (with some differences according to specific activities) as those of the schools.

Financing

The main source of education financing is the State budget. Every year the National Assembly (Parliament) approves the governmental budget, which includes education financing. The education funds are sent to kindergartens and about 90% of schools via the local budgets of the municipal administrations. Thus, these institutions are called municipal schools. About 10% of schools (special, vocational, and some subject-specific schools) are financed via the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science. These institutions are called state schools.

Education in kindergartens is not free-of-charge. Although the majority of costs is covered by the municipal budgets, parents pay some fees – predominantly for children's meals. The amount of fees is determined by the municipal councils; they therefore vary in the different regions. Funding is allocated according to educational levels and types of school. Funds are allocated for capital investment, subsidizing of scientific research, upgrading teacher qualifications, and staff salaries. Instruction in private schools is not funded by the Government. Kindergartens and all types and levels of school have the right to earn additional income (extra-budgetary income) through fees charged for extra services, rent, donations, sponsorship, educational and creative activities, etc.

In 2003-04 educational expenditure amounted to 4% of GNP and 10% of the State budget. The distribution over the educational levels in the framework of 4% of GNP was as follows: pre-school and school education - 3.37%; college education - 0.03%, university education - 0.6%. The distribution over educational levels in the framework of 10% of the State budget was as follows: pre-school and school (primary, basic, and secondary) education - 8.4%; college education - 0.1%, university education - 1.5%.

Public and private schooling

The public sector has the dominant role in schooling in Bulgaria. The public sector comprises 97% of schools and 99% of school pupils, while the private sector comprises only 3% of schools and 1% of pupils.

General standards of the school education system

In Bulgaria, there is a strictly defined national curriculum (*Ucheben plan*), which is specified in different national curricula for the different levels and types of school.

There are no local and regional curricula. The curriculum has been a field of active reforms in the past five years. The curriculum reform started with the Law on the Level of Education, the General Educational Minimum, and the Curriculum (1999). Ordinance No. 4 of September 1999 on the general educational minimum and teaching time, and Ordinance No. 2 of May 2000 on the curriculum introduced further, related regulations. The reform has involved both the structure and contents of curricula, syllabuses, and textbooks. Changes have aimed at making structures more flexible, at giving more freedom to teachers and pupils, at updating contents, and at facilitating teaching and learning. Each curriculum is divided into three parts: compulsory, compulsory-elective, and free-elective. Recent policy has brought about an increase in the total number of teaching hours, a decrease in the compulsory part, and an increase in the compulsory-elective and free-elective parts.

Ordinance No 2 of May 2000 on the curriculum established a system of standards for each subject, grade, and school level. Standards (*Obrazovatelni standarti*) consist of: contents to be taught, methodologies, competencies to be developed, and results to be expected. Upon completion of grade 8, pupils are awarded a certificate of basic education.

Secondary general education is concluded after successful completion of grade 12. Those who have completed their education receive a secondary education diploma. In 2006 two state-run written matriculation exams (*matura*) will be introduced. Pupils in vocational education, after completing grade 12 or 13, obtain a secondary education diploma and a professional certificate.

Quality management

The assessment of pupils' achievements in oral and written exams, tests, scores in certificates and diplomas at all levels of education is done on the basis of a 2 to 6 scale, where 2 is poor, 3 is satisfactory, 4 is good, 5 is very good, and 6 is excellent. There are national examinations after grade 7 or 8. Secondary general education is concluded after successful completion of grade 12. Those who have completed their education receive a secondary education diploma. In 2006, compulsory state-run written matriculation exams (*matura*) will be introduced. The National Education Amendment Act (2002, Article 24, Paragraph 2) requires that the *matura* consist of two exams: one in Bulgarian language and literature, and one in a subject chosen by the pupil.

Bulgarian teachers do not use standardized tests of quality management. Diagnostic tests are not in use for pupils in basic education. Such tests are used by specialists in reading difficulties to diagnose and identify pupils' problems. There are some tests of school readiness developed by university research teams. However, these tests have not been implemented across the country and are very rarely used. Bulgaria has taken part in PIRLS and PISA international projects.

The current school system

General structure: overview

- a) Pre-primary education (ISCED 0) (*Preduchilishtno obrazovanie*) - for children aged between three and seven.
- b) School education (*Uchilishtno obrazovanie*) - consisting of two levels:
 - Basic education (*Osnovno obrazovanie*), seven or eight years in duration, divided itself into two phases:
 - Primary education (ISCED 1), called the primary phase (*Nachalen etap*), four years in duration, grades 1 to 4; and
 - Pro-gymnasium education (ISCED 2 - lower secondary), called the pro-gymnasium phase (*Progimnazialen etap*), three or four years in duration, grades 5 to 7-8.
 - Secondary education (ISCED 3 - upper secondary) (*Sredno obrazovanie*), four to six years in duration, grades 8-9 to 12-13. In some cases, entrance to secondary school occurs after completion of grade 7, and is five years in duration, grades 8 to 12. In other cases, entrance to secondary school occurs after completion of grade 8, and is four years in duration, grades 9 to 12. There are also schools (vocational gymnasiums) of six years in duration after grade 7, grades 8 to 13. Depending on its content, secondary education is divided into general and vocational branches.

Thus, with respect to the duration of basic and secondary education there are the following structural models in the Bulgarian school system: 7 + 5; 8 + 4; 7 + 6.

Higher education. There are three kinds of higher education: University (*Univer-sitet*), Higher school (institute, academy, etc.) (*Vishe uchilishte*), and College (*Kolej*).

Education is compulsory for all up to the age of sixteen. The Amendment Law on the Law on National Education (1998) states that primary education should begin at the age of seven. Children may enter grade 1 at the age of six, depending upon the wishes of their parents and their school readiness. These two school levels – basic (including ISCED 1 and ISCED 2) and secondary (ISCED 3) – comprise the following types of schools of general education:

- Primary school (*Nachalno uchilishte*), four years in duration, grades 1 to 4;
- Basic school (*Osnovno uchilishte*), eight years in duration, grades 1 to 7-8;
- Gymnasium (*Gimnazia*), five years in duration, grades 8 to 12;
- Secondary general school (*Sredno obshtoobrazovatelno uchilishte*), twelve years in duration, grades 1 to 12; and
- Secondary general school (*Sredno obshtoobrazovatelno uchilishte*), eight years in duration, grades 5 to 12.

Pre-primary education

The objective of pre-primary education is to provide an environment conducive to the development of the child's abilities, and to offer instruction which will prepare the child for formal education. There are two main types of pre-primary institution:

kindergartens (*Detska gradina*) and unified children's establishments (UCEs - kindergartens and crèches) (*Obedineno detsko zavedenie*). There are day-care, health, special, half-care, week-care, and school preparatory groups at kindergartens and UCEs. The children, who are aged three through seven, are usually divided into three groups. The pedagogical process in kindergartens is aimed at the emotional, moral, aesthetic, intellectual, and physical development of the children.

Since 2002, pre-primary education has been compulsory for all children at the age of six, i.e. in their last pre-school year. The compulsory pre-primary education process is organized either in schools (preparatory classes) or in kindergartens (preparatory groups). In 2003, there were 3180 pre-primary institutions (of which 2800 kindergartens and 380 UCEs) with about 192,000 children and 18,500 teachers. The number of children in the groups varies from twelve to twenty-two. The average number of children in a group is 20.6. The teacher : child ratio is 1:10.4. (Popov 2004, p. 73) There are also private kindergartens, which in most cases provide half-day care with an emphasis on foreign languages, arts, and music. They make up less than 5% of the total. In fact, nobody can say for certain what the real number of private kindergartens is, because they are able to operate without a state license.

Primary education

Primary education (*Nachalno obrazovanie*) is the first phase (*Nachalen etap*) of basic education (*Osnovno obrazovanie*). Primary education is provided at primary schools (368 in number), at the primary phase of basic schools (1829 in number), and at the primary phase of secondary general schools with grades 1 to 12 (393 in number) (Popov 2004, p. 89). The school year begins on 15 September. Children have twenty-two compulsory hours a week in grades 1 and 2, and twenty-five in grades 3 and 4. The number of school weeks is thirty-one in grade 1 and thirty-two in grades 2 to 4. Free-elective hours (four a week) are included in the primary school curriculum. Curricula for free-elective hours are prepared by teachers and are approved by school directors after consultation with parents. In 2002-03 there were 341,963 pupils and 21,223 teachers in primary education. The number of pupils per class varied from sixteen to twenty-eight, and the average number of pupils was twenty-one. The teacher-pupil ratio was 1:16. The private sector comprises only eight primary schools and eighteen basic schools offering the primary level.

Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education (called pro-gymnasium education, *progimnazialno obrazovanie*) is the second phase (*Progimnazialen etap*) of basic education (*Osnovno obrazovanie*). The transition from the primary to the pro-gymnasium phase follows after successful completion of grade 4. Pro-gymnasium education (grades 5 to 7-8) is provided at the pro-gymnasium phase of basic schools, at secondary general schools with grades 1 to 12, and at secondary general schools with grades 5 to 12. This phase comprises comprehensive instruction in all subjects of study. It lays the foundations for studying the basics of the different sciences and is associated with a degree of completion of this type of instruction. Pupils receive thirty compul-

sory hours a week in grades 5 to 8. They also have four free-elective hours a week. The number of school weeks in this phase is thirty-four.

Basic education is finished upon successful completion of grade 8 and is documented by a certificate. In 2002-03 there were 348,974 pupils and 28,894 teachers in pro-gymnasium education (Popov 2004, p. 89). The number of pupils per class varied from fourteen to twenty-seven, and the average number of pupils was 20.5. The teacher-pupil ratio was 1:12. The private sector comprises only eighteen basic schools and two pro-gymnasiums.

Upper secondary education

Secondary general education (*Sredno obshto obrazovanie*) is provided at:

- Secondary general schools (*Sredno obshto obrazovatelno uchilishte*) with grades 1 to 12, and with grades 5 to 12; and
- Gymnasiums (*Gimnazia*) with grades 8 to 12.

In 2002-03 there were 148,581 pupils and 13,144 teachers in secondary general education. The teacher-pupil ratio was 1:11.3. Almost all secondary general schools (which are 393 in number with grades 1 to 12, and forty with grades 5 to 12) have subject-specific secondary classes in foreign languages, mathematics, chemistry, biology, and history. Transition to these classes occurs after grade 7 and proceeds on the basis of a national test and a subject exam. Subject-specific education lasts five years. Entrance to non-subject-specific classes occurs after grade 8 without a test or exams, and non-subject-specific education lasts four years. Pupils obtain a basic general education in accordance with state educational standards. Pupils have thirty-two compulsory and four free-elective hours a week. The number of school weeks in grades 9 to 11 is thirty-six, but in grade 12 the number of weeks is thirty-one. The average number of pupils per class is 22.5.

Gymnasiums (160 in number) are specialized, subject-specific schools. Transition to them occurs after grade 7, and requires a national test and an exam. The gymnasium lasts 5 years. Pupils obtain education at a higher level in a given field – foreign languages, natural sciences and maths, humanities and classics, sport, etc. There is a great variety of such gymnasiums. The main field of study is usually divided into specific areas. Foreign language gymnasiums are the most prestigious secondary schools in Bulgaria.

Vocational education and training system

The vocational education and training system (*Profesionalno obrazovanie / obuchenie*) is basically oriented to the secondary education level. It comprises the following types of schools (Graph 2):

- Vocational gymnasium (*Profesionalna gimnazia*), four to six years in duration, grades 8-9 to 12-13;
- Vocational school (*Profesionalno uchilishte*), four years in duration, grades 9 to 12; and
- Vocational centres (*Profesionalni centreve*).

The Law on Vocational Education and Training (1999) states that vocational schools must open their lower section, providing opportunities for entrance after completion of grade 6. However, this has not yet been done, and it is questionable if it will be done at all. Until now, only three vocational schools have offered lower sections after grade 6. Pupils in vocational education get comprehensive vocational preparation. There is a great variety of vocational schools corresponding to the wide range of course profiles, for example, geology and mining, metallurgy, power generation, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and electronics, transport, industrial chemistry, building and construction, agriculture, wood processing, food-processing and public catering, light industry, economics, management and commerce, design, etc.

Admission of pupils to the various types of vocational schools depends on school criteria. Admission to vocational gymnasiums occurs either after grade 7 or after grade 8. Entrance depends on passing admission exams. Training leads to a certificate in a given vocational, technical, or other kind of specialization. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:10. Admission to vocational schools occurs after grade 8 and no exams are required. Training leads to a certificate in a given profession. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:16.5.

Vocational centres offer preparatory courses of different duration and subject profile. Traditional links with enterprises and firms have been established which provide material assets for practical training, as well as opportunities for pupils to participate in real production processes. However, recession has severed the contacts of some enterprises with vocational schools and has thus adversely affected the quality of practical training. Some schools of arts are also included in vocational education. In 2002-03 there were a total of 506 schools (of which 358 were vocational gymnasiums) in vocational education with 191,328 pupils (142,230 pupils in vocational gymnasiums and 49,098 pupils in vocational schools) and 18,129 teachers (Popov 2004, p. 91). The average teacher-pupil ratio was 1:10.6.

Special schools

Special schools provide education, training, and rehabilitation for children with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. In 2002-03 there were 136 special schools, with 15,631 pupils and 2,333 teachers (Popov 2004, p. 90). Most of the schools (76) are for children with mental disabilities. The majority of special schools (105) are basic (grades 1 to 8). The teacher-pupil ratio was 1: 6.7. The MES favours integrating some pupils with special needs into general education schools in the hope that these children can be more easily integrated into society. The Ministry of Health Care and the MES oversee the admission of pupils in special schools. Education and instruction in special schools is carried out according to government-set educational norms.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

General outline

There is a well-developed tertiary system for academic education, but no system of post-secondary vocational education and training. Some public vocational gymnasia (twenty in number with 6000 students and 250 teachers) offer two-year courses in post-secondary training. There are also fourteen private post-secondary vocational gymnasia of this type. However, as a whole this sector is not sufficiently developed. A serious step towards the creation of such a system has been taken by the passing of the Law on Vocational Education and Training. It is too early, however, to predict the results of this legislation.

The academic tertiary system comprises a total of eighty-nine higher education institutions as follows:

- Twenty-seven universities (twenty-three public and four private),
- Fourteen specialized higher schools (thirteen public and one private), and
- Forty-eight colleges (two-two public and six private).

Due to the fact that the specialized higher schools (institutes, academies) have the same status as the universities, it can be said that there are forty-one universities in Bulgaria. Because of academic autonomy, admission requirements depend on the higher schools' regulations. As a whole, entrance to the most prestigious universities and the most desired specializations in other higher schools occurs by means of admission exams. In 2003-04 there were 220,000 students, of which 208,000 were at universities and 12,000 at colleges. The number of teachers in 2003-04 was 24,000, of which 21,200 were at universities and 2,800 at colleges. Most of the public colleges are not independent, but exist inside the structure of a university.

Higher education in Bulgaria has been one of the most rapidly developing sectors from 1990 up to the present. Reforms in the economic, agricultural, and social fields have faced great difficulties. Changes in the other levels of the educational system – pre-primary, primary, and secondary education – have also proceeded slowly. In contrast, progress in higher education is obvious. Bulgaria is a typical example of how the people in a country in an economic and social crisis have decided that higher education is one of the most reliable financial and intellectual investments. Higher education institutions organize study programmes covering the following degrees:

- First degree – a programme of at least three years leading to a specialist degree (*stepen Specialist*),
- Second degree – a programme of at least four years leading to a Bachelor's degree (*Bakalavarska stepen*),
- Third degree – a programme of at least five years or of one year after the Bachelor's degree leading to a Master's degree (*Magistarska stepen*), and
- Fourth degree – a research programme of at least three years after the Master's degree leading to a Doctoral degree (*Doktorska stepen*).

Different degrees may have specific names, depending on the educational traditions and specific features of the respective branch of learning.

Teacher training

Pre-service teacher training is performed at:

- Three-year teacher colleges, which prepare teachers for kindergartens, primary, and basic schools;
- Faculties of education at universities, which prepare teachers for all levels of education - from kindergartens to gymnasiums - and for all school subjects; and
- Departments of education at technical, economic, and other specialized universities, which prepare teachers mostly for vocational education.

A total of thirteen universities have faculties of education and they are the most popular source of teaching qualifications. There are twelve teacher colleges. College graduates usually continue their studies in part-time short-term programmes at university faculties or departments of education leading to Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Thus, almost all teachers in Bulgaria (in kindergartens, basic schools, secondary general schools, and secondary vocational schools) have Bachelor's or Master's degrees.

In-service qualification of teachers is organized at university faculties of education and institutes (three in number) for improving teacher qualifications.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Problems

1. The drop-out rate is a serious problem in Bulgarian education. In the past eleven years, the number of school drop-outs has become higher and higher. In 2002-03 nearly 43,000 pupils from all grades dropped out. About 16,000 of them gave as a main reason their unwillingness to study.
2. The system of higher education seems to be disconnected from secondary education. Admission requirements for higher education are much higher than graduation requirements in secondary education. Secondary school graduates need additional preparation, in most cases in the form of private lessons, for entry to higher education.
3. The decrease in the number of pupils. In the past fifteen years, there has been a constant decrease in the Bulgarian population: in 1988 it was 8.9 million, in 1992 it was 8.5 million, in 2001 it was 7.9 million, and in 2004 it was 7.2 million. In the last ten years, the number of pupils enrolled in all types and levels of schools has decreased by nearly 10,000 a year. This fact directly reflects on the number of schools and teachers.
4. The contradiction between the tendency towards enlargement of vocational education and the availability of equipment and material assets in vocational schools.
5. The low level of computer and other technical equipment in schools.
6. Increasing unemployment among teachers and the lack of programmes for professional re-qualification.

Discussions

One discussion point concerns placing curricula in a legal framework by adopting a number of regulations. The Law on the Level of Education, the General Educational Minimum and the Curriculum (1999), Ordinance No 4 of 1999 on the general educational minimum and teaching time, and Ordinance No 2 of 2000 on the curriculum were very important steps in this respect. Other discussion points are:

1. An increase in the role of foreign language education. Since 2000-01, a foreign language has been an obligatory subject from grade 2.
2. The equivalence of secondary education diplomas to those of the member states of the European Union. Introducing compulsory *matura* exams is considered an important step in this direction. The first compulsory *matura* exams will be implemented in 2006.

Perspectives for development

1. Meeting the challenge of EU membership. At the beginning of 2007, Bulgaria will become a member of the European Union. EU accession is the main perspective and challenge to Bulgarian education with regard to quality, standards, certificates, curricula, mobility opportunities, training, and qualifications.
2. Proving in practice that a country of Eastern Europe which lives under the rules of the Currency Board can achieve the quality of Western European secondary and higher education with considerably fewer financial resources and worse conditions than in the Western European countries.
3. Meeting the educational needs of the minorities through the creation of alternative development and training programmes.
4. Decreasing the 'brain drain' of young people.
5. Clarifying what kinds of employees must be produced for the economy, for industry, and for society. There is no clear strategy on the reconstruction of the economy and on economic priorities. This lack of clarity has a negative impact on the development of the school system.
6. Establishing a new system of teacher qualification, guidance, and assessment.

References

Legal acts

- Amendment Act on the Higher Education Act, adopted by the National Assembly on the 18th of June 1999. In: State Gazette, No 60. Sofia 1999. (In Bulgarian)
- Amendment Law on the Law on National Education, adopted by the National Assembly on the 30th of March 1998. In: State Gazette, No 36. Sofia 1998. (In Bulgarian)
- Amendment Law on the Law on National Education, adopted by the National Assembly on the 10th of September 2002. In: State Gazette, No 90. Sofia 2002. (In Bulgarian)
- Higher Education Act, adopted by the National Assembly on the 12th of December 1995. In: State Gazette, No 112. Sofia 1995. (In Bulgarian)
- Law on National Education, adopted by the National Assembly on the 1st of October 1991. In: State Gazette, No 86. Sofia 1991. (In Bulgarian)

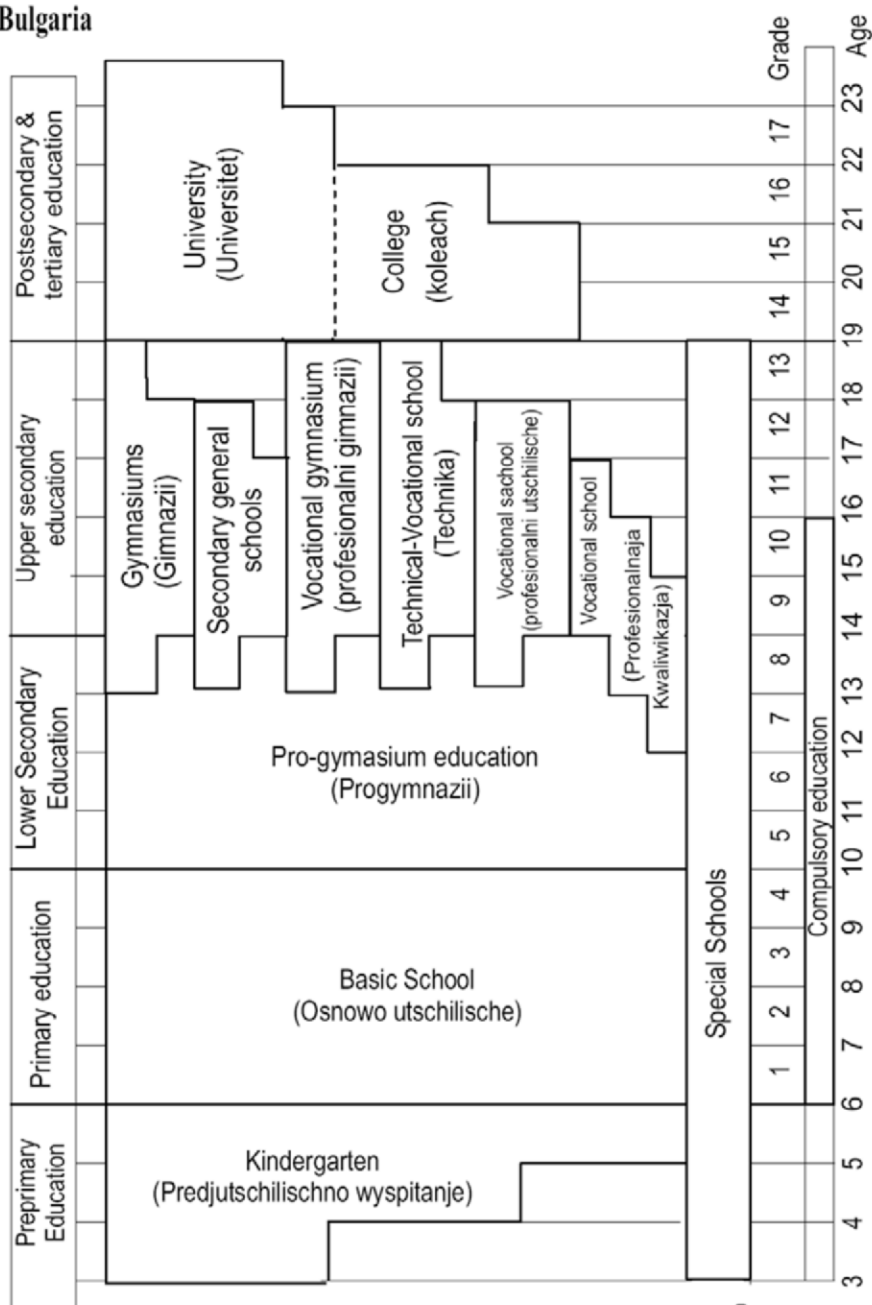
- Law on the Level of Education, General Educational Minimum and Curriculum, adopted by the National Assembly on the 14th of July 1999. In: State Gazette, No 67. Sofia 1999. (In Bulgarian)
- Law on Vocational Education and Training, adopted by the National Assembly on the 15th of July 1999. In: State Gazette, No 68. Sofia 1999. (In Bulgarian)
- Ministry of Education and Science: Ordinance No 2 of May 2000 on Curriculum. In: AzBuki, No 25. Sofia 2000. (In Bulgarian)
- Ministry of Education and Science: Ordinance No 4 of September 1999 on General Educational Minimum and Teaching time. In: State Gazette, No 80. Sofia 1999. (In Bulgarian)
- Ministry of Education and Science: Statutes on Applying the Law on National Education. In: AzBuki, No 32. Sofia 1999. (In Bulgarian)
- National Institute of Statistics: Education in Bulgaria 2003. Sofia 2004. (In Bulgarian)
- National Institute of Statistics: General and Vocational Education 2002/2003. Sofia 2004. (In Bulgarian)

Other references:

- Popov, N.: The Educational System in Bulgaria. In: Bishkov, G./Popov, N. (Eds): Comparative Education. Sofia 1994, pp. 236-255. (In Bulgarian)
- Popov, N.: Bulgaria. In: Civic Education Project: Education for the Transition. Higher Education Policy in Central and Eastern Europe: Country Reports. 1997, pp. 12-24.
- Popov, N.: The Educational System in Bulgaria. In: Popov, N./Bishkov, G. (Eds): Educational Systems in Europe. Sofia 1997, pp. 183-209. (In Bulgarian)
- Popov, N.: Das Bildungswesen der türkischen Volksgruppe in Bulgarien, 1878-1998. In: Ost-Dokumentation: Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Kulturpolitik in Mittel- und Osteuropa, 12 (1998) 3, pp. 49-58.
- Popov, N.: Higher Education Reform in Bulgaria. In: Leitner, E. (Ed.): Educational Research and Higher Education Reform in Eastern and Central Europe (Studies in Comparative Education No 6). Frankfurt/M 1998, pp. 219-229.
- Popov, N.: The Educational System in Bulgaria. In: Bishkov, G./Popov, N. (Eds): Comparative Education. 2nd Edition. Sofia 1999, pp. 230-250. (In Bulgarian)
- Popov, N.: A Review of the System of Higher Education in Bulgaria. In: Civic Education Project: Discussion Series, Volume 1, No 4. 2000.
- Popov, N.: A Review of Higher Education Reform in Bulgaria. In: International Higher Education, No 23. Spring 2001, pp. 27-28.
- Popov, N. (ed. Bureau for Educational Services): The Contemporary Education System in Bulgaria. Sofia 2004. (In Bulgarian)
- Popov, N./Bishkov, G.: Bulgaria. In: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, International Study Center, Boston College (Ed.): PIRLS 2001 Encyclopedia. 2002, pp. 15-22.
- Popov, N./Taulova, R.: Allgemeinbildung in Bulgarien. In: Ost-Dokumentation: Bildungs- und Wissenschaftspolitik, 11 (1997) 3, pp. 59-65.
- Popov, N./Taulova, R.: Fremdsprachenunterricht in Bulgarien. In: Ost-Dokumentation: Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Kulturpolitik in Mittel- und Osteuropa, 12 (1998) 1, pp. 66-75.
- Popov, N./Taulova, R.: Die Ausbildung der Unterstufenlehrer in Bulgarien. In: Ost-Dokumentation: Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Kulturpolitik in Mittel- und Osteuropa, 13 (1999) 2,, pp. 55-62.
- Popov, N./Taulova, R.: Berufsbildungsreform in Bulgarien. In: Ost-Dokumentation: Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Kulturpolitik in Mittel- und Osteuropa. 13 (1999) 3, pp. 49-54.

-
- Popov, N./Taulova, R.: Der neue Lehrplan in Bulgarien. In: Ost-Dokumentation: Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Kulturpolitik in Mittel- und Osteuropa. 13 (1999) 4, pp. 81-88.
- Taulova, R./Popov, N.: Bildungs- und Hochschulpolitik in Bulgarien 1989-1998. In: Ost-Dokumentation: Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Kulturpolitik in Mittel- und Osteuropa, 12 (1998) 2, pp. 49-55.

Bulgaria



Czech Republic

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

The Czech Republic is a relatively small country (10.3 million inhabitants) with a long educational history. After the arrival of Christianity in the ninth century, the first schools, which were run by the Church, were established in Bohemia and Moravia. The Czech king and Roman emperor Charles IV founded the oldest university in Central Europe, in Prague (1348). During the period 1526 to 1918, the Czech lands were part of the Catholic Habsburg monarchy. As a result of the Habsburgs' counter-reformation politics, a great educational reformer, Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670), was forced to emigrate from Moravia and had to live and work outside his homeland.

Compulsory education was introduced in the year 1774 through the school reform of Maria Theresa. From that time onwards, all Czech children from the age of six to twelve were obliged to be educated in at least the 'trivium', i.e. reading, writing, and arithmetic. This six-year elementary education (from 1869 mostly eight years) contributed to the relatively high level of literacy of the Czech population. According to official statistical data, the proportion of literate people in Czech lands increased from 66.4% to 96.8% during the nineteenth century.

In the modern period, the year 1918 represented a new stage in the development of the education system with the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic. The most important educational reform was introduced by the School Act (1922), which extended compulsory education to eight years. The Czech education system of that time was highly selective. The majority of children attended either eight compulsory grades in village schools or five grades of elementary school plus three grades of 'civic' school in towns. These schools mainly prepared young people for further training in an apprenticeship. A minority of children attended upper secondary schools, either the gymnasium (consisting of eight grades) or the *reálka* (*Realschule*, with seven grades), both of which concluded with *maturita* (the school leaving examination), which qualified pupils to enrol at university. In addition, there existed a number of different types of secondary technical school.

The gymnasium and the *reálka* were at that time highly selective. For example, in the year 1935 only 8.2% of the respective age cohort attended these schools, while the rest of the pupil population was educated in standard, non-selective schools. The division of children at the age of eleven into two streams of education was criticized by a number of pedagogues as social discrimination, and as a result, comprehensive school models were developed as early as the late 1930s. However, they were not widely introduced.

After the Second World War, a radical school reform was carried out in Czechoslovakia. In May 1948, the Unified Education System Act was passed by Parliament. The principal reform introduced by the Act was that all young people under the age of fifteen were given the right to receive comprehensive school education at primary and lower secondary level. In practice, this meant that all pupils attended the same type of 'basic school' consisting of nine grades. After completing this level of education, children could choose between the gymnasium (four grades), secondary technical school (three to four grades), and apprenticeship training centres (two three grades). The Act legislated for the abolition of all existing private schools and the provision of education by state schools alone. The State took over full responsibility for ensuring free education for all young people, and for activities such as the development of curricula and textbooks.

The era of 'socialist education' lasted four decades (1948 to 1989), and there is still no consensus among Czech educational experts on its positive and negative results. On the one hand, Czech education was highly unified, strictly centralized, and regulated by the political decisions of the Communist Party. Intolerance towards any non-Marxist thinking, and particularly to religion, restricted the democratic and humanistic nature of the schools. An example of extreme uniformity of education can be seen in the case of textbooks: in all Czech schools a single textbook for each subject in each grade had to be used; no alternative textbooks were allowed. On the other hand, this system helped to reduce social barriers preventing access to upper secondary education and university studies. In particular, the number of pupils graduating from upper secondary schools with *maturita* increased substantially from the 1960s to the 1980s. For example, in 1960-61, 48,148 pupils were enrolled in gymnasiums, whereas by the year 1988-89 the number had increased to 95,346 pupils.

The dramatic change in the political and economic order caused by the events of November 1989 also led to a profound transformation in the Czech education system. On 1 January 1993, the two independent states of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic replaced the state of Czechoslovakia.

Reforms and innovations

The most profound reform in Czech education was a direct result of the dramatic change in the political regime in November 1989. The long rule of the Communist Party was replaced by a parliamentary democratic system that was based on a new constitution and that enacted new educational legislation.

- As a first step, the content of curricula was changed. Marxist doctrine was removed from curricula at all levels of the school system. In its place, new subjects and topics were introduced. The aim was to offer to pupils a variety of philosophical orientations and humanistic values.

- Textbooks of history, geography, civics, and other subjects were removed from schools, as they were heavily influenced by Marxist ideology. All textbooks at all levels of education have now been replaced. A number of private publishers offer alternative textbooks for particular grades and subjects, so that schools and teachers can choose between them.
- The teaching of foreign languages was radically reformed. Russian (which was obligatory as a first foreign language in all types of Czech school until the end of 1989) was replaced by a choice: pupils can now choose from English, German, French, and Russian, beginning in grade 4 of primary school.
- The most radical change concerned the structure of the school system. In 1990 several important decrees were issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. They served as the legislative basis for removing the comprehensive school (for all children up to the age of fifteen) from the Czech education system. First of all, a selective system was reintroduced, in the same form as had existed before the socialist era, i.e. the traditional type of gymnasium (with eight or six classes) was re-established. In addition to state schools, private schools and schools run by churches or religious societies were established.
- Another important change arising from the new legislation was the broad decentralization of the school system. More responsibility was given to particular schools and school principals, as well as to local authorities. School-based management was initiated, while the direct control of schools by the Ministry of Education was reduced. In practical terms, this means that schools are financed by the State through the allocation of funds in an annual budget, but regional school authorities have a decisive role in distributing finances to particular schools.
- The future development of the Czech education system is at present hard to predict, because of serious disagreements between political parties concerning general philosophies and conceptions of education.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

General educational targets in the Czech Republic are similar to those in many other democratic countries. The main principles of democratic educational policy have been proclaimed in several documents, most recently in the National Programme for the Development of Education (2001) issued by the Ministry of Education. The concept of lifelong learning for all has been accepted as the central idea of education as a whole. The realization of this concept needs to respect the following principles:

- The guarantee of fair access to educational opportunities. This means a free choice of educational paths and institutions for everybody.
- The maximum development of every individual's potential. The aim is to adjust the education system to the individual, and to concentrate on personal development.

- The transformation of traditional school structures. This requires not only changes in educational content, methods, and forms of instruction, but also a change in the school climate, in the nature of teacher-pupil relations, etc.
- A new form for the education system with the aim of achieving the highest possible quality and effectiveness of education. This should be based on a wide-ranging decentralization of the education system, so that individual schools receive considerable autonomy, and social partners in decisions about education are at the same time involved to the greatest possible extent.
- New functions and roles for educational staff. Teachers and school principals are expected not only to teach and manage teaching but also to motivate, diagnose, and regulate their pupils' progress in learning. Educational staff have to be able to take part in decision-making about the school as a self-governing institution.
- As for the internal goals of schooling, the general aim is to enable learners to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies, values, and attitudes that contribute to the development of both individual personality and society as a whole.

Socio-economic context

The present social and economic context of education in the Czech Republic is rather diversified.

1. First of all, the profound changes in the economic system, namely the restoration of capitalism and the impact of the free-market economy, have contributed to the widening of social differences in the Czech population. Sociological studies show inequalities in income, wealth, social status, and life-style, and the formation of a new elite (Machonin/Tuček et al. 1996). This class differentiation causes problems in education: many young people from low-income families live in a socio-cultural environment that does not sufficiently support the development of their cognitive, linguistic, and other abilities. As a consequence, these young people typically have lower levels of school achievement, and access to higher education thus becomes more difficult if not impossible. This phenomenon has been recently underlined by the findings of the PISA survey: for example, Czech pupils' scores in reading literacy correlated strongly to their socio-economic background. Thus, pupils from low-income families, whose parents typically have lower levels of education, scored lower on average than pupils from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, some research findings suggest that in this context the different development of linguistic codes in children (according to Bernstein's theory) also plays a role (Průcha 2003).
2. Another factor in the socio-economic context of Czech education is the country's unfavourable demographic development: since the year 1990, the birth rate in the Czech Republic has been continually decreasing and the number of pupils in compulsory education is therefore also going down. As a consequence, many small schools in villages and cities have had to be closed because the number of pupils in classes was under the officially determined limit.

3. The ethnic structure of Czech society plays a certain role in the social context of education. Until recently, the Czech population was rather homogeneous with regard to ethnic structure. Since the year 1990, however, this situation has changed. Alongside the dominant Czech ethnic group, a number of ethnic minorities have emerged, especially Romanies (Gypsies), whose number is steadily increasing. Many problems exist with regard to the education of children from Romany families, as they are socio-politically underprivileged and their parents are typically unemployed and uneducated, and are often involved in crime. Thus, young Romanies do not as a rule attend upper secondary schools, and most of them leave education without any professional qualifications. On the other hand, more and more children from immigrant families (mainly Vietnamese, Ukrainian, and Chinese children) are being educated in Czech schools without serious problems. It is expected that after joining the EU in May 2004, the Czech Republic will acquire a more multi-ethnic character.

Social position of the teaching profession

The social position of teachers in the Czech Republic is the opposite of their economic status. The professional prestige of teachers among Czechs is still relatively high. In sociological studies, teachers of all school levels consistently occupy the highest positions in scales measuring the prestige and social significance of various professions. This elevated status is due mainly to the fact that all teachers acquire their qualifications through university studies at the master's level (a regulation that has been in place since 1946).

On the other hand, the economic position of Czech teachers is rather low, as they belong to the more poorly paid professionals with higher education qualifications.

School and the role of the family

Families are expected to play a very important role, in co-operation with schools, in the upbringing of their children. Czech education policy-makers claim that this expectation is in fact fulfilled, and that parents actively co-operate with schools. Unfortunately, recent research does not support this assertion:

1. Some demographic data indicate that the traditional Czech family structure has been seriously weakened. During the 1990s, the number of divorces increased to such an extent that about 20% of children now grow up in single-parent families, mostly with the mother only. At the same time, the proportion of children born outside of marriage increased to 22% of all newborns in the year 2003. Both phenomena have contributed to the weakening of the input of the family into children's development and education.
2. Equally disturbing are the findings on the family-school partnership. In most Czech schools, communication with parents takes the form of consultation between an individual parent and an individual teacher about the parent's child. It is not common for the majority of parents to be in frequent contact with schools and teachers, or to be actively involved in helping schools in some way. No data are available concerning the proportion of parents who are not interested in co-

operation with their children's school. However, some research findings indicate that the intensity of co-operation depends on several factors. Successful partnership between parents and schools is more often the case in kindergartens than in primary schools. On the other hand, the size of the settlement (schools in large cities vs. schools in villages) plays no decisive role in the parents-school partnership.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles and philosophy of governance

The post-socialist development of Czech education has focused on fundamental structural changes supported by certain legislative measures. The following changes had the greatest influence:

- The abolition of the state monopoly on the provision of education. This measure enabled the creation of non-state schools at all levels of education.
- The strengthening of the administrative and economic autonomy of schools. The School Act No. 171/1990 established schools as legal entities. Legal entity status means that a school may undertake economic transactions in its own name as an independent entity. This measure allowed schools and their heads to become more autonomous and responsible.
- As a result, the pedagogic autonomy of schools has also increased. Schools have gained greater freedom in implementing obligatory curricula, in proposing study plans, and in introducing innovations on an experimental basis.
- The above measures have thus brought about a high degree of decentralization in the Czech school system. However, the state authorities still have responsibility for supervising and controlling the functions of the education system. This responsibility is exercised by the Czech School Inspectorate, a state institution which regularly inspects schools at all levels, with the exception of universities. The results of inspections are published yearly in detailed reports covering various aspects of school operations.

Financing

All schools that have been approved by the Ministry of Education receive their funding from the state budget. Every year, the Ministry of Education allocates financial resources to different state and local administrative authorities responsible for schools and school facilities. The main principle underlying the financing of the school system is the normative model. For the allocation of budgetary funds from the Ministry of Education, global norms expressing expenditure per pupil are employed. The normative system of financing is forcing schools to increase their number of pupils, as this number decides the amount of money that is allocated. The university financing system is also based on per capita norms. However, the norms depend on coefficients of the difficulty of study programmes. For example, the lowest coefficient of difficulty (1) has been assigned to faculties of philosophy, law,

theology, and economics, while the highest coefficients (2.80-3.50) have been given to faculties of medicine, chemistry, veterinary medicine, and art.

As for total expenditure on education relative to GDP, in recent years the Czech Republic has allocated around 4.6%, which is roughly similar to Ireland or Italy, but much less than Finland or Sweden.

The non-state sector in the Czech education system

Under the socialist regime, no private schools were allowed to exist. Starting in 1990, new non-state schools were established in accordance with legal regulations. Czech non-state (non-public) schools are officially of two kinds: (1) private schools owned and managed by individuals or corporate bodies, and (2) denominational schools established and run by churches. Catholic and Protestant schools and one Jewish school currently exist.

At present, there are 536 private schools and 101 denominational schools at the different levels of primary and secondary education in the Czech Republic. Most private schools operate as secondary technical schools. They reach their maximum share at this level, namely 25% of all schools and 17% of all students enrolled in upper secondary technical schools. The proportion of students in denominational schools is relatively low: there are 13,847 students in all denominational schools, which represents only 0.7% of the total number of students enrolled in all schools.

Home schooling is quite rare. Only 302 pupils are instructed at home (on an experimental basis), all of them in the younger age group of compulsory school.

General standards of the school education system

Since the beginning of the 1990s, several attempts have been made to introduce a national curriculum for compulsory education. These resulted in the document *Standard základního vzdělávání* (Standard of Basic Education), issued by the Ministry of Education (1995), which serves as a framework for curricular development at the level of compulsory education. The document sets out basic aims and curricular contents in languages, mathematics, science, and other parts of general compulsory education.

Since 1998, similar curricular standards have been developed for upper secondary vocational education. At present, a great part of school policy is devoted to developing 'framework curricula' which would constitute a kind of national curriculum for all schools providing lower and upper secondary education. This endeavour is accompanied, however, by political controversy (see Section 6).

Quality management

The Czech education system has several means of quality monitoring and evaluation: official control by the state inspectorate, monitoring on the part of private institutions, assessment of the results of PISA surveys, and the accreditation system in tertiary education.

The Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) is a state institution governed directly by the Ministry of Education. The task of the CSI is defined by law and consists of two types of activities:

(1) External evaluation of all schools, i.e. both state and non-state kindergartens, lower and upper secondary schools, and higher technical schools. The evaluation mainly involves didactic aspects, educational contents, and learning outcomes.

(2) Inspection of working and material conditions in schools, of the use made of economic resources, of the control of school meals, of safety and health protection at work, and of other facilities. The CSI presents its findings in annual reports that serve as a source for assessment of the current state of the Czech education system. For example, the report for the school year 2002-03 revealed that the personnel structure in schools of compulsory education is still very unsatisfactory: about 37% of English teachers and 21% of German teachers are not fully qualified. The situation in gymnasiums and upper secondary technical schools is of course much better.

Since 1995, an annual evaluation of the learning outcomes of Czech pupils has been carried out by Kalibro. This is a project operating on a commercial basis which uses specific tests measuring the knowledge and skills of pupils in lower and upper secondary schools. The Czech Republic has also participated in international evaluations of educational achievement such as TIMSS and PISA. In PISA 2000, which assessed the knowledge and skills of fifteen-year-olds, the results of Czech pupils were rather middling: in reading literacy young Czechs ranked under the OECD average, in scientific literacy they ranked above the OECD average. Particularly displeasing, however, was the high inequality of educational outcomes: the socio-economic background of pupils was strongly associated with their school performance. Thus, social inequalities are having a strong impact on Czech education, as, for example, in Germany and Hungary, and this conclusion is supported by other research (Průcha 2003).

In higher education, quality assessment is controlled by an independent body, the Accreditation Commission. The main role of the Accreditation Commission is to produce an expert overview on the quality of faculties and universities. It submits recommendations on universities' applications to offer graduate (doctoral) courses, to establish or close faculties, etc. Thus, the Accreditation Commission has a significant influence on monitoring the quality of Czech higher education.

Support systems

Support systems in Czech education function in several ways:

1. The information system, which provides data for state management at all levels of education. This provision is ensured by the *Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání* (Institute for Information in Education), a state institution under the competence of the Ministry of Education. The main part of the Institute's work is collecting and processing statistical data on Czech schools and publishing them annually in the *Statistical Yearbook of Education*. This also includes a volume of indicators on educational organizations other than schools (e.g. after-school care centres, youth homes, school libraries, etc.) and on employees and remuneration in education.

2. Another element of the support system is in-service teacher training. This has been repeatedly proclaimed by official school-policy makers as a necessary condition for increasing the quality of the teaching profession. In reality, however, continuing teacher training does not function well in the Czech Republic. The reason is that the network of institutions that provided teacher training until the year 1990 was unreasonably abolished as a residue of the socialist regime, and was not replaced by an effective new system. At present, regional teacher training centres are in a phase of reorganization. On the other hand, there are a large number of private agencies offering various kinds of teacher training, naturally for a fee.
3. Psychological counselling in education is provided by both state and private educational counselling centres. These offer services for children, parents, and teachers, especially in the prevention of anti-social behaviour, crime, and the abuse of addictive substances. Counsellors cater to children between the ages of three and nineteen. At present, there are about 100 counselling centres in operation, providing services not only in socio-psychological diagnostics, but also in student career orientation. Only a few schools have on-site psychologists, although this would be very useful given the increase in aggression, bullying, and violence among youngsters.
4. Educational research should serve as a natural source of support for education, on the condition, of course, that research findings are properly utilized by education policy-makers and teachers. Unfortunately, this is not the case for Czech education. On the one hand, there is a relatively well-developed body of research dealing with various important aspects of education, e.g. the measurement of the psycho-social climate in classrooms and schools, studies on teachers' professional competencies, textbook analysis, etc. On the other hand, findings from research studies are mostly not applied by those who design new framework curricula, who write new textbooks, or who decide about the future development of Czech education (see Section 6). One of the shortcomings of this situation is that until now educational research has developed quite haphazardly, according to the interests of researchers, and is not regulated by any national committee which would establish a hierarchy of research priorities.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The school system in the Czech Republic comprises educational institutions at six levels (see the scheme in the Appendix). Young children attend pre-school education, then the nine-year basic school, and after that proceed to the various branches of upper secondary education. Finally, if they have the necessary aptitude, they can progress to post-secondary or tertiary education. Pupils are streamed and differentiated in several ways; the first and most important streaming unfortunately occurs as early as the basic school, when pupils around the age of eleven can apply for entry to the more academic programmes provided by gymnasiums. A specific feature of

Czech education is the relatively high proportion of private schools (see Section 3.3).

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education (ISCED 0) is provided by kindergartens (*mateřská škola*). They cater to children from the age of three to five years. In the school year 2002-03, there were 5973 pre-primary institutions in the Czech Republic with 287,008 children and 23,324 teachers and other personnel.¹ Attendance in pre-primary education is not compulsory; however, the majority of young children (mostly in big cities) spend at least one year in a kindergarten before starting compulsory education. According to the Czech School Inspectorate, the quality of education in kindergartens is very good, especially with regard to the development of language and communication skills.

Primary education

Compulsory school attendance usually begins at the age of six. Primary education (ISCED 1) is not a separate level of education, but is included in a basic school (*základní škola*) which lasts nine years. The first cycle of the basic school lasts five years and is provided in 3956 schools with 544,554 pupils and 30,499 teachers, of which 94% are female. The curriculum in primary education includes compulsory subjects such as the mother tongue, mathematics, sciences, and music, which are taught over a total of twenty to twenty-five lessons per week (in the first and fifth class respectively). All subjects are typically taught by one class teacher, except for foreign languages, which are taught by specialized teachers. In addition to the so-called fully constituted schools (with all five grades), there are single classroom schools, i.e. schools where children from two or three grades are all taught together by one teacher. There are about 1200 such schools of primary education, and they are especially common in small communities.

Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education (ISCED 2) covers grades 6 to 9 of the basic school. There are 2463 schools of this level in the Czech Republic, with 449,576 pupils and 36,121 teachers, of which 75% are female. There is no examination at the end of the primary level, and no final examination at the end of the second cycle. Teaching in the second cycle is performed by specialized subject teachers. Basic schools are almost exclusively public institutions; only about 2% of schools are non-state institutions (privately owned or run by a church).

The main goals of basic school are to provide pupils with the fundamental knowledge and skills that are necessary for further education, to ensure the personal development of pupils according to their individual abilities, and to orient pupils in

¹ This number and the following data on Czech education are taken from *Statistická ročenka školství 2002/2003* (Statistical Yearbook of Education 2002/2003) published by Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání (2003).

the universal values of morality and democracy. These goals are of course similar to those of the curricula of other countries.

Because basic school forms one integrated type of compulsory education, it should be described as a whole:

- About 90% of the school-age population attends all nine grades of the basic school, while about 10% of pupils leave it at the end of the fifth grade or the seventh grade and enter a gymnasium. Another form of differentiation is provided by several educational programmes that are officially approved by the Ministry of Education and among which schools can choose. The programmes are the Basic School Curriculum (followed by approximately 90% of all basic schools), the Civic School Curriculum, the Waldorf Curriculum, and others.
- Apart from the typical basic schools, there also exist distinctive institutions for primary and lower secondary education, for example *školy s rozšířeným vyučováním* (extended schools). These follow the curricula of the normal basic schools, but have more lessons for mathematics, foreign languages, music, or sports. They are in fact selective schools for ‘talented’ pupils.

Upper secondary education

The upper secondary school network (ISCED 3) has traditionally consisted of three branches: gymnasiums, secondary technical schools, and secondary vocational schools. The difference between them is that the first two offer programmes leading to *maturita* (final examination), which provides access to university, whereas secondary vocational school is typically completed without *maturita*. The differences in Czech upper secondary education are substantial:

- The gymnasium (ISCED 3A) has a predominantly academic orientation. The goal of the gymnasium is to prepare pupils for university or other tertiary education and to develop certain intellectual skills. The gymnasium is a selective school, i.e. applicants take entrance examinations. Since 1990, two basic types of gymnasium have existed: (1) the four-year gymnasium, accepting pupils after the ninth grade of the basic school, and (2) the multi-year gymnasium, i.e. either an eight-year gymnasium (after the fifth year of the basic school) or a six-year gymnasium (after the seventh year of the basic school). In total, there are 347 gymnasiums in the Czech Republic with 142,349 pupils and 12,896 teachers, of which 65% are female. About 19% of all gymnasiums are non-public institutions (mainly with private owners). At present, a variety of gymnasiums exist as a consequence of the relatively large range of optional subjects. General education subjects dominate and are divided into two groups: (1) compulsory subjects whose allotment of hours must follow the guidelines of officially approved programmes, and (2) optional subjects whose inclusion and number of hours are either partially or completely determined by the headmaster. This gives rise to a great variety of educational profiles. Roughly two thirds of all gymnasium graduates are admitted to university; many of the rest enrol for a different type of study programme at post-secondary technical schools.

- Secondary technical schools (ISCED 3A) represent the main type of upper secondary education. These schools prepare for professional activities in technology, business, health care, social welfare, and administrative, artistic, and cultural fields. Full secondary technical schools, usually lasting four years, culminate in the final examination (*maturita*), which entitles graduates to university entrance. These schools can also operate as two- or three-year secondary technical schools without *maturita*. Secondary technical schools in the Czech Republic are very popular and are attended by some 40% of all pupils in upper secondary education. In total, there are 1272 schools offering study towards *maturita*, with 269,866 pupils and 26,148 teachers, of which 45% are female. A great number of such schools operate as private institutions (about 20% of the total).
- Secondary vocational schools (ISCED 3C) prepare young people for skilled professions. Pupils receive a general education in a number of subjects, are taught vocational theory, and undertake practical training in instruction centres or at a workplace. The school programmes vary in difficulty and length depending on the field, e.g. the building industry, electrical engineering, transport and communications, agriculture, etc. Most schools provide apprenticeship programmes concluding with a final vocational examination that qualifies the graduate for a specific profession. Graduates can gain a *výuční list* (vocational proficiency certificate). Some schools also provide study programmes leading to *maturita* at the same level as secondary technical schools. After 1989, there was a sharp decline in the number of secondary vocational schools. There are at present 754 institutions of this type with 198,466 pupils. About 14% of the schools are private institutions.

In upper secondary education as a whole, there has been a trend in the last decade towards an increase in the number of pupils who receive education leading to *maturita*, i.e. level ISCED 3A. At present, about 65% of young people in the respective age cohort graduate with *maturita*. A number of pupils also gain *maturita* in various follow-up courses (ISCED 4A).

Special education schools

Special education in the Czech Republic has a long tradition of high quality. The respective institutions operate in pre-school education, compulsory basic education, and upper secondary education. They provide education to children with hearing, sight, speech, and physical handicaps, with multiple handicaps, with mental handicaps, and with behavioural and learning problems. The following types and numbers of special education schools currently exist in the Czech Republic: 237 kindergartens with 6091 children, 957 basic schools with 43,242 pupils, and 319 upper secondary schools with 19,988 pupils. These schools (except those for the mentally retarded) provide pupils with an education equivalent to that received at the same level by the general population, but they reach this goal by using special teaching methods and resources tailored to the abilities of handicapped pupils. Special schools employ teachers with special pedagogical training, and other specialists such as psychologists, rehabilitation workers, etc.

In addition, a number of handicapped children receive education in classes that are integrated into standard schools or as individual members of standard classes. The general tendency is to include more children in these forms of integrated education, with the exception of children with severe handicaps, who receive better care in special education schools. A specific type of non-standard education is provided by *přípravné třídy* (preparatory classes), which provide education for children from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds, i.e. mainly for children from Romany families.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Post-secondary non-tertiary education

During the last decade, there has been a rapid growth of student numbers in post-secondary follow-up courses (ISCED 4A). These enable students who have finished secondary vocational education (ISCED 3C) to gain *maturita*. Courses are organized within secondary technical schools or secondary vocational schools as part of life-long education. About 41,000 students participate in follow-up courses.

Tertiary education

As in other countries, the system of tertiary education has expanded into a variety of different streams, at university and non-university level, and in the public and private sectors. The three main types of tertiary institution are as follows:

- Higher technical schools (tertiary professional school, *vyšší odborná škola*) are institutions providing specialized professional post-secondary education at level ISCED 5B. They usually accept students from the age of nineteen who hold an upper secondary school leaving certificate. The schools offer short- and medium-length courses (two to three and a half years) leading to non-university tertiary qualifications. Though this type of education only started in the year 1992-93, it has expanded rapidly and at present there exist 168 higher technical schools with 27,584 students. About a half of the schools are public state-subsidized institutions and the other half are private institutions. Fees must be paid, however, at both public and private institutions. Graduates typically enter the labour market directly. Students in higher technical schools represent about 10% of all students in tertiary education.
- Universities in the Czech education system are institutions of higher education that provide both medium-length programmes (bachelor's studies) and long programmes (master's studies) usually to students from the age of nineteen. The most typical course is still a master's programme at a public university lasting five to six years. In the year 2002-03, the Czech Republic had twenty-four universities with 235,874 students in all kinds of studies. About a half of them were female students. In 2002 the total number of graduates was 30,880, and the total number of enrolments was 43,180. The growth in the number of students in Czech universities has been enormous since the year 1990: in the school year 1989-90 there were 113,000 students in public universities, in 1995-96 140,000 students, and in 2002-03 a total of 235,874 students.

As for fields of study, social sciences, economics, and law have seen the biggest increases in student numbers, and typically have several times as many applicants as available places. In engineering and agriculture, the increase is less obvious. In all universities, applicants have to pass entrance examinations. At present, about 30% of a respective age cohort is admitted to universities; the interest, however, is twice as large. Universities thus have to apply a *numerus clausus* system, as the capacities of the institutions (financial, material, and personnel) are limited.

There are no tuition fees in public universities, although some faculties demand small entrance fees. The number of foreign students is 11,437, which represents about 5% of all students. Among foreign students, more than 60% are Slovaks, as they suffer no language barriers in Czech universities and are attracted by the fact that do not have to pay fees. Another positive trend in the last decade is the increase in the number of students who are pursuing vocational and educational careers simultaneously. 42,906 students participate in distance education, which represents about 18% of all university students.

A large proportion of university students (about 15%) are in teacher training programmes. Student teachers study in nine faculties of education (all belonging to universities) and in more than twenty other faculties (e.g. faculties of arts preparing teachers of history or foreign languages, etc.). Future teachers of all categories have traditionally studied in full master's programmes (ISCED 5A), with the exception of kindergarten teachers, who study in bachelor's programmes (ISCED 5B).

Private tertiary institutions

A new phenomenon in Czech education is represented by tertiary institutions governed by private (non-state) providers (*soukromá vysoká škola*). The number of such institutions has increased from a handful in the 1990s to twenty-seven in the year 2002-03. Most of them offer bachelor's programmes; only exceptionally do they also provide master's programmes. More than half of the programmes on offer are in economics, management, and business administration. In all private institutions, students pay fees; in some cases these are extremely high. This is probably one of the reasons why the total number of students remains small: 7891 in the year 2002-03, which represents 3% of all students in tertiary education. However, a number of other private tertiary institutions have since been established, bringing their number to thirty-four in the year 2004. Though the establishment of new private institutions of higher education must be approved by the Accreditation Commission and fulfil its strict requirements, there is generally only at most a cursory evaluation of their subsequent development, quality, and outputs.

Current problems and perspectives for development

The Czech education system developed dramatically after the political change in 1989, and is still in transition. This development naturally possesses both positive and negative features.

Among the positive features, probably the most significant is the growth in the educational attainment of the young and adult population. According to OECD indi-

cators (OECD 2003) the Czech Republic has one of the highest proportions of citizens who completed upper secondary education. For example, in the age cohort of twenty-five to thirty-four years, this proportion is more than 90%. As mentioned above (Sections 4.5 and 5), this level of achievement is reflected in the continuing increase in the number of pupils in upper secondary technical schools, gymnasiums, and post-secondary schools.

On the downside, the percentage of the Czech population completing tertiary education is significantly lower than the OECD average (data for the year 2001): in the age group of twenty-five to thirty-four years, about 11% have completed the tertiary level of education (ISCED 5A +B), whereas the average of the OECD countries is 28%. One of the reasons for this figure is that in the Czech Republic some kinds of specialized studies are traditionally completed in upper secondary technical schools (ISCED 3A), rather than in tertiary professional schools (ISCED 5B), which are not as common as in other countries. For example, nurses and kindergarten teachers have until recently been trained in secondary technical schools; they are now beginning to study in bachelor's programmes at universities.

The problems that are currently being discussed within the Czech education system are mostly economic, political, and pedagogical in nature:

- With regard to economic aspects, the most serious problem in recent years has been the insufficient financial support for education from the state budget. The governments in OECD countries spend on average 5.9% of GDP on their educational institutions. In the Czech Republic the expenditure on education (as an average of all levels of education) is 4.6% of GDP.
- This creates difficulties in several areas, the most significant of which relates to teachers' salaries. Although teachers' salaries have increased in absolute terms in recent years, they still remain below the average of salaries in occupations demanding a tertiary level of education. Czech teachers are paid less than their colleagues in most OECD countries, in both primary and secondary schools.
- Another problem concerns small schools in villages: because of the lack of finances, more and more schools which do not have the required number of pupils are being closed by the Ministry of Education. Some communities try to defend their schools, but in most cases without success. The argument that small schools often fulfil the function of cultural centres in the community, and serve not only as places of instruction but also as a location for out-of-school activities for children, etc. is not accepted by the bureaucrats who decide on the allocation of funds for small schools.
- With regard to pedagogical aspects, many questions have been debated in recent times, among them Czech results in PISA 2000 and the worsening of the psycho-social climate in Czech classrooms and schools.
- Concerning PISA results, it was quite surprising to education policy-makers and the general public that the achievement levels of Czech pupils were not equally high in all areas of testing: Czech fifteen-year-olds ranked slightly below the average of OECD countries in reading literacy, average in mathematical literacy, and slightly above average in scientific literacy. In general terms, this is ac-

ceptable. What must be interpreted, however, as a great shortcoming of Czech education is the enormous discrepancies among pupils that were caused by social factors: in the Czech sample there was a strong correlation between the educational outcomes and the socio-cultural background of pupils. Whereas in countries like Finland or Korea there is remarkable equality in learner achievement, in the Czech Republic (as well as in Germany and Austria) the achievement of pupils is strongly influenced by parental education, family wealth, and other social factors. This shows that pupils have quite different learning opportunities in their families, and that Czech primary and secondary schools are not able to eliminate social inequalities existing in education. On the contrary, the selection of children into 'academic' and 'non-academic' streams at the age of only eleven contributes to a high variation in achievement between schools and their pupils.

- Furthermore, PISA revealed differences in the performance of pupils in schools located in big cities (with the best learning outcomes) and small communities (with the worst learning outcomes), both in reading literacy and mathematical literacy. This is again associated with the socio-economic stratification of parents in particular localities.

The problem of social inequalities in Czech education is thus serious; furthermore, it has been revealed not only by PISA results, but also by other research findings (Průcha 2003).

As for the future development of the Czech education system, some policy materials have been developed by a group of experts co-operating with the Ministry of Education. For example, the document called *Priorities for Czech Education Policy* (1999) contains a list of the main tasks to be included in the future plans of the government. In reality, however, this only formulates unrealistic proposals such as an increase in public expenditure on education from 4.5% of GDP in 1999 to 6% of GDP in 2002. In fact, this proposal was not realized in 2002, and not even in 2004.

The most significant document dealing with the future development of the Czech education system is the *White Paper on the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic* (2001). This document was adopted by the Czech government in 2001 as the basic strategy for the next five to ten years. The main aims of education policy have been reformulated as 'recommendations' and proposals concerning, for example, the implementation of lifelong learning for all. The strategic goals are:

- To ensure that education is fully accessible and that all levels of the education system offer people the opportunity to change their course of study.
- To promote the individualization and differentiation of the educational process at all levels of the education system.
- To implement a system to foster talented and exceptionally gifted children. To promote the education of disadvantaged individuals.
- To increase the proportion of young people passing the upper secondary school leaving examination to 75%.
- To enable access to tertiary education for 50% of a respective population year.

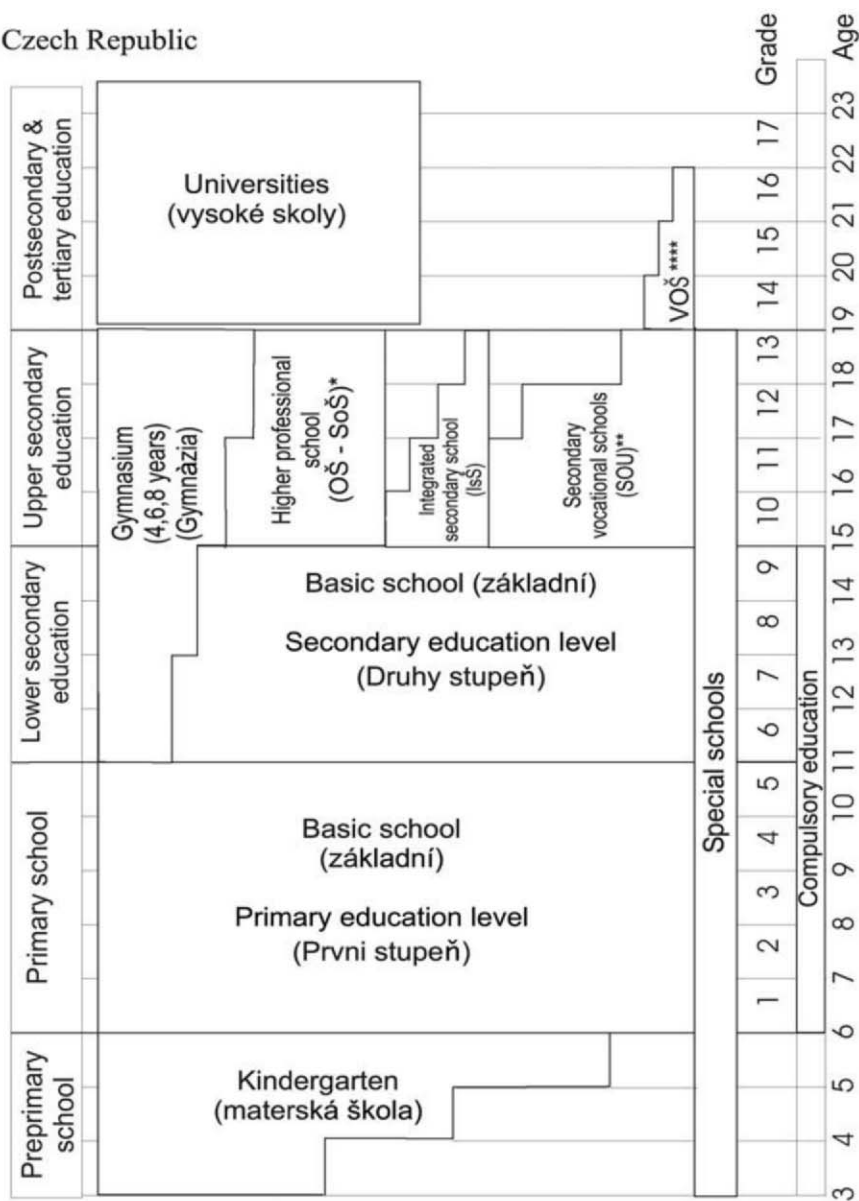
Most of the proposals published in 2001 have turned out to be pure fantasy or inadequate propositions when confronted with the reality of the year 2004. The reason for the failure of the document was that the proposals did not rest on the findings of empirical research projects. The only successful cases have been those in which exact research methods and pilot studies have been applied. Foremost among them is the task to elaborate a State Programme of Education (National Curriculum) for children and adolescents from three to nineteen years of age. This task has been carried out by elaborating a *rámcový vzdělávací program* (frame curriculum) for kindergarten and for basic school which is at present in the stage of verification in pilot schools.

It has thus again been shown that not only plans for the future development of education, but also the specific measures suggested by education policy-makers must be anchored in educational research, and must utilize both preliminary feasibility studies and the findings of experimental verifications.

References

- Czech School Inspection: Annual Report of the Czech School Inspection on the School Year 2002/2003. Prague 2004.
- Machonin, P./Tuček, M. et al. : Česká společnost v transformaci (Czech Society in Transformation). Prague 1996.
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport: National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic – White Paper. Prague 2001.
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports: Ke společnosti znalostí (Towards the Knowledge Society). Prague 2004.
- OECD: Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators. Paris 2003.
- Priority pro českou vzdělávací politiku (Priorities for the Czech Education Policy). Prague 1999.
- Průcha, J.: Sociální nerovnosti ve vzdělávání (Social Inequalities in Education). In: Pedagogika, 53 (2003) 3, pp. 287-299.
- Standard základního vzdělávání (Standard of Basic Education). In: Věstník MŠMT ČR 51, No.6. Prague 1995.
- Statistická ročenka školství 2002/2003 (Statistical Yearbook of Education 2002/2003). Praha 2003.
- Vzdělávací program Základní škola (Educational Programme Basic School). Praha 1996.

Czech Republic



* Secondary technical schools (Střední odborné školy)

** Secondary vocational schools (Střední odborné učiliště)

*** Higher technical school (Vyšší odborná škola)

Croatia

History of the school system

Cultural background and historical development of the school system

Croatia has a population of 4,381,352 (March 2001). In the school year 2002-03, approximately 813,000 pupils and students attended Croatian educational establishments, including those attending institutions of adult education and those pursuing special courses of studies. The majority of pupils and students were younger than twenty-five; this age bracket makes up about 18% of the total population. Approximately 105,000 children were looked after in nursery schools (about 38% of the age group), 396,000 pupils (99%) attended obligatory primary school, 196,000 adolescents studied at middle school, and 116,000 young adults were enrolled in universities and colleges. In the year 2002, approximately 5% of the 1.4 million employees in Croatia worked as teachers. The illiteracy rate for those over fifteen years of age was stated as 2% in 2001.

The earliest recorded information on educational institutions in Croatia dates from the fourteenth century and refers to village schools associated with churches. In the following centuries, Austrian and Hungarian rulers encouraged reform movements which favourably affected the entire Croatian school system. As the system lacked, however, Croatian teachers and officially approved textbooks in the Croatian language, it cannot be considered genuinely Croatian. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the school system developed into a truly Croatian system. Only after the collapse of absolutist rule and the settlement between Croatia and Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1868 was Croatian introduced as the language of instruction in educational institutions. The reform movement, initiated by progressive teachers, culminated in the publication of pedagogic writings; the foundation of numerous teachers' associations, which were assimilated into the umbrella organization of the Croatian Pedagogic-Literary Association in 1871; and the organization of three great teachers' conferences. The first national law regulating primary education and teacher training (the Act on the Establishment of Primary Schools and Teacher Training Institutions for Primary School Teachers in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia, enacted by the Croatian Parliament on 31 August 1874) prepared the ground for the establishment of primary schools in Croatia. In the same year, the Croatian University at Zagreb commenced teaching and research. Ever since, Croatia has maintained a high level of autonomy with regard to its national school system.

Against the background of the kingdom embracing Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after the First World War, the school system was centralized; the individual countries (*banate*) retained, however, the authority to decide on specific questions of implementation. While the foundations for a unified school system had been laid

down in 1926, it was only in 1929 that a national curriculum was settled; eight years of compulsory, including pre-primary, education, was introduced, and both secondary and tertiary education were regulated by law. In the years following 1929, the individual schools' autonomy became increasingly restricted. The division of the Croatian national body, moreover, was not without its consequences for the development of the Croatian school system. After 1945, the Croatian Republic in general, and its education system in particular, was adapted to the new social and political order of the Yugoslavian Federation. Primary education was made compulsory for eight years in 1952. The reform of the school system that took place at that time lasted for twenty years. The significance of non-vocational secondary school as the dominant type of general school increased greatly. Teacher training courses now took five years; at the same time, a network of both four-year technical and two- or three-year vocational colleges was established. The General School Act of 1958 formed the basis for Croatian special legislation with regard to educational policies; Croatia was thus granted a high degree of autonomy within the framework of the ideological and political principles of the socialist order.

Reforms and changes

In the 1960s, both the organizational structures and the contents of the school system were unified and to some degree decentralized. The 'second school reform' of the mid-1970s was implemented by means of closer pragmatic co-operation between schools as 'service providers' and commercial companies as 'customers'. As a consequence, a form of 'anti-intellectualism' emerged; non-vocational secondary schools were formally abolished. This advance was, at the same time, an attempt to extend general compulsory education to ten years. Because of both inconsistencies within the programme of reform and a lack of funding, however, this effort was doomed to failure. The legitimate criticism of the second school reform resulted in further attempts at restructuring the school system, especially in the middle schools, between 1986 and 1990. The 'Croatian National War' delayed, but did not prevent, the emergence of a Croatian school system based on a democratic multiparty system after 1991.

Several outlines of a school reform that have been considered since 1992 are presented in section 6.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational aims and general objectives of the school system

Since Croatia does not have central documents in which general objectives, aims, and functions of the school system are codified, we refer the reader to section 4, where the aims and objectives of the individual educational subsystems are outlined.

Socio-ethnic context of the education system

All Croatian citizens are entitled to education irrespective of their ethnic background. Pre-primary education is guaranteed by law for a certain number of children; all children, furthermore, have the right to primary and secondary education. National minorities are partially instructed in their mother tongues; they constitute about 2% of all pupils in primary and middle schools. While it cannot be denied that problems have occurred in some regions with regard to school attendance of children of individual ethnic groups such as the Romanians, these instances occur less frequently now. Part of the minority-language instruction is offered by Croatian schools; in addition, specific minority schools have been established. In recent years, considerable funds have been provided for schoolrooms as well as for the training of qualified teaching staff. The problem of war refugees who do not want to return to their former places of residence is still topical in some regions; its significance, however, is decreasing.

In the school year 2000-01, the children from ethnic minority backgrounds were offered instruction in the following languages: Serbian - seven nursery and thirty-seven primary schools; Italian - thirty-two nursery, seventeen primary, and seventeen middle schools; Czech - two nursery and eighteen primary schools; German - five nursery schools; Slovak - two primary schools; Hungarian - one nursery, nine primary, and one middle school. In total, children of ethnic minority origin make up approximately 1.6% of all pupils.

Social standing of the teaching profession

Generally, Croatian teachers are not content with their social status. In recent years, they have succeeded in improving their situation; they have achieved, for instance, pay rises and additional financial bonuses. Especially the fact that their salaries have been lower than those of other employees in the public sector and in administration had caused the teachers' dissatisfaction.

Net salaries of primary school teachers, on the one hand, vary between EURO 500 and 600 depending on the economic circumstances of the municipality responsible; the minimum wage matches the amount paid to teachers in their probationary period.

Wages of primary and secondary school teachers, on the other hand, depend on both the qualifications and the position of the individual teacher. Middle school teachers receive a net salary of approximately EURO 550 in their first post; by the end of their professional lives, this figure has increased by 25 to 40%. Teachers usually work until the age of sixty-five; in other words, they can reach over forty years of service.

In tertiary education, salaries are paid according to academic title and professional position, and vary between EURO 700 for junior employees and EURO 1300 for the most senior staff.

The gravest problem for Croatian employees in general, and teachers in particular, is the very low pension; even after forty years of service, monthly net payments do not exceed EURO 300.

Measures aimed at improving housing conditions have not yet yielded satisfactory results. With respect to the general standard, interest rates are still too high; they vary between 7.5 and 12%. In recent years, however, the Croatian state has initiated programmes that provide low-interest loans for the purchase or construction of owner-occupied houses.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Legal foundations and administrative hierarchies

According to the Constitution of the Croatian Republic (1990-2001), ‘elementary school [is] obligatory and free of charge’, while ‘education at middle and tertiary schools is open to everybody under the same conditions in accordance with his [*sic*] abilities’ (Article 65). The Constitutional Act on Human Rights and Liberties, and Rights of Ethnic and National Groups or Minorities in the Croatian Republic (*Ustavni zakon o ljudskim pravima i slobodama i pravima etničkih i nacionalnih zajednica ili manjina u Republici Hrvatskoj*, 2000?) contains special regulations for minorities. Pre-primary education is regulated by the Pre-primary Education Act (*Zakon o predškolskom odgoju I naobrazbi*, 1997), primary school by the Primary School Act (*Zakon o osnovnom školstvu*, 1990-2001), secondary education by the Middle School Act (*Zakon o srednjem školstvu*, 1992-2001), and tertiary education by the Academic and Tertiary Education Act (*Zakon o znanstvenj djelatnosti i visokom obrazovanju*, 2003).

The educational sector comprises four levels of control: a) the Croatian Republic, b) administratively autonomous regional entities (*komitate* and the city of Zagreb), c) local entities (municipalities and towns), and d) legal entities as well as individuals both Croatian and foreign. The latter include churches and religious communities.

At the level of the state, the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sport (*Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i športa*) controls the operations of the school system. The Ministry passes regulations regarding the implementation of laws, approves the establishment of schools up to the secondary level, and decides individual administrative cases. Two committees within the Ministry supervise the performance of headmasters of primary and secondary schools. A superintendent body (*prosvjetny inspekcija*) controls the legality of operations in every school at both the institutional and the individual levels (headmasters, teachers, and additional staff). The Croatian School Institute (*Zavod za školstvo Republike Hrvatske*) is responsible for pedagogic supervision at the school level (*stručno-pedagoški nadzor*); it determines and implements annual curricula, organizes classes and other educational units, and plans the adequate use of textbooks, teaching aids, and other media. Furthermore, the Institute supervises the compliance with and implementation of pedagogic and didactic-methodological standards as well as the regularity of examinations and qualifications. Administrative control, finally, is exerted by regional bodies, which have jurisdiction over districts (*komitate*).

Individual schools are responsible for the implementation of curricula and school programmes, and for the adequate distribution of the funds available. Administrative

committees, comprising representatives of teachers, the superintendency, and parents, decide on and control the implementation of annual curricula and school programmes at every individual school. In order to facilitate pedagogic supervision and decision-making, the teaching staff has initiated school and class committees. In addition, each school has parents' and pupils' councils.

Financing

Approximately 3.2% of the Croatian gross national product is spent on the school system. The Croatian national budget covers a small proportion of pre-primary programmes, about 80% of the cost of primary and middle schools, and most of the expenses for tertiary education. Parents have to pay for textbooks, part of the regular programmes and all special nursery programmes, optional primary school programmes, and the total cost of middle-school education 'as individually required'.

Public and private schools

The majority of educational institutions are state schools established by municipalities or districts. Approximately 8% of nursery schools are privately owned and operated (attended by 4.1% of children), 0.6% of primary schools (0.11% of pupils), and 4.1% of middle schools (0.9% of pupils). An additional 11.6% of nursery schools (3.22% of children) and 3.08% of middle schools (0.79% of pupils) are operated by the church. All schools are 'public' or 'recognized as public'.

Setting of curricula and programmes

The Croatian Ministry of Education and Sport issues documents which regulate educational structures and contents for all school levels. The pre-primary programme was published in 1991, curricula and programmes for primary schools from 1992 to 1999, and for middle schools between 1992 and 2001. These documents delineate contents and the total number of both obligatory and optional lessons that pupils have to take per week; furthermore, the distribution of subjects over the school years is laid down. Depending on the school level, moreover, didactic standards, staffing levels, structural conditions, and the implementation of programmes are outlined. Curricula for vocational middle schools that offer general as well as practical instruction, in contrast, are issued by the Ministry of Trade.

Within the Ministry of Education and Sport, specific committees develop curricula and school programmes; they are issued only after a public debate. This is an instance of traditional state-centred control over education by means of curricula and school programmes. These curricula and programmes are a means of legitimizing educational policies, the control of learning, and, especially, teaching processes. Schools and teachers, however, have retained a certain level of autonomy with regard to the implementation of curricula and school programmes.

Evaluation of schools and school performances

The Croatian state does not provide school-specific standards according to which the performance of pupils, teachers, schools, subsystems, or the entire system are assessed.

The Ministry responsible decides on the establishment of institutions of primary, secondary, tertiary, and, in some cases, pre-primary education. The evaluation of schools and the education system in general is still in its infancy; it has not yet developed into an independent system. Whereas the law provides for drastic measures in cases of violation of statutory regulations, such as disqualification from the profession, these are rarely applied.

The assessment of the quality of school management is also still in an early phase; only recently has this issue gained currency in the discussion implemented by the Croatian School Institute on the further qualification of primary and middle school headmasters.

Quality assessment takes the form of self-evaluation by individual schools at the end of each school year. The criteria, however, are not consistent throughout the system; in addition, the results are usually of a quantitative rather than a qualitative nature. Generally applicable standards, such as individual 'bodies of knowledge' for each school level, are being developed. In the current absence of standards, however, the evaluation of the individual performance of primary and secondary school teachers is usually carried out by the Croatian School Institute; its assessment is also based on the judgement of headmasters and teachers' and pupils' committees. University or college teachers are subject to a legally prescribed evaluation system. After a specified number of years, they can either be promoted, maintain their position, or be degraded, according to their scientific-pedagogic or pedagogic performance. Since no national ranking lists exist, schools cannot be ranked individually.

With the exception of competitions that are held in specific subjects from local to state level, there is no national evaluation of the performance of pupils. In late 2003, however, it was decided that Croatia would participate in the PISA survey. The newly established National Examination Centre was entrusted with the task of preparing the introduction of standardized middle school examinations (*državna matura*); by passing these, the pupils acquire university entrance qualifications.

In Croatia, 98% of all pupils finish primary school in the prescribed number of years; 97% of these pupils continue their education at middle school. The majority of middle school leavers meet the criteria for tertiary education. According to the data available, about 10% of pupils do not obtain middle school qualifications. 20% of all students graduate within the prescribed time period; while university students spend seven years at university, those at vocational colleges study only five years on average. A quarter of the students, however, do not finish their degree at all. Approximately 60% of those who finished middle school are unemployed.

Pupils' overall performance and their performances in all obligatory and optional subjects are registered by means of a marking system ranging from the best mark 5 to the lowest mark 1; a 5 means 'very good', a 4 'good', a 3 'satisfactory', a 2 'fair', and a 1 'fail'. With the exception of grades 1 to 3, pupils need to receive pass marks in all subjects in order to move on to the next grade. Conduct is assessed descrip-

tively by the form teacher in primary school; in middle school it is marked either 'exemplary', 'good', or 'bad'.

School attendance is obligatory in both primary and middle school. In middle school, pupils can be suspended from school for the remainder of the year if they miss more than thirty to thirty-five lessons without an excuse, or if they seriously violate school rules. They are allowed, however, to take examinations at their or any other school at a later date. Primary school concludes with the completion of grade 8; there are no formal examinations. After the final year at middle or vocational school, in contrast, there are final examinations, the passing of which enables the pupils to enter university or college. In primary school, only about 0.6% of children have to repeat a year; very few pupils leave school without successfully completing their primary education. In middle school, approximately 2.3% of pupils repeat a year. Adolescents who do not finish primary school usually enter adult education programmes; in the year 2000, approximately 23,000 people participated in about 170 programmes.

University and college students acquire their degrees through both examinations and other means of assessment, such as traineeships, exercises, term papers, or colloquia. Students are examined by a committee. Those students who fail to fulfil all requirements for their subjects more than once are usually not allowed to continue their course of studies. The competence for deciding on these requirements rests with the individual institutions. The marking system corresponds to that used in primary and middle school; it ranges from 5 to 1.

Qualifications of the teaching staff

The following staff work directly with pupils: nursery-school teachers (*odgojitelj*), primary school teachers (*učitelj*), middle school teachers (*profesor*), vocational school teachers (*stručni učitelj*), and teaching assistants (*suradnik u nastavi*). Those working in nursery schools have to complete a two-year programme at a pedagogic college. Whereas primary-school form teachers who instruct grades 1 to 4 are required to have a degree from a pedagogic college, both subject teachers for grades 5 and 6 and middle school teachers have to hold a university degree. Both courses take four years. Prospective teachers with a non-pedagogic university degree, such as qualified engineers, are required to obtain pedagogic, psychological, and didactic-methodological qualifications within one to two years. Teams for the pedagogic improvement of schools (*razvojno-pedagoška služba*) are responsible for one or more schools; they comprise pedagogues (*pedagog*), psychologists (*psiholog*), special school teachers (*defektolog*), social workers (*socijalni radnik*), computer experts (*informatičar*), and librarians who have completed a four-year university course (*školski knjižničar*). The above-mentioned pedagogic staff, who can be hired and dismissed by the headmaster or an administrative committee, are obliged to take an examination after a legally prescribed period of time that ranges between one and a half and two years; they are examined by a committee based at the Ministry of Education and Sport. Subsequently, they can be promoted and obtain the title of mentor (*mentor*) or counsellor (*savjetnik*). Headmasters of nursery, primary, or middle schools have to meet the same requirements as the respective teachers and, in addi-

tion, have to have at least five years of practical experience. A position is filled after a school's administrative committee has publicly advertised the post; in primary and middle schools, the school council (*školski odbor*) decides on the candidate, in nursery schools the administrative council (*upravno vijeće*). Both committees have the right to remove headmasters from office.

In tertiary education, there are assistants (*asistent*), teaching staff, and academic staff. The teaching staff comprise part-time lecturers (*predavač*), senior part-time lecturers (*viši predavač*), lecturers (*profesor visoke škole*), language assistants (*lektor*), senior language assistants (*viši lektor*), practical assistants (*umjetnički suradnik*), and senior practical assistants (*viši umjetnički suradnik*). The academic staff includes university lecturers (*docent*), special lecturers (*izvanredni profesor*), senior lecturers (*redoviti profesor*), permanent senior lecturers (*redoviti profesor-trajno zvanje*), and emeritus professors (*professor emeritus*). The latter is used as an honorary title.

The current school system

Overview of the general structure

Pre-primary education is voluntary; approximately 103,000 children attend nursery school (*dječji vrtić*), i.e. about 32% of the two to six age bracket. The basic type of primary school (*osnovna škola*) comprises two phases of four years' duration each. From grades 1 to 4, pupils are taught by a form teacher, from grades 5 to 8 by several subject teachers. School education is compulsory until the age of fifteen. After completion of grade 8, pupils are entitled to enter any type of secondary school. Approximately 26% of pupils attend the only type of general, or non-vocational, middle school (*gimnazija*). After four years, i.e. middle school grades 1 to 4, pupils take an examination (*matura*), the successful completion of which enables them to enter tertiary education.

Vocational secondary education is subdivided into four-year technical vocational schools (44% of pupils) and three-year vocational schools (29%). 13% of the latter are associated with industry, 11% are traditional trade schools, and 5.5% are trade schools that offer both general and practical instruction. Training courses for qualified workers take between one and two years (0.6% of pupils). In addition, there are special schools for physically disabled or mentally challenged children (0.8%); these three-year schools are either autonomous institutions or embedded in regular schools. Fine arts middle schools, finally, comprise music, ballet, art, and design schools; the programmes take at least four years (2% of pupils).

Nursery and primary schools follow standardized curricula. Pupils have the opportunity, however, to choose up to three or four additional lessons per week; these optional subjects include, for instance, religion or a second foreign language. Furthermore, they can participate in supplementary lessons and extra-curricular activities. By the first year in middle school, i.e. at the age of fifteen or sixteen, adolescents have to opt for one of about 430 educational programmes with little scope for optional contents. In other words, the school system becomes increasingly diversified. While they are at primary school, pupils can change from one school to another

without restrictions; in contrast, programmes cannot usually be changed after the first year of middle school.

Tertiary education is divided into vocational college and university education; the length of the various programmes varies between two and six years for graduate courses, and between two and three years for post-graduate degrees. It is possible to change universities or colleges both horizontally and vertically.

Pre-primary education

The objectives of pre-primary education are based on a humanistic approach to individual development, which emphasizes the personality of every child. The average teacher-pupil ratio is 1:13.5. In addition to teachers, nursery schools employ further qualified personnel such as pedagogues, psychologists, specially trained pedagogues, and nurses. Teachers are required to spend six hours per day, or thirty hours per week, with their group. Pre-primary education programmes cover four areas: a) development of physical and psycho-motor skills, b) socio-emotional and personality development, c) cognitive development, and d) development of linguistic, communicative, and expressive skills. The programmes are subject to the Guidelines on Pre-primary Education (Ministry of Education and Sport, School Development Institute, 1991). Whereas nursery schools' programmes must be approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport, the approval of measures for health care, hygiene, nutrition, and social care is within the purview of the responsible departments of the Health Ministry and the Ministry of Social Services. Approximately 17% of children in the two to three age bracket attend nursery school; of the three- to six-year-olds about 75% spend between eight and ten hours in nursery school, 22% between five and eight hours, and 3% fewer than five hours. So-called 'pre-school' is attended by approximately 17% of children, while about 13% make use of special programmes such as music, art, and dancing lessons; foreign languages; or physical education. Group size varies considerably between twelve and thirty children. The most serious problems, however, are the lack of national pedagogic standards, the shortage of rooms in several municipalities, the unsystematic funding of private nursery schools, the lack of institutions that take care of children between six and twelve months old, and the insufficient number of nursery schools in smaller towns and villages.

Nursery schools employ qualified counsellors in order to meet the individual needs of children with learning difficulties; special institutions have been set up to the same end. Children from minority or refugee backgrounds are either offered specific contents in regular nursery schools, or attend specially established schools with appropriate programmes.

Primary education

All children who have reached the age of six before 1 April enter primary school in the same year, usually in the school closest to their home. Enrolment, however, can be postponed for one year. At primary school, pupils should acquire an elementary, general education, and develop basic forms of independence, personal interests, a positive system of values, and other personality traits. These objectives are intended to enable children to pursue their education according to their personal preferences

and capabilities. Form teachers who instruct grades 1 to 4, i.e. the first phase, have to have a degree from a pedagogic college or have taken a two- or three-year course at university; those who teach grades 5 to 8, the second phase, are required to have completed a two- or four-year university programme. The latter teach one or two subjects. About 25% of all primary school teachers have a university degree and 69% a college degree; a further 6% have merely completed middle school. The overall teacher-pupil ratio is 1:15.2; 1:18.5 in the first phase and 1:14.2 in the second. While 49% of all primary schools employ a school pedagogue, only 2% have a social worker, 14% a psychologist, and 35% a special pedagogue. The latter is responsible for several schools; accordingly, special pedagogues spend only a part of their working day in each school. Every school, in contrast, has a librarian, although some of them work only on a part-time basis.

The curriculum consists of obligatory and optional subjects as well as electives. Weak pupils can opt for supplementary lessons, stronger ones for additional courses. The pedagogic workload amounts to between eighteen and twenty-three hours per week. The school year starts in early September and finishes in mid-June, which is the equivalent of 175 workdays. Pupils usually spend between four and seven hours per day in school; one lesson is forty-five minutes long. Most schools have divided the school day into two, some into three, shifts. On average, twenty-five pupils of the same year learn together in one class; in classes that combine two or more years, the average figure is about twelve. Traditional teaching methods are the predominant mode of instruction; teaching units usually take the form of courses.

As with the nursery schools, the lack of national pedagogic standards is a severe problem, as are the fragmentation of the school infrastructure; a shortage of school buildings and, especially, gymnasia; an insufficient supply of equipment, teaching aids, and media; the lack of qualified teachers; and difficulties in the publication of textbooks.

The European orientation of the Croatian school system manifests itself in the school programmes. Children have to take foreign language lessons from grade 1; in addition, they can opt for a second language from grade 4 onwards. These lessons, usually two sessions per week, are financed by the state. The programme also allows for additional contents, such as human rights or the Holocaust, which have been taught to pupils from other European countries as well.

Extra-curricular activities include academic and fine arts subjects, usually between one and three lessons per week. These study groups or clubs offer courses on music, literature, recital, drama, sports, or environmental topics; with regard to assessment, the pupils' performance in the extra-curricular activities is on an equal footing with those in the regular classes.

Secondary education

The availability of places and the pupils' performance at school restrict enrolment in grade 1 of secondary, or middle, school. Depending on the chosen programme, between three and five subjects that are relevant to the pupils' further education, together with their overall performance during the last two years at primary school, are taken into consideration. In addition, achievements at regional, national, and inter-

national school competitions affect pupils' evaluation. Those with the best results and disabled children are admitted immediately to the programme. About 97% of the pupils who finish primary school continue their education at middle school level.

Both general and vocational middle schools are subject to nationally standardized regulations; these include a common school calendar and the division of the school year into two semesters. Each week has five school days, every lesson is forty-five minutes long. While general middle school pedagogues have to teach between eighteen and twenty-two lessons, and practical teachers at vocational schools twenty-eight lessons per week, qualified assistants work between thirty-two and thirty-six hours. The teacher-pupil ratio is approximately 1:12, the average class size about twenty-seven pupils. The function of general middle schools is to prepare pupils for further education at university or college level. Middle school teachers are required to have at least four years of university education and to have specialized in one or two subjects. There are middle schools with general, linguistic, mathematical-scientific, and fine arts orientations. While only one school has an international programme, several middle schools offer foreign language instruction. Approximately 90% of the curriculum is common to all types of middle school. Fine arts schools can be subdivided into music, ballet, art, and design schools; they usually prepare pupils for further specialized education. Vocational middle schools offer a variety of programmes, such as electrical engineering, civil engineering and transportation, chemistry, economics, trade, hotel and catering trades, tourism, and public health. The four-year courses at technical and similar vocational schools train adolescents for the labour market; pupils, however, can also continue their education. While the majority of teachers hold a degree from a four-year university or college, subject teachers and assistants can have lower qualifications. Curricula and school programmes consist of a general and a specialized section; the ratio of the former to the latter is 3:2. There are on average twenty-eight pupils in each class; the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:11. At three-year vocational schools, adolescents receive training which enables them to enter the job market immediately. The ratio of teachers to pupils is approximately 1:10. Most of the programmes of 'traditional' trade and industry schools are taught in school. General subjects constitute between 30 and 35% of the curriculum, theoretical subjects between 20 and 25%, and practical subjects about 40%. Pupils can continue their training at several vocational colleges. At trade schools that offer general as well as practical instruction, the latter makes up 60%, while theoretical subjects, both general and specialized, account for only 40%.

Every pupil who has successfully completed middle school has the right to enter tertiary education. Admission, however, is subject to several criteria that vary between different courses of studies; as a result, not everybody who finishes middle school can enter all courses. Whereas university students are required to have completed four years of middle school, vocational colleges also admit those who have three years of middle school. Admission is contingent on the passing of a course-specific entrance examination; furthermore, the students' performance at middle school is taken into account. Several vocational colleges do not conduct aptitude tests; they accept students on the basis of their achievements in school.

Special schools

Regular middle school programmes for disabled children take three years; there are, however, shorter courses of one or two years' duration that train qualified workers. Pupils with minor disabilities attend regular schools while those with more serious disabilities are taught in special schools. The latter make up about 1.5% of all middle school pupils. The function of curricula and school programmes is to train these pupils for twenty-seven different 'auxiliary jobs' in eleven domains; they include a general and an applied technology programme as well as a practical training period. Furthermore, pupils are specially counselled. The following grave problems complicate the education of disabled children: the lack of comprehensive pedagogic standards and qualified teachers; the shortage of rooms, adequate equipment, and textbooks; the division of the school day into two shifts; inappropriate and over-extensive curricula; and the unsatisfactory co-ordination of school and university programmes. The weak economic situation of Croatia inhibits the ability to provide disabled pupils with a high-quality, practically orientated education.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

A great challenge faces the Croatian tertiary education system, for its structure and contents need to be brought into line with the Bologna Declaration by 2005-06.

According to the legislation currently in effect, the tertiary education system consists of diploma (*dodiplomski studij*) and post-graduate (*poslijediplomski studij*) courses of studies. The former is subdivided into vocational college (*stručni studij*) and university (*sveučilišni studij*) degrees. College courses take between two and four years, and are offered by post-secondary schools (*viša škola*); by seven autonomous colleges (*veleučilište*); by nine state or private vocational colleges that specialize in technology, medicine, humanities, and fine arts ('*visoka škola*'); and by numerous faculties (*fakultet*). These faculties are based within universities offering degrees in technology, medicine, bio-engineering, and arts and humanities. Courses at Croatian universities, faculties, and academies take between four and six years. The five universities are based at Zagreb, Rijek, Split, Osijek, and Zadar respectively; in addition, there are faculties of the sciences, engineering, medicine, bio-engineering, and the humanities, as well as music, drama, and fine arts academies (*umjetnička akademija*).

Under the previous regulations, a regular post-graduate degree (*postdiplomski studij*) took up to two years. Usually, after completing the course, students were awarded a Master's degree (*magisterij*); by meeting specific additional demands and successfully defending their doctoral thesis, they could also obtain a Doctorate (*doktorat znanosti*). It has become common practice, however, for students to obtain a diploma from a university or college before they enrol in a doctoral programme (*doktorski studij*).

At present, about 10% of the Croatian population holds a university or college degree. As a result of the policy to increase this figure, between 65 and 70% of pupils who finish general or vocational middle school are admitted to an institution of tertiary education. Approximately 35,000 new students enrol every year, more than

half of them in the humanities. The number of students who pay for their tertiary education themselves is increasing year by year; this holds for both regular and special courses of studies. In recent years, the significance of smaller towns as university towns has also increased. However, since the means of adequate quality assessment with regard to both contents and staff have not kept abreast of this trend, the *raison d'être* of the decentralization remains in question.

According to recent estimates, the present rate of graduation will not be sufficient in order to reach the level of education and the percentage of graduates of between 20 and 30% that characterizes more developed countries. Every year, about 35,000 students start university or college, whereas only 10,500 to 13,500 students finish their degrees in the same period of time.

In general, the Croatian tertiary education system is still too rigid, for there are insufficient opportunities to change institution both horizontally and vertically. Furthermore, the co-ordination between middle school and university or college programmes is inadequate, the institutions' equipment is inappropriate, and the quality of instruction leaves much to be desired. Modern teaching methods, such as work in small groups or research projects, are rarely used. Although individual courses of studies appear to have reached the quality standards of the developed countries, the Croatian university and college system in general is lacking standards, procedures, and methods to assess the quality of education comprehensively and objectively.

Teacher training is very unbalanced; in recent years, college courses have become the dominant type at the expense of university education. Teacher training courses can be subdivided into college programmes for primary school teachers and university programmes for both upper primary and middle school teachers. Both approaches to teacher training emphasize specialized contents; psychological, pedagogic, and didactic subjects make up, on average, only 15% of the curricula. Vocational schools do not prepare young adults to become subject teachers; they have to acquire additional psychological, pedagogic, didactic, and methodological skills during their first semester at university. This very basic, uneven, and late education cannot guarantee the quality of the teachers' training.

A first step towards the improvement of the organization of the Croatian tertiary education system was the establishment of the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sport at the end of 2003, which unified responsibility for all levels of education.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The transformation of the school system has been discussed since 1992. While four drafts have been proposed, none of them has been implemented. In the period from 1992 to 1999, however, changes in the legislation, the curricula, and the structure of the school system were enacted (cf. *National Report 2004*). In the year 2002, new suggestions for the reform of the school system were made. The Education Council, a committee under the direction of the Ministry of Education and Sport, recommended the drawing up of a draft programme of reform for the school system of the Croatian Republic in May 2000. Subsequent to the publication of the *Foundations for the Establishment of a Croatian School System*, a public discussion was initiated,

the results of which were systematized and published in March 2001. At the same time, the project *Strategies for the Development of the Croatian Republic in the Twenty-first Century*, under the auspices of the Croatian government put forward a further paper outlining changes to the school system. The first draft, drawn up by Prof. Dr. sc. A. Mijatović in 2000, elaborates on the following issues: basic characteristics and deficiencies of the school system; objectives and aims of education in general; structural principles and theoretical guidelines; structural elements of the school system, curricula, and programmes; both basic and extended training of teachers and non-pedagogic personnel; assessment of the performance of teachers and pupils, and of the quality and level of education; and the financing of the school system. A further draft programme written by Prof. Dr. sc. Nikola Pastuović employs a comprehensive approach to learning. On the basis of a study which investigated the compatibility of the Croatian and other European school systems, the draft proposes changes at all school levels; furthermore, it includes an analysis of the present situation as well as suggestions on required changes with regard to adult education.

One of the central questions in both the above-mentioned drafts and public discussion has been the duration of the individual stages of school education. Both proposals include several models for the organization of primary and secondary education. The first draft suggests a 1 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 2 to 4 model. One year of obligatory pre-school is followed by three primary school stages of three years' duration each; after ten years of compulsory education, pupils can attend middle school for another two, three, or four years. In contrast, the second proposal recommends the introduction of several differing primary school models, such as 4 + 4 + 1, 6 + 3, or 6 + 4.

The issue of reforming the curricula and programmes for all stages of the school system has been predominant in public discussion. The legal foundations and the funding of school reforms have in addition attracted the attention of both politicians and educationalists.

Questions regarding the practical implementation as well as both the scientific and political foundations of educational reform have dominated the professional, scientific, and political debates, and have included topics such as the following:

- The European orientation of the Croatian school system;
- A reconsideration of basic educational objectives and aims;
- Democratization and increased pluralism of education;
- The adjustment of educational contents and qualifications to the requirements of the labour market;
- Equal opportunities;
- The relationship between formal, informal, and self-education;
- Decentralization of the management and financing of the school system;
- A review of the concept of the stages in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education;
- Opportunities to change from one school type to another, vertically as well as horizontally;

- A reconsideration of approaches to teaching and learning processes, especially with regard to the acquisition of transferable skills and knowledge on the one hand, and the support of gifted children on the other;
- The education and training of physically disabled and mentally challenged children;
- Scheduling on all levels of the school system on a daily, weekly, and annual basis;
- The introduction of a standardized middle school examination which awards university entrance qualifications;
- Written or oral assessment of pupils' performance and the transfer of pupils to the next year despite poor marks;
- The proportion of teaching to pedagogic staff; and
- Theoretical research in pedagogy and the scientific study of school development within the framework of a proposed Institute of Educational Research.

The Croatian school system is in need of reform, especially in view of European integration. The transition that the Croatian economy is undergoing is bound to affect the school system as well. Whether these changes are accomplished by means of short-term measures and alterations, or on the basis of one of the proposed large-scale reforms of the school system, or through a combination of these, or by means of a third proposal, depends on a variety of factors. These include societal, political, economic, financial, and pedagogic issues and conflicting interests. The authors of the above-mentioned reform programmes suggest as a first step a thorough analysis of the present state of the Croatian education system and a feasibility study. In late 2001, a tendency towards a combination of both approaches could be observed. Initial reform measures have been implemented; the financing of primary and middle schools, for instance, has been partially decentralized. These measures also provide for short-term changes and reductions in the curricula in order to ease the pupils' workload. At the same time, a debate on the necessity and the nature of a reform of the entire education system is taking place. In addition, research projects have been initiated which aim at the scientific study of individual aspects of the school system, and which raise questions central to educational reform in general. The former comprises, for instance, the experimental evaluation of models of nine or ten years of compulsory education, enquiries into a prospective reform of teacher training programmes, and the scientific evaluation of performance. The latter includes research projects such as Reform of the National Curriculum, and Methodology and Structure of the National Curriculum. The findings of these and further studies as well as the subsequent public debate are expected to yield the following results: a clearer understanding of methodological and theoretical-pedagogic approaches to school reform, and thus the avoidance of negative effects caused by partial changes lacking scientific corroboration; the improvement of the proposed alterations and the adaptation of the concept to economic and social realities; the setting of a feasible timetable and financing scheme for the strategic implementation of the planned educational reform; the drawing up of training and funding plans for teaching staff in accordance with the proposed reform; the establishment of an Institute of Educational Research, which is to analyse and underpin the reform scien-

tifically; and the development and implementation of a programme of reform that achieves a dynamic balance between the compatibility of the Croatian school system with European regulations on the one hand, and the desire to retain the substantial characteristics of the Croatian national curriculum on the other. Thus, a more realistic and qualified discussion of the problems and challenges facing the present Croatian educational system is becoming possible.

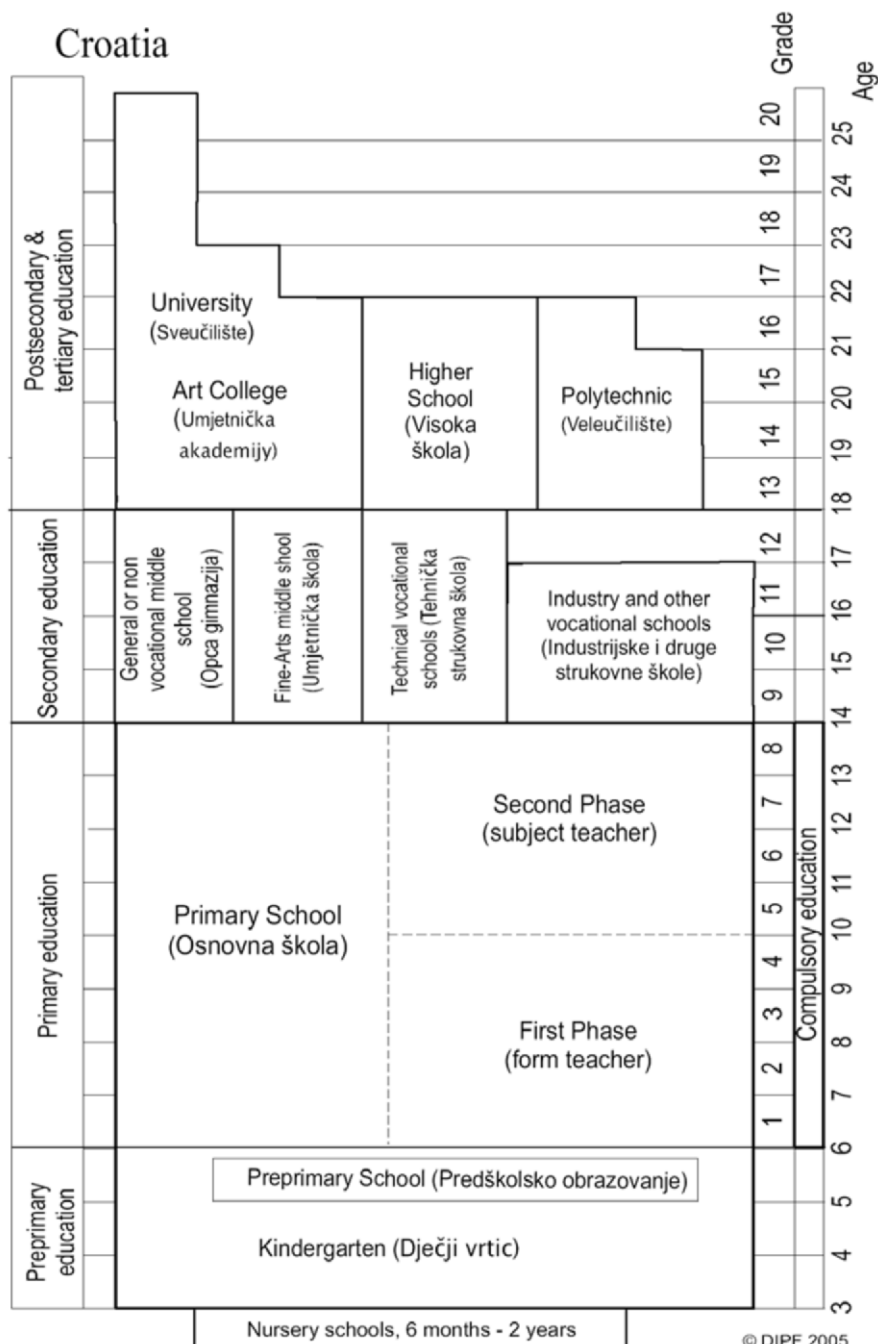
The new government that came in power after the parliamentary elections in November 2004 decided that it was not necessary to carry out a fundamental educational reform. For the time being, the 4 + 4 + 3 to 4 model remains in force. In other words, compulsory primary school comprises two four-year stages while optional secondary school education takes between three and four years. The National Committee for the Competitiveness of Croatia has recommended the pursuit of the following strategies: the admission of a larger number of adults to programmes of extended vocational training; regular surveys of the knowledge and skills which are in demand on the labour market, and the adaptation of syllabi to these demands; the opening of post-primary education both vertically and horizontally; and the advancement of the tertiary education system. Furthermore, teacher training on all levels ought to be supported; forms of assessment other than self-evaluation should be developed and modernized, e.g. the introduction of nationally standardized middle school examinations which enable pupils to enter tertiary education; and Croatia ought to participate in international evaluation programmes, such as the PISA survey, for which preparations are already being made. Finally, private-sector involvement ought to be encouraged; overall expenditure on education is to be increased, and a considerably greater proportion of children should attend pre-primary school. By publishing a Declaration of Knowledge, the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts contributed significantly to this discussion.

References

- Koncepcija promjena odgojno-obrazovnog sustava u Republici Hrvatskoj, Projekt: Izvorište. Ur.: V. Strugar. Zagreb, Ministarstvo prosvjete i športa 2002.
- Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu. Ministarstvo prosvjete i športa, Prosvjetni vjesnik, posebno izdanje, br. 2. Zagreb 1999.
- Nastavni plan i program za gimnazije. Glasnik Ministarstva prosvjete i kulture, posebno izdanje. Zagreb 1992.
- Nastavni planovi i programi za područje strojarstva (A), (B) i (C). Ministarstvo prosvjete i športa, posebna izdanja broj. 7., 8. i 9. Zagreb 1996.
- Nastavni planovi i programi odgoja i školovanja učenika s teškoćama u razvoju. Ministarstvo prosvjete i športa, posebno izdanje broj 4. Zagreb 1996.
- Plan razvoja sustava odgoja i obrazovanja 2005 – 2010. Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i športa Republike Hrvatske. Zagreb 2005.
- Strategija razvoja Republike Hrvatske u 21. stoljeću. Projektni zadatak "Odgoj i obrazovanje". Voditelj: N. Pastuović. Institut za društvena istraživanja, Centar za istraživanje i razvoj obrazovanja. Zagreb 2001.
- Statistické informacije/statistical information 2001. Državni zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske. Zagreb 2001.
- Ustroj školstva Republike Hrvatske. Radni materijal. Ministarstvo prosvjete i športa, Prosvjetno vijeće. Ur.: Hrvoje Vrgoč. Zagreb 2001.

Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju na jeziku nacionalnih manjina, Narodne novine broj 51/00.
Zakon o osnovnom školstvu, Narodne novine broj 69/03. i 76/05.
Zakon o predškolskom odgoju i naobrazbi, Narodne novine broj 10/97.
Zakon o prosvjetnoj inspekciji, Narodne novine broj 50/95. i 73/97.
Zakon o srednjem školstvu, Narodne novine broj 69/03. i 76/05.
Zakon o stručno-pedagoškom nadzoru, Narodne novine broj 73/97.
Zakon o zavodu za školstvo Republike Hrvatske, Narodne novine broj 153/02.
Zakon o znanstvenoj djelatnosti i visokom obrazovanju, Narodne novine broj 123/03., 198/03., 105/04. i 174/04.

Antić, S.: Školstvo u Hrvatskoj. U: Školstvo u svijetu, str. 260-296. Zagreb (Hrvatsko pedagoško- književni zbor) 1993.
Europska orijentacija hrvatskog školstva: Skupina autora. Zagreb (Hrvatsko pedagoško- književni zbor) 1995.
Katunarić, V. (ur.): Multicultural reality and Perspectives in Croatia. Zagreb (Interkultura).
Mijatović, A.: Osnove ustroja školskog sustava. Zagreb (Školske novine) 1994.
Mijatović, A.: Obrazovanje za stoljeće znanja XXI. stoljeće. Svrha, zadaće i strategija preobrazbe hrvatskog školstva. Zagreb (Hrvatski pedagoško-književni zbor) 1998.
Pedagogija i hrvatsko školstvo – jučer, danas za sutra: Zbornik stručno-znanstvenog skupa. Zagreb (Hrvatski pedagoško-književni zbor) 1996.
Staničić, S.: Školski menadžment. Napredak 144 (2003) 3., pp. 286-301.
Strugar, V.: Ususret promjeni sustava odgoja i obrazovanja u Hrvatskoj. Napredak 142 (2001) 2, pp. 218-224.
Vrgoč, H.: Promjene u hrvatskom školstvu: zašto? kako? kada? Napredak 142 (2001) 2, pp. 197-217.
Vrgoč, H.: Za preobrazbu hrvatskog školstva. Upravljanje i rukovođenje, učiteljstvo, materijalna osnova financiranja. Zagreb (Hrvatski pedagoško-književni zbor) 1999.
World Education Report 2000: Literacy, Culture and Communication. UNESCO'S World Education Indicators. 2000.



Cyprus

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

Cyprus is an island in the north-eastern Mediterranean with a surface area of 9251 km². The estimated population in 2003 was 800,000, with an ethnic composition of 80% Greek Cypriots, 17% Turkish Cypriots, 3% foreign residents, and a few Maronites, Armenians, and Latins. These figures do not include Turkish settlers and military personnel, estimated at 85,000 and 40,000 respectively, who have moved into the Turkish-occupied areas since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. At that time one third of the Greek population (about 200,000 persons) was expelled from their homes in the northern part of the island and forced to resettle in the southern areas. The economy of the island depends on agriculture and tourism, which may be regarded as the major economic forces in Cyprus. The quality and standard of life are high and the standards of health provision, the functioning of other social organizations, and the provision of public education can be favourably compared with the European Union.

The great empires of the world, in their efforts to penetrate into the Mediterranean region, had to pass through Cyprus. Cyprus was very small and unable to defend itself and preserve its independence. Therefore, the position of Cyprus has influenced its development and history. In 1500 BC Mycenaean Greeks came and settled in Cyprus. The Achaean Greeks followed in the thirteenth century BC. They introduced the Greek language and Greek culture, both of which have been preserved until today. The Romans conquered Cyprus in 58 BC. During this occupation, the Apostles Paul and Varnavas established the Christian Church of Cyprus. In the fourth century AD, the island became part of the Eastern Roman Empire (395 to 1191), which later became known as the Byzantine Empire. During this period, Christianity was well established in the island, and in 488 AD the Church of Cyprus was recognized as independent from other Orthodox churches.

King Richard the Lionhearted of England occupied Cyprus during the third crusade and handed it over to the French noble, Guy de Lusignan, who established a feudal system that lasted up to the end of the fifteenth century. In 1489, Venice took over Cyprus from Katerina Cornaro, the last queen of the Lusignan dynasty. In 1570 Cyprus was occupied by the Ottomans, and it remained part of the Ottoman Empire until 1878, when the Sultan ceded the island to Great Britain. A Turkish minority remained dispersed all over Cyprus. In 1960, after a four-year liberation struggle against the British, Cyprus became an independent republic.

¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of his doctoral student Andreas Tsiakkiros during the preparation of this manuscript.

As far as education is concerned, two main periods can be distinguished: education before independence and education after independence. During the Ottoman occupation (1570 to 1878) and British colonial rule (1878 to 1960), the Greek Orthodox Church established itself as the centre of religious, educational, and cultural activities. It tried to establish schools that were able to strengthen Greek tradition and culture (Persianis 1978). Greek Orthodox tradition thus permeates the Cypriot education system, especially secondary education. In the early years of British rule, the education system was administered by three bodies: the village or town school committees, the district committees, and the Board of Education (Karagiorges 1986). The village or town school committees appointed or dismissed teachers, specified their salaries, released the necessary funds for the schools, and reported to the district committees on all matters related to education in their jurisdiction. The main duties of the district committees were to report to the Government on matters connected to education in their area, and to recommend the establishment of new schools to the Board of Education. The Board of Education decided upon all matters connected with the provision of education in Cyprus. After 1931, the colonial government tried to take total control of education. The administration of primary education was centralized. The Board of Education served merely as an advisory body (Polydorou 1995). Secondary schools, on the other hand, continued to be administered by the Greek school committees, and they were supported financially through the fees paid by pupils and through contributions from the church.

In 1959, after the London and Zurich agreements, Cyprus became an independent state, and subsequently a member of the British Commonwealth and of the United Nations. The provisions of the agreements placed education under two parallel communal chambers, one for the Greek community and one for the Turkish community. The system of school committees continued to function under the same rules and regulations as those during the British era (Anastassiades 1979). The Greek community aimed at strengthening cultural and emotional links with Greece. A new curriculum for public schools was developed that was similar to that of Greek schools, and the Teacher Training College, modelled on the pedagogical academies of Greece, was renamed the Pedagogical Academy of Cyprus (Persianis 1981).

In 1963, violence broke out between the two communities (Greek and Turkish). As a result of these disturbances, the parallel system of the two communal chambers was abolished, and the two communities took steps towards separation. Following the separation in 1965, all of the administrative functions of the Greek communal chamber were transferred by law to a new ministry, the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education was responsible for all Greek schools, and for the schools of all the other ethnic groups that aligned themselves with the Greek community.

On 20 July 1974, Turkish forces invaded Cyprus and occupied approximately 40% of the total territory of the Republic. Despite all hopes for a peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem, the Turkish occupation continues until today. At the moment 541 Greek Cypriots live in the northern part of Cyprus, which is occupied by Turkey. Until 1998 there were three primary schools in the occupied areas. In 1999 the

Kormakitis primary school had to close when the one enrolled pupil graduated. The Ayia Triada primary school had to close because of the Denktash regime's refusal to allow the teacher to return to her village. Today, there is only one primary school in the occupied areas, in Rizocarpaso, with nine children and two teachers. The military authorities have imposed censorship on educational books and a number of obstacles to their use. Furthermore, until recently the military authorities did not allow any high schools. As a result, children who graduated from primary school were compelled to leave their homes and families to seek further education in the free part of Cyprus. Fortunately, after persistent efforts on the part of the Government and the Republic of Cyprus, a high school was established as of September 2004 with ten pupils and nine teachers.

The Ministry of Education, which was renamed the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1994, is the policy-making and administrative body of the Government in the field of education. It is responsible for the enforcement of educational laws and the preparation of educational legislation. It prescribes syllabi, curricula, and textbooks. It regulates and supervises all the institutions under its jurisdiction.

Reforms and innovations

During the past thirty years, there have been numerous developments in every area of human life, including considerable economic, scientific, and technological achievements; demographic changes; an increase in the interdependence of states and globalization; the expansion of knowledge; and the growth of global problems (Pashiardis 1997). Educational organizations and social systems are the direct recipients of innovations and are at times also the initiators of innovation. These changes inevitably have a tremendous impact on education, for example in the form of increased demands for effectiveness and quality in education. These demands are the result of three main social trends: (a) recent developments in the educational and psychological sciences, (b) an increase in monetary expenses and larger investment in education, and (c) the demand expressed by parents and society in general for increased accountability and the provision of quality education (Pashiardis 1996; 2004). As a result, educational organizations need to adapt to contemporary trends and demands; those organizations and individuals 'who do not want to follow or are unable to respond to these changes will probably not be able to function properly in the long term' (Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis 2002a, p. 6). The educational process in Cyprus has moved from an emphasis on writing, reading, and arithmetic in the last century to a focus on the logic of writing, reading, arithmetic, learning foreign languages, and learning how to work with computers.

There are numerous examples of policy changes and policy implementation at the national level where those who need to implement them do not know or have not been informed about the content of the changes. The usual approach in Cyprus is for all educational innovations to be introduced through a top-down approach without the knowledge of those who will need to implement them. One example is the decision on the development and introduction of national standards in the education system. Initially, when the whole effort began, not even the ministry inspectors knew about this development. Only the handful of persons who had developed the

ideas and the then Minister of Education himself were aware of it. In short, the policy-making role of school administrators in Cyprus is non-existent, as they do not help formulate policy, but are merely called upon to implement it once it has been decided upon.

As has been shown by international research, the most important catalyst for the introduction of innovations and empowerment at the school level is the school unit's leadership, i.e., the principal, assistant principals, etc. Unfortunately, even at this level, the education system of Cyprus has not done much to empower principals and provide them with the tools necessary to lead and introduce change at the school level (Pashiardis 1995; 1996; 1997; 1998).

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of schools

Educational goals or ideals are philosophical statements that give a broad indication as to what kind of citizen a society wants its education system to produce. Based on this statement, education needs to fulfil the following three aims:

- To provide young people with a general orientation and cultural identity, and to help them grow into critically thinking citizens;
- To provide young people with experiences of democratic processes early on in their education, thus creating members of society with autonomous and democratic habits of thought; and
- To produce citizens who are able to think freely and critically, who are educated in the scientific method of inquiry, and who are able to act in a wise and creative way in society.

Moreover, there are mission statements in different laws and other policy documents that describe the purpose of schools in Cyprus. Most of these statements contain two broad goals:

- To transmit knowledge from one generation to the next, and
- To produce good and tolerant citizens who will be able to take over and continue to develop the democratic society in which they live.

In ancient Greece there was the 'heroic' ideal during periods of war, the 'agricultural' ideal during periods of peace, the 'democratic' ideal during the era of democracy, and the 'theocratic' (or metaphysical or religious) ideal during the Byzantine era (the ideal was to reach God). More recent European history has produced other ideals, such as the individualistic ideal of Rousseau, Durkheim's social ideal, and the Humboldtian humanistic ideal (*Humanismus*). This latter is the main ideal pursued today by the education system of Cyprus, at least in theory. It is a combination of the ancient Greek spirit and the teachings of Christianity. Based on these two pillars, the humanistic ideal has been developed for the education system of Cyprus, and has been formulated in the following terms:

The general aim of the Greek Cypriot education system is to create free, democratic, and autonomous citizens who have a well-rounded personality; who are healthy, honest, and creative; who contribute through their work to the social, scientific, economic, and cultural advancement of their country, and to the promotion of cooperation, understanding, and love among peoples with the aims of freedom, justice and peace; and who resolutely pursue the freedom of their country according to the principles of Greek identity and the Christian Orthodox tradition (Ministry of Education and Culture 1996).

Socio-economic context

The present historical period is characterized by globalization, which has forced Cypriot society to face a great challenge: on the one hand to retain its own language and distinct cultural traits, and on the other to unite the different groups of people who live on the island, thus furthering the cause of harmonious co-existence. Bearing in mind the discussion in the previous section, pedagogical ideals or educational goals are usually determined based on the socio-political and cultural period in which a society finds itself at a specific point in its history. These pedagogical ideals are usually transformed in the course of history. Therefore, every society formulates a number of goals that contain at least the following three basic elements: (a) an interpretation of the socio-political milieu that exists in the particular society, (b) an idea about the position of youth and its role in this particular moment of history, and (c) a projection as to how the socio-political system and society at large will be further transformed in the future. At the same time, these educational goals need to give an idea of youth's role in the formation of this future stage of society.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has reinforced the school curricula and instituted programmes in the field of human rights. Special attention has also been given through a system of subsidies to educational programmes for children belonging to religious groups such as Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians, and Latins. Their right to set up and operate their own schools is safeguarded, and such schools are subsidized by the State. Moreover, children belonging to these groups are assisted by the State to attend private schools of their choice. The State covers all fees and expenses of Turkish-Cypriot pupils whose families reside in the areas controlled by the Government, and who attend private pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools. Adult education centres and the state institutes of further education offer free Turkish language lessons to Turkish Cypriot children. The Government also grants a fixed amount of money per year to every Armenian, Maronite, and Latin pupil attending a private school.

The Ministry of Education and Culture subsidizes cultural activities for all religious groups, which include book publishing, performances, libraries, etc. Financial assistance is given to social and athletic clubs, which further helps in maintaining other elements of identity. Furthermore, a primary school for Maronites has been established, and the Government has provided financial support towards the construction and operation of a welfare home. Efforts are also being made in the fields of education and research, so as to expand knowledge of the culture, language, and religion of other religious groups, for example by including more references to them in school textbooks. Non-discrimination and tolerance are promoted in public schools through the use of non-biased textbooks. More specifically, in secondary

education, and in other curricula and textbooks, the subjects of history, civic education, Greek literature, and philosophy:

- a) Present historical events from various points of view and in an objective manner;
- b) Stress the fact that world culture is the result of collective human effort, and of the interdependence of societies and their need to communicate and co-operate;
- c) Train pupils to respect and protect other people's rights and personality, and to avoid dogmatism; and
- d) Promote both harmonious relations between people of different ethnic origin, and democratic values and respect for other cultures.

The above activities promote the notion of living peacefully in a multicultural society, and nurture positive attitudes towards minorities and foreigners living in Cypriot society.

Social position of the teaching profession

Teaching in Cyprus is highly regarded as a profession, partly due to tradition and partly because of the immense value accorded to academic study. Moreover, the profession offers security of employment in an increasingly uncertain world. Despite the low unemployment rate, university graduates have difficulty in securing employment commensurate with their academic qualifications. Teachers are well-paid, and at secondary level can increase their income by offering private tuition or by teaching the supplementary afternoon classes organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture (UNESCO Report 1997). Teachers' salaries compare favourably with salaries of other civil servants at the same levels. Appointments, secondments, transfers, promotions, and discipline of all teaching personnel, as well as the inspectorate of the public education system, are the responsibility of the Educational Service Commission, a five-member independent body appointed by the Council of Ministers for a term of office of six years. The Pedagogical Institute, which is mainly a staff development organization providing in-service training to both primary and secondary teachers on the island, offers a variety of professional development programmes for teachers. Teachers attend short courses offered by the Institute, usually on a voluntary basis in the afternoon and after school (Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis 2002b).

School and the role of the family

Cypriot society generally considers the term 'family' to mean parents, children, and grandparents, even though grandparents do not as a rule live with their children. Under national legislation, the meaning of the term 'family' differs according to the context in which it is used. A restricted meaning is to be found in the laws for the protection of children, and includes the father, the mother, and their children. Parents have a statutory obligation to educate their children, and they also have freedom of choice regarding the kind of school their child attends, namely public or private. If parents send their child to a public school, their choice is restricted by their place of residence, although exceptions are generally possible if requested. The Cypriot

education system promotes the establishment of 'authentic' relationships between parents, other members of the school, and the local community. Given the fundamental role played by parents in their children's education and socialization, provisions are made for schools to employ strategies that bring parents closer to the school environment and offer them the opportunity to be involved in the life of the school. There are parents' associations for both primary and secondary schools; in recent years, these associations have become increasingly powerful, and parents now play an important role in the making of education policy.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The Cypriot education system, in its present form, is the outcome of the developments that established the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. Educational administration is highly centralized. The highest authority in the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) is the Minister, followed by the Permanent Secretary. There are other departments, such as Administration, Planning, Registry, and Accounts Office, which assist in the overall functioning of the education system. The education system provides education at three main stages:

- Primary (which includes pre-primary and primary education),
- Secondary (which includes secondary schools as well as technical and vocational schools), and
- Higher and tertiary (which includes the University of Cyprus, and public and private colleges or institutes).

Other departments of the Ministry include the Pedagogical Institute, the Cyprus Research Centre, Cultural and Technical Services, and other services and units such as the Educational Psychology Service, the Career Guidance and Counselling Service, and the SOCRATES Unit.

The Ministry is responsible for the implementation of educational laws and the preparation of new legislation. Each department in the Ministry has its own team of inspectors (about forty inspectors for primary schools and about forty-five inspectors for secondary schools) who inspect teachers, deputy principals, and principals. Inspections of the school as a whole give the principal a grade based on which the principal may be promoted to inspector. Inspections of newly appointed teachers are conducted twice a year until they become permanent civil servants. Inspection then becomes irregular, and not so important until the twelfth year of service for a particular teacher, when (by law) the teacher must be inspected in order to earn a grade for promotion that usually happens around the eighteenth to twentieth year of service. Recently, teachers at the primary level have been promoted as early as their fifteenth year of service, but this is due to periodic needs arising from retirements, and not to any structural changes in the system.

Currently, the main philosophies that underpin the education system in Cyprus involve the centralization of power and seniority within the system (Pashiardis 2004). Power emanates from the Ministry alone through the Inspectorate; the

schools and their principals are obliged to obey without really questioning the system and its authority. Another central philosophy urges teachers to be patient, promising them that they will eventually be rewarded (usually shortly before retirement) with higher administrative positions within the educational bureaucracy. Thus, the Cypriot education system is mainly a transactional bureaucracy that above all teaches pupils and teachers 'patience to the highest degree'.

Financing

Public schools are financed through government funds. The education budget is part of the national budget, and public education is under the control of the central government. The system is very centralized and every financial matter needs the approval of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Everything requires written authorization. School principals are not permitted to decide on any school expenditure whatsoever. As school principals often mention, the country trusts them with the education of its children, but it does not trust them with the administration of even the smallest sums of money. Therefore, democracy is at a minimum with regard to this aspect of school management, as principals have many responsibilities but are not given the money or the authority to exercise these responsibilities.

Public and private schooling

A number of non-profit and profit-making establishments, ranging from missionary boarding schools to vocationally oriented institutions and foreign language centres, offer tuition in specialized fields. Funded by overseas organizations and/or religious denominations and local entrepreneurs, private primary and secondary schools offer pupils the opportunity to pursue qualifications that will ensure their smooth transition into the professional sphere or the business world, and their admission to overseas universities or local tertiary education establishments of their choice for diploma or degree studies.

Although private schools maintain a considerable degree of independence in their operation and curricula, they are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture and comply with certain curriculum and facility requirements prescribed by law. Curricula for most private secondary schools extend over a six-year period with an emphasis on general education for the first three years. Foreign language schools have six- or seven-year curricula with English, French, Italian, or Arabic as the basic languages of instruction. A few private secondary schools are attached to primary schools, thereby providing an integrated twelve- or thirteen-year programme. There are no entrance examinations except in certain foreign language schools. Private schools raise their funds primarily from tuition fees along with some government assistance. Private schools are administered by voluntary bodies or private individuals, but are supervised by the Ministry, as mentioned above (Ministry of Education and Culture 2001).

Private schools are divided into three categories, depending on the curriculum and the timetable they adopt:

- (i.) Private schools of the same type: this category comprises those schools which follow, without any deviation, the curricula and timetables which apply to the existing types of public schools.
- (ii.) Private schools of a similar type: this category comprises those schools which offer, apart from other subjects, at least two thirds of the main subjects offered by the existing type of public schools with regard to the number of hours taught and content.
- (iii.) Private schools of a different type: this category comprises those schools which do not fall into either of the above two categories (Ministry of Education and Culture 2003).

General standards of the school education system

Each department at the Ministry of Education had, until recently, its own curriculum development unit. It was then decided, however, to create a single unit that would be responsible for all levels of public education, and this unit became a single operating entity as of 2002. The same curriculum is applied to all schools in Cyprus on both the primary and secondary level (national curriculum). At the level of individual schools, there is no flexibility in the curriculum, except when teachers take their own initiative to create papers and handouts for the enrichment of the education process. All modifications to the curriculum, if necessary, come as a direct result of policy decisions emanating from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The curriculum is exactly the same for all pupils up to the last grade of the gymnasium (this is the term used for lower secondary education institutions for pupils up to fifteen years of age). After that pupils are offered the opportunity to choose some of their subjects according to their interests. This is a new development as of 2000, when the concept of the unified lyceum (*Eniaion Lykeion*) was developed. In any case, even the teaching and curriculum delivery methodologies used by teachers are often prescribed either by the Ministry or by the inspectors, and there is not much room for deviation or experimentation; the curriculum is thus completely centralized. It must be noted that the curriculum is mainly directed towards preparing the pupils for Greek-speaking higher education institutions (either in Cyprus or in Greece). It does not cater to pupils wishing to pursue further studies in a foreign institution (other than in Greece). Textbooks are produced locally by the curriculum development unit, or are donated by the Greek government.

Quality management

There are no state examinations for primary education except some diagnostic and formative examinations performed by the teachers themselves. Every pupil receives a school-leaving certificate (*Apolytirion*) at the completion of the sixth grade. However, examinations are administered at the end of each grade in secondary education. There is also an exam for university entrance in the last year of secondary education. The examinations at the end of each grade contribute a percentage towards the assessment of the pupil's total performance, which determines whether the pupil is to proceed to the next grade or not. These final exams are prepared at school level. The only difference occurs at the end of the last grade of upper secondary education,

where pupils have the option of taking university entrance exams for the University of Cyprus and the Greek universities. These exams are prepared and administered by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the subjects differ according to the university department or discipline the pupils wish to apply for. The subjects examined thus differ, for example, for pupils applying to the Department of Education from those for pupils applying to medical schools. Throughout all grades, the norm is that a pupil will fail to progress to the next grade only under extraordinary circumstances.

Examination results are kept by each school for their own year-to-year performance assessment practices. No official mechanism for interschool comparison exists. A factor that could make a difference in the interpretation of the results involves the pupils who choose to attend a university outside Cyprus or Greece. The requirements for entering such institutions are not covered by the curriculum. Nevertheless, a considerable number of pupils choose to enter a British or an American university, and usually these pupils do not appear in any report.

Thus, there are no examinations whereby the education system or the school demonstrates accountability. As long as there are no national standards, schools do not feel compelled to demonstrate any form of accountability towards society at large. However, plans are underway to begin the introduction of national standards at all levels of education within the next three to five years. This effort began in 2002 and is co-ordinated by the University of Cyprus and the Pedagogical Institute. Some form of accountability is also provided by the Inspectorate, but this is not organized in an official way that could help the system monitor its quality. Cyprus has only recently begun to participate in international studies, such as those conducted by the IEA. The results of these studies gave an impetus to the qualitative improvement of the system.

Support systems

In recent years a number of support systems have been established to ensure equal access of all children to education. These systems can be summarized as follows:

- The extension of school time for children in grades 1 to 3 of primary schools until 1:05 p.m..
- The designation of a maximum number of children per class, currently at an average of twenty-six.
- The implementation of educational measures and policies that will facilitate the smooth integration of children from different cultural identities into a creative school environment.
- The promotion and implementation of the all-day school in primary education: schools can apply for such status in order to remain in operation from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. instead of the usual 7:45a.m. to 1:05 p.m.
- The introduction of information technology.
- Proposals for the redesign, reform, and modernization of secondary technical and vocational education.
- The establishment of evening technical schools.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Education is provided in pre-primary, primary (the term 'primary' refers to the schooling of pupils from age six to twelve), general secondary, technical, vocational secondary (pupils in secondary and technical schools are approximately twelve to eighteen years old), and special schools. The structure of the public education system suffers (1) from discontinuity in the primary to secondary transition; (2) from lack of communication and co-ordination because of the artificial splitting of a number of primary schools into two cycles, a junior and a senior primary school, each with a different principal, albeit operating in the same buildings; and (3) from the total control that is exerted over all schools by the MOEC.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education (i.e. kindergarten) is optional and offers education to children of three to five years and eight months of age. It is part of basic education, which includes kindergartens (*nipiagogeia*) and primary schools (*dimotika scholeia*). It falls, in general, under the same legislative framework as primary schools except with regard to specific regulations governing the operation of community kindergartens and those of the private sector. As of the 2004-05 school year, pre-primary education is free and compulsory for all children for one year before their entrance into primary school.

Under the current system, kindergartens fall into three categories: public, community, and private. Public kindergartens are founded by the Ministry of Education and Culture in co-operation with the parents' association and the local authorities. The Ministry appoints the teaching staff and subsidizes the necessary equipment, while the parents' association or the local authorities are responsible for the building and basic equipment. Cleaners and in some cases high school graduates who act as assistants to the kindergarten teachers are also employed. These are paid by the parents' association. In public kindergartens, children of four years and eight months to five years and eight months of age are admitted. If there are vacant places, these may be filled with children of a younger age (from three years old). Children are placed according to the Law Regarding Primary Education and by the committee concerned with the selection of children according to criteria and procedures set by a circular issued by the Director of Primary Education.

Community kindergartens operate only in cases where the available public kindergarten classes do not meet the needs of all the children in the community. They are founded and operated by parents' associations or local authorities, and they are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture, which offers a substantial annual subsidy. They are non-profit organizations. They employ qualified personnel and they are supervised by the Ministry. Private kindergartens are established and operated by individuals in the private sector with the approval of the Ministry. Their operation is regulated by the Law Regarding Private Schools and Institutes. These are profit-making organizations.

The daily programme of a kindergarten is a smooth succession of periods determined by the kindergarten teacher, who takes into consideration the needs, the abilities, and the interests of the children. The order of activities is not fixed. It can be changed depending on the particular traits of the kindergarten itself, the season or the occasion, and the nature of the particular activity. The duration of each activity is also flexible. The timetable in kindergartens is flexible and the teacher has the freedom to choose her/his subjects according to the needs and interests of the children on that day (Ministry of Education and Culture 2004).

Primary education

Primary education constitutes the main and fundamental stage of education, which lays the foundation for the harmonious development of children's cognitive, emotional, and psychomotoric competences. For this reason, the Department of Primary Education insists on the continuous improvement and upgrading of primary education by encouraging in-service training of teaching staff, the writing of new books, the appointment of more teachers in education for children with special needs, and the extension or construction of new school buildings. Public primary education has been free and compulsory since 1962. The various sectors of the Department of Primary Education include pre-primary education (kindergarten schools: public, community, and private), primary education (primary schools in the free and occupied part of Cyprus), education for children with special needs (schools for children with special needs and the provision of individualized help to children with special needs placed in primary schools), the Cyprus Educational Mission in the U.K., adult education centres, educational and summer camps, and the education of the Greeks of the diaspora.

The fundamental aim of primary education has always been the harmonious development of the child's personality. This is believed to be achieved under conditions that help children acquire knowledge, develop correct attitudes, and cultivate skills, and in situations in which children are prepared to face the changing world in a responsible manner.

According to the nine-year educational programme, the aim of primary education is to create and secure the necessary learning opportunities for children regardless of age, sex, family, social background, and mental abilities so that they will be able to:

- Develop harmoniously in all domains using to the maximum the means offered by contemporary technology;
- Deal successfully with the various problems they may face, including difficulties in adjusting to their educational and wider environment;
- Promote socialization and forge firstly their national and ethnic identity, and secondly their status as citizens of the Republic of Cyprus who through legal and generally accepted procedures vigorously pursue the national demand for human rights; and
- Acquire positive attitudes towards learning, and develop social understanding and engagement, belief in human values, respect for our cultural heritage and human rights, the appreciation of beauty, and a disposition towards creativity

and the love of life and nature that fosters the preservation and improvement of the environment (Ministry of Education and Culture 2004).

Lower secondary education

Secondary education is pursued in public and private schools. Public secondary education extends over six years and is divided into two cycles: the lower, which is called the gymnasium, with pupils between twelve and fifteen years old, and the upper, *Eniaio Lykeio*, with pupils between fifteen and eighteen years old. The lower cycle is free and compulsory, while the upper one is free but not compulsory. Based on the socio-economic, cultural, and national needs of Cyprus, public secondary general education offers equal opportunities for education and fosters the acquisition of knowledge in order to prepare pupils for academic and/or professional pursuits. It also promotes the development of healthy, moral personalities, with the aims of creating democratic and law abiding citizens, and consolidating the national ideals of freedom, justice, and peace.

In the last four years the education system has become more flexible at the level of the *Lykeio*, with a varied subject framework which allows pupils to select subjects according to their inclinations, skills and interests. This has especially been achieved by the implementation (as of the school year 2000-01) of the *Eniaio Lykeio* at all *Lykeia*, thereby offering flexibility and opening up perspectives for the pupils. This innovation responds to local and international challenges, and supports Cyprus' status among the member states of the European Union.

The Directorate of Secondary Education in the Ministry of Education has a wide range of responsibilities. The main areas are: monitoring and evaluating the activities of public and private schools and institutes, the development of curricula, the publication of textbooks, counselling and career education, monitoring the implementation of school regulations, the inspection of teaching staff, the development of educational programmes, the appointment of teaching staff, and further education for pupils and adults.

The gymnasium is a complete cycle of general education based on humanistic principles. Subjects are the same for all pupils. Innovations have been introduced into the gymnasium, such as computer studies in all grades, the establishment of language rooms, and the introduction of the form teacher. Education priority zones ensure the prevention of school failure and functional illiteracy.

The *Eniaio Lykeio* is an innovation which is promoted and continuously upgraded to respond to the challenges of the knowledge society, the new realities stemming from Cyprus' accession to the EU, and the socio-political and economic conditions of the Cypriot State. Its aim is to cater to the needs of citizens of the twenty-first century who must live in a global and multicultural society. The *Eniaio Lykeio* offers common core optional streaming and special interest and/or enrichment subjects. This structure provides general education and skills, and systematic in-depth study of subjects which the pupil has a special interest in or aptitude for (Ministry of Education and Culture 2004).

Upper secondary education

Secondary technical and vocational schools accept pupils graduating from the gymnasium at the age of fifteen. Each school has two departments, technical and vocational. They provide local industry with technicians and craftsmen. By offering a balanced curriculum of general and technological education, secondary technical and vocational education (STVE) aims to offer pupils the knowledge and skills that they require to enter the world of work, or to continue further studies in their chosen area. STVE is offered in two main streams, namely theoretical and practical, and in various specializations in thirteen technical schools. These schools operate in the main towns of Cyprus. Technical school graduates can compete on favourable terms with lyceum graduates for places in tertiary education institutions by taking the centrally administered entrance examinations.

The apprenticeship scheme, in operation since 1963, caters to school-leavers between the ages of fifteen and seventeen who leave the formal education system without qualifications. Apprentices are employed in industry, where they receive on-the-job training, and have the opportunity for general education and school-based vocational training on a day release basis for a period of two years. The scheme is a joint effort of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. Its aims are to equip young people with the means to get a job, and to supply industry with semi-skilled workers. The evening classes offered at several technical schools aim to provide individuals with the opportunity to enrich their knowledge and abilities, and to compete for employment in a rapidly changing world. The evening classes provide formal STVE programmes, programmes of continuing TVE, and programmes that prepare pupils for national and other examinations.

In an effort to keep pace with rapid technological developments, STVE is in the process of introducing new technology into its curricula. Upgrading of the curricula in computers and information technology is at an advanced stage. The aim of the courses is that all pupils in STVE on the one hand achieve computer literacy, and on the other are able to use information technology and computers as a tool for learning, and as a means of accessing information and carrying out various tasks in their adult life. After serious deliberations with social partners and stakeholders, a proposal for the restructuring, reform, and modernization of STVE was submitted and approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic. In view of the expanding need for life-long education, STVE has established evening technical schools, with the first school operating in Lefkosia as of September 1999. The increase in the number of pupils opting for STVE programmes has led to the decision on the part of the MOEC to establish new technical schools to meet this expanding demand. Moreover, the expansion of existing technical schools is being studied (Ministry of Education and Culture 2004).

Special education schools

The inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education is a fundamental philosophy and policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and is fully in line with international declarations and tendencies. The adoption of this policy

has been followed by changes of attitudes towards, social perceptions of, and beliefs about children with special needs, whether in regular schools or not. An expression of this attitude is the 1999 Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs and the 2001 regulations concerning the means for early detection of children with special needs and their education, which support the application of the Law. The education system identifies the individual requirements of children with special needs as early as the age of three through full assessment by a multidisciplinary evaluation group, and provides all necessary means, facilities, exemptions, and special assistance from educational or auxiliary personnel for their smooth integration into regular schools.

The educational and other needs of children in kindergartens (both public and communal) and of children in schools for children with special needs are met through programmes for special education. A number of teachers of various specializations (teachers for intellectual, emotional, and other problems; teachers for the deaf, the blind, special gymnastics, music therapy, work therapy, speech therapy, educational psychology, audiology, and physiotherapy) work to support children with special needs and to meet their educational needs.

The Ministry of Education and Culture aims at reinforcing the awareness and sensitivity of inspectors, school principals, class teachers, and teachers of special education regarding the Special Education Law and their obligations towards children with special needs attending their schools. This objective is achieved through in-service training seminars and personal contacts with people involved in the field, such as inspectors of special education, educational psychologists, officials, and teachers of special education (Ministry of Justice and Public Order 2003).

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Cyprus occupies a high place internationally in terms of tertiary education. In Cyprus, further education is offered at the following state institutions: The University of Cyprus, the Higher Technical Institute, the Forestry College, the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the Hotel and Catering Institute, and the Mediterranean Institute of Management. The Department of Higher and Tertiary Education is the competent department in the Ministry of Education and Culture, and is responsible for the legislation that governs the establishment and operation of the public and private universities in Cyprus, the European programmes in higher education, private schools for higher and tertiary education and their efficient operation, the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS), the Council for the Educational Accreditation of Programmes of Study (SEKAP), examinations, life-long learning, and student affairs.

The Department of Higher and Tertiary Education has taken significant steps towards the establishment of Cyprus as a regional educational and research centre. These steps include, first of all, a series of measures which aim at the expansion of university level education and the enrichment of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study at the University of Cyprus. The Department is also responsible for the establishment of new universities as well as for the legislation governing

their establishment and operation. Furthermore, steps have been taken to upgrade the private institutions of tertiary education with the forwarding to the House of Representatives of the legislation that will govern the establishment and operation of private universities in Cyprus.

The University of Cyprus offers programmes through its six faculties and various departments:

- Faculty of Humanities (Departments of English Studies, French Studies and Modern Languages, Turkish Studies and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Language Centre),
- Faculty of Social Studies and Education (Departments of Education, Social and Political Sciences, Law, and Psychology),
- Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences (Departments of Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics, Physics, Chemistry, and Biological Sciences),
- Faculty of Economics and Management (Departments of Economics and Public and Business Administration),
- Faculty of Letters (Departments of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Classics and Philosophy, and History and Archaeology), and
- Faculty of Engineering (Departments of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering).

Further steps are being taken towards the construction of the University of Cyprus campus, and the first students are enjoying the facilities of newly built student dormitories.

In December 2003, the House of Representatives approved the law for the establishment of the Technological University of Cyprus. This new university will cover the fields of four of the existing public schools of higher education. The Interim Governing Board was appointed in March 2004 and expects the university to commence operations in 2007. The procedures for the establishment of the Open University of Cyprus are also being advanced, as the Interim Governing Board is taking the necessary measures to allow the university to commence operations in 2006. The Interim Board has dealt with issues regarding the preparation of all budgetary, legal, and functional requirements for the operation of the university. In 2004, twenty-three private institutions of tertiary education were registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture, and offered programmes of study at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The Department of Higher and Tertiary Education provides all private institutions of tertiary education with the administrative support needed for the registration of new programmes of study (Ministry of Education and Culture 2004).

A university degree in the subject to be taught renders teachers eligible for inclusion in the official register of candidates for appointment. A teacher's appointment is based on a system where priority is determined by the year of submission of the application (on the principle 'first come first served'). Secondary priority (among applicants of the same year) is decided on a system of units, which the candidate accumulates according to the date of graduation and special qualifications. Prior to permanent appointment, a secondary school teacher is required to attend a pre-ser-

vice training course at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, leading to a Certificate of Pre-service Training. Furthermore, prior to permanent appointment a teacher may serve as a substitute for short or long term needs, and/or maintain her/his temporary status through contract teaching. A newly appointed teacher serves a probationary period of two years (Ministry of Education and Culture 2003).

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

One important challenge Cyprus will have to face will be social exclusion, and the fact that a large proportion of our society drops out of the mainstream and is unable to gain access to the knowledge and information society. These people will become the new poor, since the rich will be those who possess knowledge and information. In the rest of Europe and in Greece, we already have the so-called society of two thirds. The impact of this kind of society on our schools will be very direct. The schools currently possess the power and the means to effect change and to improve social mobility, but if they are inactive or rest on their laurels, progress will lose its momentum.

Another challenge is the lack of vision and a clear future for young people. This leads to frustration and disappointment and the pursuit of a false paradise through the abuse of drugs and other psychedelic substances. If the education system cannot exemplify socio-economic development and mobility based on ability, but rather remains an institution for the mere reproduction of social and economic conditions, it will not have succeeded in its mission. This is why we need structures that provide a vision of and faith in the future rewards of hard work.

Another emerging challenge is the huge cost of education, which, if it continues to grow along current lines, will lead to the commercialization of education. This in turn means that some people will take advantage of the need for more education and will lead it in the wrong direction. This applies to all four levels of the education system. We need to start thinking about the cost of building and running new schools, and we need to decide how the state can deal with this issue. This is imperative, as education was, is, and has to remain an individual and social right, but at the same a state responsibility. It should be the last public good to be removed from the control of the state, not only as a function and a social provision, but also as a controlling and inspecting mechanism in a market society.

In lieu of a conclusion, and in order to provide a more complete picture of the educational status of Cypriots and Cyprus, it should be noted that:

(a) The number of illiterates in Cyprus, as of 1998, was only 5% of the population. This is a great success for the Republic of Cyprus if we take into consideration the fact that in 1946 33% of the population was illiterate. By 1960, this number had dropped to 18%, and sixteen years after independence, in 1976, was only 10%.

(b) About 15% of the population of the island aged twenty and above holds a university or college degree. This is a considerable achievement given the fact that in 1946 only 1% of the population of Cyprus aged twenty and above had received higher education.

It seems that education in Cyprus has come a long way in the forty years since the island gained its independence from the British. However, there are still several issues that need to be addressed, such as the relationship between public and private education; the accreditation of degrees, diplomas, and certificates; cheaper access to higher education for all students regardless of socio-economic status; the role of secondary schools with respect to the preparation of pupils for higher education; and the allocation of more resources for basic and applied research and other pressing educational issues.

It is in this light that education in Cyprus should be seen. Education should not be seen as the solution to pressing market demands. On the contrary, public education should be viewed as an investment in the future of a country that is increasingly dependent on its human resources for further economic and cultural advancement. Change in the modern world is inevitable, and educators can no longer afford to hope that changes will disappear. If true and lasting reforms are to be effected in schools, administrators and principals in particular must learn how to effect change. It is high time that public schools became knowledgeable about the nature of change. We must learn to effectively deal with change if the public education system is not only to remain a viable institution, but is also to flourish into the twenty-first century.

The educational needs of the new millennium require that structures at school level be redesigned and modified in a way that responds to these new needs and guarantees further improvement in the years to come. It is obvious that the bureaucratic and highly centralized structure of the Cypriot education system is ineffective and must be abandoned. Principals must be motivated towards self-improvement and school improvement. As the current teacher evaluation and promotion system seems unlikely to change in the near future (Pashiardis 2004), it would seem logical for such motivation to be offered to teachers as well, in order to foster self-improvement among this group.

Principals are very important to the education enterprise and their training, evaluation, and overall treatment must be treated accordingly. Change in educational matters becomes manageable if there are principals who can manage change. No change in the education system can be successful unless certain aspects of principals' work and training are modified at the same time. Based on the above and on the complexity of the environment around us, we should try to see the present as a function of the past and of the future. In essence, educationalists need to be able to envision the future and convert it into present teaching practice. We need to be able to see society at least thirty, forty, or fifty years ahead, when our present pupils will be adults, in order to make the changes to our curricula and methods that will enable the children of today to live in the global and multicultural village called Earth. In order to live the present, we need to be able to envision the future, a future built on our past heritage; for a person without a cultural past is like a tree without roots.

It is imperative, however, that selection methods, evaluation, training, and professional development of educational leaders attract substantial attention from those concerned with the improvement of educational provision in every country. It is also imperative that educational leaders operate as central figures in all efforts towards

empowerment. It seems that in Cyprus we urgently need to make gigantic steps forwards in terms of structural and organizational reforms, so that existing drawbacks do not prevent the educational system from successfully negotiating current changes. Principals should be flexible enough to allow teachers to take part in rational problem solving, and to be responsible for widely shared decision-making. Teachers should not have to become principals in order to influence policy; they should have the opportunity to work with administrators as partners and to share power. The power of principals derives from their staff. Therefore, their competence in delegating responsibilities would reinforce their position within the organization they lead. Furthermore, principals should always remember that only those who are qualified for the post they possess are accepted and respected by their staff.

Finally, given the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, the current educational system should be harmonized with European and global educational practices, albeit with close attention to the local culture and character of education in Cyprus. In view of this development, tensions between local and European elements and other forces are expected to emerge. However, Cyprus, as a member of the multicultural European Union, should be ready to respond to the challenge of multicultural education. In the twenty-first century, educational institutions will have to become multicultural in their perspectives, given the fact that Cypriot society has been confronted with unprecedented diversity in its population during the last decade. Many groups of foreign nationality either emigrate to Cyprus or reside for short-term periods of work. Consequently, pupils with diverse cultural backgrounds, colour, religion, and language needs are already enrolled in our schools. It is the school's duty to provide an educational environment that will be effective for all pupils, regardless of their background (Prentice 1999). However, in order for schools to be able to do that, they need to be empowered and autonomous to the greatest extent possible within the boundaries of a national educational system. Looking at the issue from another perspective, we can easily foresee that, with the abolishment of protective labour regulations, Cypriot teachers will be in direct competition with foreign teachers, mainly Greeks from Greece because of that country's proximity, language, and familiarity.

Bearing all these issues in mind, the Government of the Republic has launched an ambitious educational reform programme, inviting dialogue among all interested parties, and with the aim of realizing the vision of a better and more modern educational system that would meet future needs and challenges. This initiative was announced at a special gathering of representatives of all parties convened by the President of the Republic of Cyprus following a lengthy report by a group of seven academics on the future governance and administration of the education system, the content of education, and the restructuring of educational levels from kindergarten to university. In January 2005, the President stressed that: 'Education has no room for political expediency or party confrontations, unlike other matters where disagreement is inevitable. Consensus and agreement is the common goal in this dialogue.'

Taking all of the above into consideration, it is easy to see that centralization will not take the education system far. In essence, we will be forced to move towards

more decentralization and empowerment at the school level. Therefore, the sooner we move in that direction, the better off the education system will be.

References

- Anastassiades, A.: The development of the administration of elementary education in Cyprus. Lefkosia 1979.
- Karagiorges, A.: Education developments in Cyprus (1960-1977). Lefkosia 1986.
- Ministry of Education and Culture, Curriculum Development Unit: Curriculum for primary schools – In the context of nine year Education (Rev. Ed.). Lefkosia 1996.
- Ministry of Education and Culture: The development of education: National Report of Cyprus by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Lefkosia 2001.
- Ministry of Education and Culture: The Cyprus Educational System. Lefkosia 2003.
- Ministry of Education and Culture: Annual Report 2003. Lefkosia 2004.
- Ministry of Justice and Public Order (Ed.): Report of the Republic of Cyprus against discrimination in the fields of the European Union Aquis: Policy and measures against discrimination. Lefkosia 2003.
- Pashiardis, P.: Cyprus Principals and the Universalities of Effective Leadership. In: *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 23 (1995) 1, pp. 16-27.
- Pashiardis, P.: The Cyprus Educational System and contemporary trends. Speech presented at Skali, Aglantzia, Lefkosia, Cyprus. 1996.
- Pashiardis, P.: Higher education in Cyprus: Facts, issues, dilemmas and solutions. In: *Higher Education in Europe*, 22 (1997) 2, pp. 183-192.
- Pashiardis P.: Towards Effectiveness: What do Secondary School Leaders in Cyprus Need? In: *Journal of In-service Education*, 23 (1997) 2, pp. 267-282.
- Pashiardis P.: Researching the Characteristics of Effective Primary School Principals in Cyprus: A Qualitative Approach. In: *Educational Management and Administration*, 26 (1998) 2, pp. 117-130.
- Pashiardis P.: Educational Leadership: From the Era of Benevolent Neglect to the Current Era. Athens 2004. (In Greek).
- Persianis, P.: Church and state in Cyprus Education. Lefkosia 1978.
- Persianis, P.: The political and economic factors as the determinants of educational policy in independent Cyprus (1960-1970). Lefkosia 1981.
- Polydorou, A.: The development of the primary education in Cyprus (1830-1994). Lefkosia 1995.
- Prentice, H.: The multicultural environment of schools: Implications for leaders. In: Hughes, L. W. (Ed.): *The principal as leader*. 2nd ed.. New Jersey 1999.
- Tsiakkiros, A./Pashiardis, P.: Strategic planning and education: The case of Cyprus. In: *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 16 (2002a) 1, pp. 6-17.
- Tsiakkiros, A./Pashiardis, P. : The management of small primary schools: The case of Cyprus. In: *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 1 (1). 2002b, pp. 72-102.
- UNESCO Report (ed. International Institute for Educational Planning): Appraisal study on the Cyprus Education System. Paris 1997.

Cyprus												
Preprimary education	Primary education	Secondary education	Upper secondary education	Postsecondary & tertiary education	Grade	Age						
Kindergarten (Nipiagogeia)	Primary schools/ (Dimoteka Scholeia)	Gymnasium (Gymnasia)	General lyzeum (Eniaeo Lykeio)	University of Cyprus	3	4						
					4	5						
Private Kindergarten (Nipiagogeia)	Private primary schools (dimotika scholeia)	Private secondary schools	Technical schools (Tekniki Scholi)	Higher Technical Institute (H.T.I.)	6	7						
					7	8						
Special schools	Compulsory education		Vocational school (Systemu Mathitiae)	Higher Hotel Institute (H.H.I.C.)	9	10						
					10	11						
1	2	3	4	5	6	12						
						13	14					
7	8	9	10	11	12	15						
						16	17					
8	9	10	11	12	13	18						
						19	20					
9	10	11	12	13	14	21						
						22	23					
10	11	12	13	14	15	24						
						25	26					
11	12	13	14	15	16	27						
						28	29					
12	13	14	15	16	17	30						
						31	32					
13	14	15	16	17	18	33						
						34	35					
14	15	16	17	18	19	36						
						37	38					
15	16	17	18	19	20	39						
						40	41					
16	17	18	19	20	21	42						
						43	44					
17	18	19	20	21	22	45						
						46	47					
18	19	20	21	22	23	48						
						49	50					
19	20	21	22	23	24	51						
						52	53					
20	21	22	23	24	25	54						
						55	56					
21	22	23	24	25	26	57						
						58	59					
22	23	24	25	26	27	60						
						61	62					
23	24	25	26	27	28	63						
						64	65					
24	25	26	27	28	29	66						
						67	68					
25	26	27	28	29	30	69						
						70	71					
26	27	28	29	30	31	72						
						73	74					
27	28	29	30	31	32	75						
						76	77					
28	29	30	31	32	33	78						
						79	80					
29	30	31	32	33	34	81						
						82	83					
30	31	32	33	34	35	84						
						85	86					
31	32	33	34	35	36	87						
						88	89					
32	33	34	35	36	37	90						
						91	92					
33	34	35	36	37	38	93						
						94	95					
34	35	36	37	38	39	96						
						97	98					
35	36	37	38	39	40	99						
						100						

Tobias Werler and Tine Bering Keiding

Denmark

Development of the education system

Basic conditions

Unlike the other Scandinavian countries, Denmark is densely populated, with approximately 5.3 million inhabitants living in an area of only 43,000 square kilometres. Almost 70% of the land area is given over to agriculture, but only 5.7% of the population works in the farming sector. An important economic sector is the fishing industry. Denmark changed from an agrarian to an industrialized nation during the 1960s. About 28% of employed persons are active in industry, while 66% work in the service sector. The high export potential for Danish industry is secured by a concentration on modern production and research technologies and a highly trained workforce. In 1999 the unemployment rate was 5.9%. In 2001 the gross national product amounted to 182,000m euros. Spending on education comprised about 14% of public expenditure. With the expansion of the Welfare State, expenditure on education climbed from 2% of GNP in the 1950s to 14% in 2001.

The ethnic structure of the population is relatively homogeneous. A small German minority which makes up 1.6% of the population lives in the south of the country. There is also a small number of immigrants (258,000).

The Danish State has a long democratic tradition; the monarchy was reformed in 1849 through the introduction of a liberal constitution and the *Folketing* (Parliament). The Church and the State are not separated; in 2001 84.7% of the population belonged to the *Folkekirke* (people's church).

The educational tradition

The notion of so-called life-enlightenment (*opplysning*) and the concepts elaborated by N. F. S. Grundtvig form the fundamental principles of the Danish school system. More than the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, the acquisition of practical knowledge that provides an explanation of and orientation in life is valued.

The Danish school system belongs without a doubt to the Scandinavian model of education. Its main characteristics are a distinctive progressive and social democratic understanding of education. The education system was always understood as part of social policy. The school system shows a high degree of loyalty to the State.

With regard to its relationship to the State, the school system is traditionally highly centralized, although there has been a trend towards decentralization since the 1970s. Local and regional commissions are responsible for the planning, control, and evaluation of the education system. Nevertheless, major decisions are taken centrally by the State. In recent years, there has been increased discussion about common objectives and standards.

The State (i.e. the government or a commission working in its name) is responsible for the organizational structure of the education system, and for the main areas of contents, aims (*centrale kundskaber og færdigheder* - CKF), curricula, and evaluation. The welfare state policy of Denmark is oriented to the creation of social homogeneity, social justice, and equality of opportunities. The application of this principle means that the government tries to give all learners similar resource access, regardless of their regional or local situation.

As in all Nordic countries, the duration of compulsory schooling was extended in Denmark in the decades after the Second World War to nine years, the multi-track school system was replaced by a comprehensive school model, and efforts were made towards the extensive inclusion of handicapped pupils. Based on the experience of the War, special value is given to strengthening democracy through school education. The duration of school was extended and the co-operation between parents and school was improved. Extra-curricular support was also intensified through the extension of nursery schools and the establishment of school leisure time schedules.

Educational aims

The aims of the Danish school system are expressed in the *folkeskole* law (1993) and the curriculum of 1995. According to these documents, teaching must foster individual access to education and contribute to technical knowledge. Furthermore, professional training is seen as personality education.

The education process in Danish schools is characterized by notions of individualism. There are thus some fears that education fostering responsibility towards and membership of the community may decline. When the old school system was abolished, individualistic teaching (pedagogical differentiation) was introduced. School education has the function of inculcating Danish culture and Danish self-understanding, taking into account the processes of Europeanization and globalization. The objective of school culture, however, is broader.

In order to serve local educational needs, the school system generally offers education in information technology. Teaching is interdisciplinary and project-oriented.

According to the *folkeskole* law, school must contribute to an understanding of the relationship between humankind and nature; this aspect must be integrated into all subjects. Besides general education, the areas of practical and fine arts are strongly emphasized, and school is also required to offer pupils the opportunity to extend their sensory experiences and impressions.

Legal bases, educational constitution, and financing

The Danish school system today displays a high degree of decentralization. Decisions about learning objectives are given concrete form in the predefined timetable at local level. This autonomy has been strengthened by political decisions in recent

years. Administrative and decision-making power was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the local authorities and from there to individual schools. There is an education act for every type of school. Clarifications of and additions and amendments to the law are elaborated on a frequent basis.

The *Undervisningsministerium* (Ministry of Education - *UVM*) has responsibility for the education system, with the exception of nursery schools, professional adult education, and individual university courses. The Ministry is made up of three national authorities: the *Uddannelsesstyrelsen* (Division for Education Policy, responsible for educational contents), the *Institutionsstyrelsen* (Division for Institutional Planning, responsible for financing) and the *Sustyrelsen* (State Authority for Educational Financing and Support of Pupils).

The *Undervisningsministerium* determines the other basic conditions for the *folkeskole* as well as for the *friskole* (free school). These include the general aims of the school, the curriculum, and single subjects. The fundamental character of the public school is determined by the core curriculum and a guideline for the timetable of the *folkeskole*. At the upper secondary level (*gymnasium*, *hf-kurs*, *HHX* (trade school), *HTX* (technical secondary school)), the Ministry develops the regulations for the curriculum and for the final examinations. It also approves new subjects, and supervises lessons and exams. The district has very few competencies regarding the administration of the education system. At this level, the head teacher is only authorized to decide on the appointment and dismissal of teachers at the *folkeskole*. The district runs the *gymnasia* and preparation courses for higher education. The district councils decide on the foundation, operation, or closure of these schools; on the appointment and dismissal of teachers; and on the size of the school.

The following agencies are involved in the local administration and operation of the *folkeskole*:

- The *kommunalbestyrelse* (district council) is responsible for the *folkeskole*. There are 275 such councils in total, with up to twenty-five members. The council is responsible for local educational aims and for ensuring the conditions necessary for their realization. The district council decides on the distribution of financial resources, on the employment of teachers, and on the opening and closing of schools. The decision-making process regarding the local curriculum and the development of the timetable is also one of the competencies of the district council. The school board makes recommendations on these two elements. The municipalities are not obliged to adhere to the central guidelines.
- Each of the approximately 1250 schools has a school board (*skolebestyrelse*) as its central governing body. The committee consists of at least eleven members. Five to seven parents' representatives, two teachers, and two pupil representatives develop the local curriculum. The head teacher, two representatives of the teaching staff, two pupils, and in some cases a member of the district council attend the so-called school conference but have no right to vote. Other tasks of the committee include the organization of optional subjects, the formation of classes, and the promotion of co-operation between parents and school.
- In addition to this, every school has a consulting committee of teachers (*pædagogisk råd*), to which every teacher automatically belongs. The central function

of the committee of teachers is to discuss the school's educational problems. Upon request, the committee is obliged to advise the head teacher.

The head teacher and the school board are responsible for the provision of education, subjects, the use of the state subsidy, examinations, and decisions on the hiring of teachers. Each school is responsible for the equipment, the organization, and the maintenance of the institution. The autonomy of the local school is expressed in the free selection of textbooks and all other teaching aids through the school conference, and in the freedom of every teacher to decide on their use in his or her class.

The *Folketing* and the *Undervisningsministerium* determine teaching objectives and set national standards which must be fulfilled by the schools. The municipalities or the district supervise the schools. For the *friskole*, a supervision representative is either chosen from among the parents or appointed by the municipality. All general and professional schools receive state funding. Schools at the district level are fully financed, while private schools receive funding for approximately 85% of their costs. The *folkeskole* is fully financed in an indirect manner by the State. Every municipality may emphasize some areas over others in its disposal of the lump sum provided by the government. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the 'taximeter principle' has been increasingly introduced in Denmark. It consists of a lump sum (*grundtilskud*), a pupil-related amount (*uddannelsestakst*), and a combination of funds to cover administration and operating costs (*fællestakst* and *bygningstakst*).

Organization of the school system

Present structure: overview

About 1250 state primary schools (*folkeskole*), 360 free schools (*friskole*), and about 150 secondary schools (*gymnasia*) and trade colleges (*handelsskole*) form the core of the Danish education system. Around 650,900 pupils were in education in 1999 (*Statistisk Årbok* 2001, p. 89). 180,000 pupils attended professional schools and 170,000 students studied at a university (*Statistisk Årbok* 2001, p. 89). About 94% of the respective age group continued in education after the end of compulsory schooling. Approximately half of the pupils attended grammar schools, while 40% took courses at vocational schools (*Statistisk Årbok* 2001, p. 90, p. 101).

Nursery school and transition to elementary school

The first institutions of pre-school education in Denmark were set up in 1820. Reforms in the social system at the beginning of the twentieth century gave the State – and since 1987 municipalities – financial and educational responsibility. In day-nurseries (*vuggestuer*), children up to three years of age, and in the following kindergarten (*børnehaver*), children from the ages of three to seven are educated. In order to negotiate the transition from the exploratory and playful programme of the pre-school institutions to the *folkeskole*, one-year pre-school classes (*børnehavsklasser*) were established for five- to seven-year-olds. Approximately 95% of all children of an age group attend pre-school classes. There are also numerous age-comprehensive

institutions (*integrerede institutioner*) which cater for children from pre-school age up to the age of fourteen.

Folkeskole

Unlike numerous other European countries, Denmark does not have compulsory school attendance. Parents are merely obliged to ensure that their children receive at least nine years of education. Children may attend lessons at the public *folkeskole* or at other institutions whose programmes comply with national standards. Compulsory education begins at the age of seven and lasts nine years, after which pupils can take part in educational courses which prepare for academic study or vocational training. Beyond this, it is possible to take part in adult education, which draws on the rich tradition of N. F. S. Grundtvig.

The *folkeskole* (nine-year primary school) is the public state school providing primary and secondary education. The grammar schools and vocational education also form part of secondary education. In addition to the public school system, a diversified private school system (*friskole*) exists in Denmark. These are mainly primary institutions, but they are also found at the secondary level. Academically oriented courses at grammar school (*gymnasium* – in 2006 these courses will be called students exams, *STX*) or at secondary vocational schools (*HHX/HTX*), or vocationally-practically oriented courses at vocational schools may be attended after successful completion of compulsory schooling.

General and vocational education

The folkeskole as primary and secondary school

The most notable characteristic of the Danish education system is the Danish model of the comprehensive school. In the middle of the twentieth century, the integration of the different types of school (*almuesskole*, primary school, *realskole*, secondary modern school, *gymnasia*) was realized in the *enhedsskole* (comprehensive school). This development was the result of changes in social structure, urbanization, and population growth.

The development of the comprehensive school culminated in the course of the 1970s and 1980s. In the process of eliminating differentiation among schools, internal differentiation was created. Some experts see the increased participation of parents since 1985 as possibly posing a fundamental threat to the comprehensive school idea (Brøcher 1989, p. 11).

The most salient characteristic of the educational reform at the beginning of the 1990s was the introduction of market principles, i.e. variety, choice, and competition between schools. In order to introduce this system without loss of quality, nationwide exams were implemented as a form of state evaluation. The resulting transparency was seen as a service to parents.

The folkeskole: current situation

The *folkeskole* is the public school. About 88% of children attend schools in the public education system for the nine years of compulsory schooling (*undervisningsplikt*). The preceding voluntary year in the nursery school and attendance in

a tenth school year are voluntary. The *folkeskole* is a coeducational comprehensive school open to all pupils. It is free of charge, including study materials. In the comprehensive school, all children remain in one class from the first until the ninth school year. Although it is possible to offer English, German (from the eighth school year onwards), mathematics, and physics/chemistry (from the ninth school year onwards) at two standard levels, there is a remarkable nation-wide trend not to employ this differentiation. Vocational guidance is a compulsory subject from the seventh until the ninth school year, and is voluntary in the tenth school year.

In Denmark no marks are given between the first and the seventh school year. Schools are obliged to report to parents on the pupil's progress at least twice a year. Marks are given from the eighth until the tenth school year through final exams (*Bevis for folkeskolens afgangsprøve*) in Danish, mathematics, English, physics/chemistry, German, French, art, handiwork, domestic science and home economics, and typing. The final exam is sat in the form of individual subject exams. Extended final exams (*Bevis for folkeskolens udvidede afgangsprøve*) can be taken in five subjects. In order to obtain these certificates, pupils must have been enrolled in the corresponding main subjects and have completed the voluntary tenth school year. Written tests are the same for all schools and are centrally organized by the educational department. Oral exams are held by the teachers in the presence of a teacher of another school. About 95% of an age group complete *folkeskole* with a leaving certificate.

The curriculum

The *Læseplan for folkeskolens fag* (the official title of the Danish curriculum) is set out as a core curriculum. This allows pupils to take on an active role with regard to cultural, political, economic, and environmental problems. The curriculum thus aims to link humanistic, social scientific, and natural scientific fields of knowledge. The choice of methodology lies with the teacher, but decisions of the district council (*kommunalbestyrelsen*) and local adjustments to the curriculum are binding on teachers. The task of the municipal school is to present suggestions for its profile to the district council.

The curriculum consists of: (1) compulsory subjects, to be offered by every school; (2) compulsory subjects which can be offered by a single school; (3) optional subjects to be offered by every school; and (4) optional subjects which can be offered by a single school. Compulsory lessons for all pupils in the first two school years are Danish, mathematics, art and music, sport, and (Christian) religion. From the first school year to the seventh school year, sciences and engineering lessons are compulsory. In addition, pupils are required to attend open discussion groups. English language is compulsory, starting in the fourth school year. German or French are electives from the seventh school year to the ninth/tenth school year.

This list can be extended as follows: history lessons take place from the third school year to the ninth school year, geography and biology from the third school year to the seventh school year, physics or chemistry from the seventh school year to the ninth school year. The municipality decides whether local history, general skills lessons, and domestic science and home economics are offered at one or more lev-

els. Furthermore, lessons in civic education (*samfundsfag*), including basic principles of social studies, politics, and economics are offered in the ninth school year and the tenth school year. The curriculum also includes (seventh to ninth school year) the compulsory subjects ‘training, work, and labour market orientation’, and ‘work experience’. Traineeships in and excursions to plants or institutions are frequently used as educational means. The intensive study of local economic conditions and the building up of relations between local industry and the vocational education system are the main purposes of these lessons. Practically oriented compulsory subjects are: word processing, technology, media, photography, film, and drama. Latin is an optional subject in the tenth school year.

The weekly number of lessons varies according to the age of the pupils. The first two school years start with at least twenty hours, and this number climbs to at least twenty-eight hours in the course of a pupil’s school career. This means that the daily teaching time varies between four and eight hours, depending on the age group. About 12% of pupils in the *folkeskole* (70,000 pupils) receive short- or long-term special educational support. Physically and mentally handicapped pupils are increasingly integrated into the regular lessons of the *folkeskole*.

Teachers

Danish *folkeskole* teachers are educated at *Seminarer* (university colleges) or at universities. The curriculum contains all of the subjects taught at the *folkeskole* as well as general pedagogical education. Four core subjects can be studied, but Danish and mathematics are compulsory. Requests for further education are regulated at the local level.

The homeroom teachers have a special function. As the teachers are trained in Danish and at least another two subjects, they may accompany a class or a trainee group for the pupils’ whole school career as homeroom teachers. The system of the homeroom teacher is not, however, a compulsory regulation. Nevertheless, it is a characteristic feature of the Danish *folkeskole*.

Friskole - open schools

Private *friskoler* (open schools) have existed in Denmark since the middle of the nineteenth century. The free private primary schools have a similar structure to public schools. Parents can freely choose the school form attended by their children. They decide both on the educational type and the structure of the school, and on the form, contents, and amount of teaching. In addition, they have the constitutional right to teach their children themselves. The private schools are small and the number of pupils varies between twenty-eight and 450. There are approximately 200 *friskoler*, and they are attended by around 12% of the pupils of an age group. The costs not covered by the State (approximately 15%) are covered by school fees. A parents’ representative supervises the lessons in Danish, mathematics, and English, to ensure that the teaching is of the same standard as in state schools. The teachers must be paid on the same scale as teachers in public schools. However, the private schools have the right to employ teachers without regard to their formal education.

Efterskole

The *efterskole* (after-school) is one of the private open schools. This school derives from the tradition of the *folkehøjskole* (home adult education centre), the first of which was established by N. F. S. Grundtvig in Rødding in 1814. The *efterskole* is a boarding school for young people between fourteen and eighteen years of age. Pupils can spend the ninth and tenth school year at such a institution as an alternative to the *folkeskole*. The *efterskole* is a place of studying and living together: there is no separation between teaching and leisure time. By emphasizing practical education, the *efterskole* is an alternative for 'late developers'.

Home schooling

It is possible for Danish parents to teach their children themselves at home, but they have to inform the municipality of their decision. The district council can set exams in mathematics, Danish, and English to supervise the teaching and learning, and to ensure that their respective levels correspond to the standards of the *folkeskole*.

Upper secondary education

Danish secondary schooling is provided in all the usual forms: *gymnasium* (secondary school), the *hf-line*, *HHX* and *HTX*, and various forms of vocational education. Secondary schools usually also provide special education and some form of adult education.

There are three types of school, which cater to 94% of an age group of *folkeskole* graduates. About 40% of the age group continues education in vocational education. Education at the upper secondary level is subdivided into two main types, both of which lead to university entrance entitlement:

- three-year upper secondary schools (*gymnasium*) and the university preparation route (*Højere Forberedelseksamen - hf-line/hf-kurs*) as preparation for entrance into higher education; and
- two- to three-year programmes leading to a double qualification at commercial schools (*Højere Handelseksamen - HHX*) and technological schools (*Højere Teknisk Eksamen - HTX*). These tracks are named after their examinations.

In addition to these forms of upper secondary education, it is possible to attend two- to three-year evening classes. Exams can be taken in single subjects as well as in so-called single subject courses in the context of adult education.

Secondary school (gymnasium)

The *gymnas* offers general education for sixteen- to nineteen-year-old pupils. It is completed with the *studentereksamen* (student exam), which is a general university entrance exam. About 6% of all *gymnasia* are run on a private basis. Pupils who have finished the tenth school year of a *folkeskole* may complete *gymnasium* through a two-year course (*studenterkurser*), but the majority of entrants have completed the ninth school year and take the regular three-year course. Generally speaking, the majority of applicants are accepted at their chosen school; applicants may sometimes have to take an entrance exam.

The secondary school (*gymnas*) is divided into a languages and into a mathematical-natural-scientific branch.

The final examination, the *studentereksamen*, consists of ten subject exams, consisting of all the pupil's main subjects as well as Danish. The written exams are set centrally by the Ministry. All pupils have to write an examination essay in Danish, or in history, or in one of the chosen special subjects. The final mark is determined by the result of the examination and the achievement in the subjects in the course of the school year.

As a rule, the subject teachers at secondary school have degrees in at least two subjects. After academic studies, teacher trainees undertake a six-month phase of theoretical and practical education (*pedagogikum*). These courses are accompanied by teaching practice at a secondary school or a *hf-line*.

The hf-line

The *hf-line* system arises from the political desire for the extensive participation of broad population groups in education. It was originally planned that future teachers would be trained in this system in order to have teachers who stood in social and cultural proximity to their pupils. After completing the tenth school year of the *folkeskole*, pupils can participate in two-year university preparation courses leading to the general university entrance entitlement. The *hf-line* system is especially attractive for young adults who could not attend secondary school for social or personal reasons. While at secondary school one finds an over-representation of children from the middle and higher social classes, pupils in the *hf-line* are drawn from a wider circle of society. The courses are organized either as full-time or as evening classes in secondary schools or in local adult education facilities.

The Ministry is responsible for the final examinations. The *Bevis for højere forberedelseeksamen* (certificate of higher preparation exam) is awarded after successful completion of oral and written exams. Advisory teachers may help pupils in their choice of a further school career at the end of the second phase of teacher training. Most of the *hf-line* pupils complete their educational career with a non-academic certificate.

HHX and HTX

Attached to the *folkeskole* as part of secondary education are two- to three-year programmes leading to a double qualification, called 'grammar school professional' (*erhvervsgymnasiale uddannelser*). A basic vocational education which ends with the *HTX* or *HHX* qualification is also offered. The day courses in these two educational tracks are completed with an oral and a written exam. Both tracks lead to a certificate for a professional qualification and university entrance entitlement. The *HTX* qualification can be obtained at technological vocational schools. The programmes for trade, economics, and administration are carried out at business schools. Some elements of general grammar school education are included in vocational secondary education, but the curriculum corresponds more to the needs of qualified employees. The *HHX* programme contains the following compulsory subjects: Danish, English, a second foreign language, economics, and special subjects

such as trade, information technology, international economics, and commercial law. The programme also contains special vocational education programmes such as project work, and optional subjects such as mathematics, foreign language, cultural studies, design, media, psychology, environmental education, economics, and EU co-operation. About 40-55% of these subjects can be chosen by the pupils. Additional differentiation is possible through the choice of optional subjects.

The *HTX* programme, which appeals to young people with scientific or technical interests, was introduced in 1982. It includes a number of compulsory subjects: technology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, Danish, English, a second foreign language (German or French), and social studies. Optional subjects are: trade, economics, environment of the work place, history of technology, international technology and culture, information technology, processing of materials, design, statistics, and quality control. These subjects can be attended at three levels: A, B, and C. Specialization is achieved through the choice of technical subjects: construction and energy, design and production, services and communication, process management, diet, nature, and agriculture. In both programmes, teachers for vocational and for general subjects are employed. As a rule, teachers for vocational subjects are trained through professional teacher training (*Statens Erhvervspædagogiske Læruddannelse - SEL*). The general subject teachers have the same education and qualifications as those at the *gymnasia*. All teachers are obliged to obtain further education and professional qualifications; however, there are no rules on how they are to fulfil this duty.

Other educational offers at schools

Basic vocational and professional education is offered in Denmark in the context of a national homogeneous vocational school system (*Erhvervsfaglige uddannelser*). The qualifications are valid nation-wide and are appreciated by management and employees. In addition to these programmes, an alternative vocational education strategy is being developed in the *produktionsskoler*. This concept focuses on the personal development of the participants through the connection of teaching, advice, and practical activities. The aim is to improve their chances of success in the labour market and in further education.

Basic vocational education

Basic vocational education is carried out through a dual system at vocational schools and in the workplace. The enterprises and their trainees sign an education contract. As an alternative, schools also offer vocational education for trainees who have not received a contract with an enterprise. The objective of the vocational education programmes is the theoretical and practical training of young people for the labour market. Beyond this, the programmes serve as a motivation towards further education. In 2000-01, the structure of basic vocational education changed. The programme was divided into a basic course (*grundforløb*) and a main course (*hovedforløb*). The basic course is supported by the school and leads to a certificate. All the subjects studied and the levels attained in them are listed in this document. The

certificate is the prerequisite for participation in the main course, which consists of practical training in the workplace or the school, and theoretical education.

Produktionsskole

The establishment of *produktionsskoler* (production schools) can be initiated by local government. These schools offer programmes for sixteen- to twenty-four-year-olds. They combine theoretical teaching, advice, practical work, and production. N. F. S. Grundtvig's ideas on integration may be seen as the basis for this kind of school. The starting point of the educational concept is the individual person and his or her growth. In general, the theoretical and practical courses at a production school last for twelve months, but students can leave before the course finishes. A special feature of the programme, and the basis of all teaching, is the flexibility of the curriculum, which respects the needs and the experiences of the trainee in the initial phase of his or her work career.

Evaluation and quality control

A continuous debate in Danish schools on quality and quality development has been taking place over the last ten years. In 1998 a nation-wide programme of quality development and control was started. It is carried out on the national, local, school, and class level. This means that every school has to deal with evaluation and quality control instruments. All data are collected on a national level and evaluated for the further development of the *folkeskole*. In 1997 a project which focuses on the development of a national advice system on quality was initiated by the Education Ministry.

University

Many school-leavers continue their education at university or university colleges from the age of nineteen to twenty. Tertiary studies are offered as short-term (three years), medium-term (three to four years) and long-term (more than four years) courses. For entry to medium-term study programmes, a leaving certificate of the *gymnasium* (*Studentereksamen*, *HF*, *HHX*, *HTX*) is required; the *Studentereksamen* is the prerequisite for admittance to long-term studies. Three-year courses lead to a bachelor's degree (B.A., B.Sc.), four-year courses to the master's degree (*kandidat*).

Denmark's educational university, the DPU

In order to strengthen the position of education, pedagogics, and teacher training within Danish society, an educational university, *Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet* (DPU), was founded by the Education Ministry in the year 2000. The tasks of the DPU are educational research and educational training. Central aspects are didactic/methodological research and the collection of available educational knowledge. The DPU thus ultimately functions as a bridge between research, education, and practical didactics.

Current discussions and perspectives for development

The general goals of recent Danish politics have been individual responsibility and initiative, the deregulation of the markets, and the avoidance of state intervention. The objective of this politics was to increase the market share of the national economy in the world market. Accordingly, the education policy of Denmark has been subject in the past twenty years to a strong restorative and neo-conservative influence. Education is to serve economic interests. Keywords in the corresponding debates were: 'standard', 'quality', 'competence', and 'effectiveness' (Telhaug/-Tonnessen 1992). With regard to methodological aspects, restorative education supported training with reference to technical competences. This could only be achieved with recourse to a central administration. Individual and institutional competition was also increased. As a consequence, the freedom of teaching and the free activity of pupils were limited. The beliefs that the same possibilities can not be given to all and that equality cannot be guaranteed through the school structure gained broader acceptance (Lundahl 1989, p. 191).

Focus on the development of the school

In recent years, new and more detailed targets for the *folkeskole* have been issued for most subjects. In connection with the curricula, intermediate targets were established. Every municipality may formulate its own intermediate targets or use the general guidelines. The intermediate targets describe what a pupil is expected to know (competencies) at selected levels.

A lively discussion is currently being carried out on the further development of the *folkeskole*, which includes topics such as mobbing, competencies, and bilingualism. A new curriculum for the *gymnasia* is also under discussion, not least as a consequence of the publication of the PISA-study results.

Implications for the principle of financing

Increased decentralization and self-determination in terms of financing and administration, which resulted from the *folkeskole* law of 1993, led to a competition between schools for pupils. With every new pupil, the school budget increases (taximeter principle). This means that the Danish *folkeskole* is characterized by market instruments, in spite of its being a comprehensive school. School is an instrument for increasing the efficiency and productivity of the nation. It remains questionable, however, as to whether the aims of the curriculum, the quality control programme, or the plans for development can be realized.

References

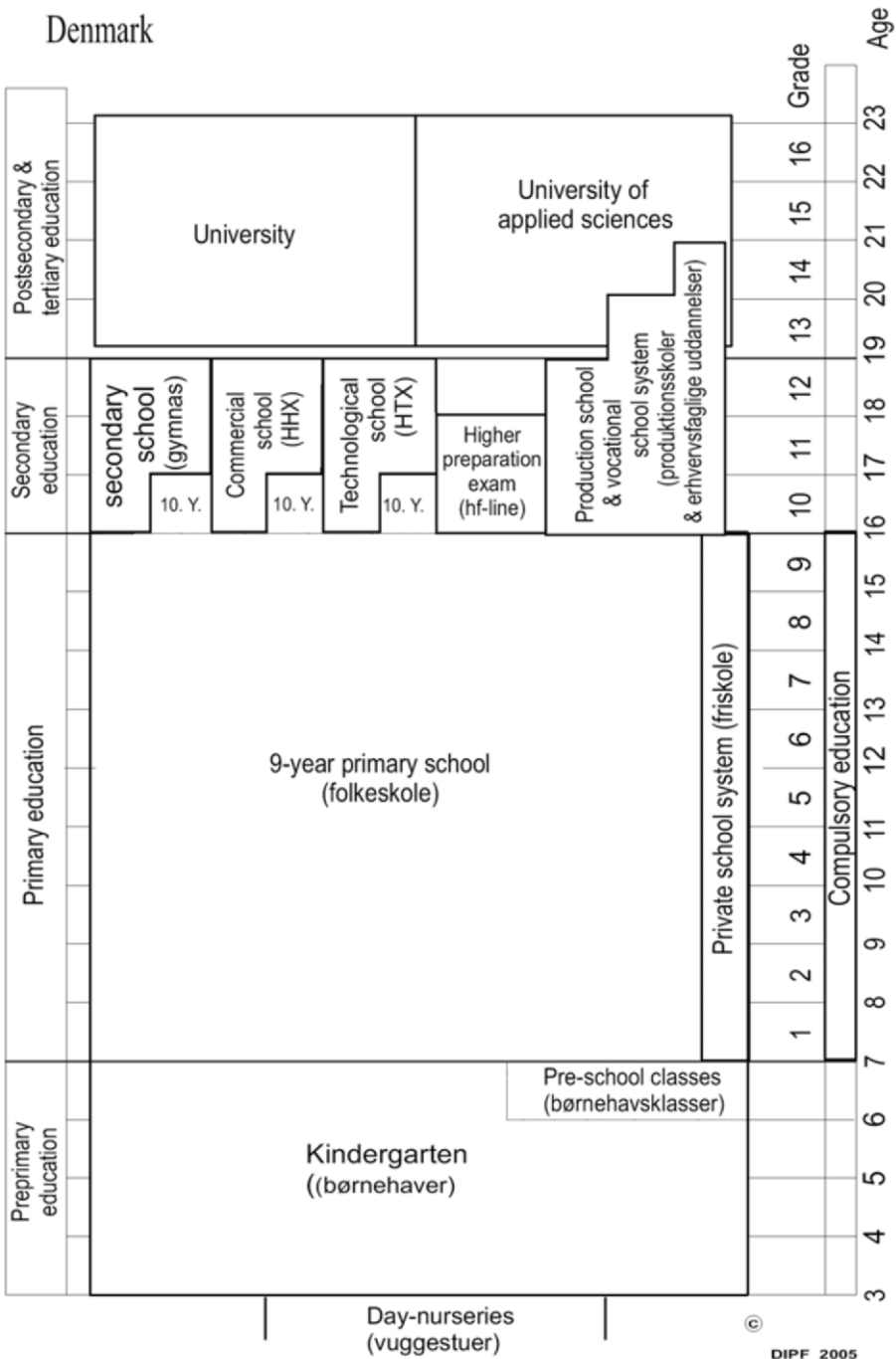
- Andersen, K. H.: Skoleliv i Danmark. Vejle 1994.
Brøcher, K.: Kursen mod enhedsskolen. In: Jørgensen, J. Chr. (Ed.): Enhedsskolen i udvikling. København 1989, pp. 7-13.
Haarder, B.: Grænser for politik. København 1990.

- Haue, H./Nørgaard, E./Skovgaard-Petersen, V.: Skolen i Danmark. 1500 - 1980'erne. Herning 1986.
- Jørgensen, J. Chr. (Ed.): Enhedsskolen i udvikling. København 1989.
- Kampmann, T./Markussen, I./Nørgaard, E. (Eds): Et folk kom i skole. 1814-1989. København 1989.
- Lundahl, L.: I moralens, produktionens och det suna förnufts namn. Det svenska högerpartiets skolepolitik 1904-1962. Lund 1989.
- Markussen, I.: Visdomens lænker. Studier i enevældens skolereformer fra Reventlow til skolelov. Odense 1988.
- Nørr, E.: Almue- og borgerskolevæsenet i det 19. århundrede. In: Jespersen, L./Peterse, E. L./Tamm, D. (Eds): Dansk forvaltingshistorie I. Stat, forvaltning og samfund. Fra middelalderen til 1901. København 2000, pp. 757-786. (=Dansk forvaltningshistorie. 1) Statistik Årbok. København 2001.
- Telhaug, A. O./Tønnessen, R. Th.: Dansk uddannelsespolitikk under Bertel Haarder. Dansk nyliberalistisk og nykonservativ uddannelsespolitikk fra 1982 til 1992. Oslo 1992.
- Tonnesen, L./Bastholm, E. (Eds): Ungdomsuddannelserne i 90'erne. En bog til oplysning og debat. Vejle 1991.
- Undervisningsministeriet (Ed.): Formål & centrale kundskabs & færdighedsområder. folkeskolens Fag. København 1994.
- Undervisningsministeriet (Ed.): Læseplaner. Folkeskolens fag. København 1995.
- Undervisningsministeriet (Ed.): Kvalitet der kann sees. København 2000.
- Undervisningsministeriet (Ed.): Tanker om EUD-Reformen. En pædagogisk og organisatorisk udfordring. København 2001.
- Ussing, O. P.: Skolen for samfundet. Frederikshavn 1986.

Internet sources.

- <http://www.aer.dk>
- <http://www.dpu.dk>
- <http://www.folkeskolen.dk>
- <http://www.folkeskolen.dk>
- <http://www.gsk-fag.dk/>
- <http://www.odin.dk/>
- <http://www.politikken.dk>
- <http://www.uvm.dk/grundskole/generelt/>
- <http://www.uvm.dk/lov/menu/m1.htm>
- <http://www.uvm.dk/pub/2000/friegrundskoler>
- <http://www.uvm.dk/statistik/noegle/010800.htm>
- <http://www.uvm.dk:80/pub/1999/eur2000/index.html>
- <http://www.uvm.dk:80/pub/1999/q90/index.html>
- <http://www.uvm.dk/nyheder/gymnasiereform/oversigt.htm?menuid=152510>

Denmark



Day-nurseries (vuggestuer)

©

DIPF 2005

Estonia

History of the school system

The origins of school education in Estonia can be traced back as far as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when churches and monasteries founded Latin-language educational institutions. The first primer in the Estonian language was published in 1575. In the year 1632, the first university was established; the *Academia Gustaviana* was the predecessor of the present University of Tartu (Dorpat). The B. G. Forselius seminary trained the first generation of teachers; this institution offered two-year courses in the period between 1684 and 1688 in the Tartu region. While two thirds of the peasants could read at the end of the eighteenth century, hardly anyone was able to write. Between 1870 and 1880, three years of compulsory education were introduced. According to the 1881 census, almost all peasants were able to read and between 30 and 40% could also write. In 1940 and, after the break caused by World War Two, from 1944 on, the Soviet school system was introduced.

From 1988 on, an Estonian education system was developed and the Soviet system was thus gradually abandoned. After the Estonian Declaration of Independence of 20 August 1991, this project was further pursued. The Education Law of the Estonian Republic was enacted on 23 March 1992 and came into force on 30 March of the same year. The Estonian Constitution, passed on 28 June 1992 after a popular referendum, lays down the following:

- Everyone is entitled to education. Compulsory education applies to children of school age; its extent is defined by law. Education in state and municipal general schools is free.
- Both state and local authorities provide the number of schools required to make education accessible. Within the legal framework, other education institutions, such as private schools, can be established and operated.
- Parents have the right to choose a school for their child.
- Everyone is entitled to instruction in the Estonian language. The educational institutions of the minority groups can choose their language of instruction.
- The education system is supervised by the state.

Organization of the current school system

Basic principles

The guidelines for the organization of education in Estonia are laid down in the Constitution. The following principles originate from these guidelines:

- The state and the municipalities ensure that everyone in Estonia has the opportunity to comply with the principle of compulsory education as defined by law, and to pursue further education.
- Within the borders of Estonia, the state and the municipalities guarantee education in the Estonian language on all levels in public educational institutions and universities.
- The Estonian Republic ensures that Estonian-language instruction is also available in those institutions and groups that use a different language; attendance of religious instruction classes is voluntary.
- The structure of the education system and the educational standards as laid down by the State enable everyone to pass from one educational stage to the next.
- Economic management and pedagogical control of educational institutions are to be kept separated.
- Secondary education at public institutions is free.

Educational institutions offer the following forms of instruction: daytime instruction, correspondence courses, out-of-school preparation for examinations, home schooling, and individual instruction. In theory, further forms could be offered. The form of instruction is subject to the regulations of the educational institution. The control of the education system is characterized by functional decentralization.

Legal principles

The principles that inform general educational policies also apply to certain types of educational institutions.

The educational sector is regulated by the following laws: the Law on Private Schools (3 June 1998), the Pre-primary School Law (9 June 1993), the Law on Nine-year Primary Schools and Upper Secondary Schools (15 September 1993), the Adult Education Law (10 November 1993), the Law on Scientific Organizations (26 March 1997), the University Law (12 January 1995), the Law on the University of Tartu (16 February 1995), the Vocational School Law (17 June 1998), and the Law on Vocational Colleges (10 June 1998). Also relevant to the education system are the Language Law (21 February 1995) and the Law on Cultural Autonomy and Minorities (26 October 1993). Those laws that were enacted in the period between 1993 and 1995 cover almost the entire educational sector, with the exception of the Law on Vocational Colleges, which was not passed until 1998 after heated discussions.

When new laws are enacted, older ones have to be adapted. The University Law, for instance, necessitated changes in both the Education Law and the Law on Private Schools which then had to be implemented. Several of the above-mentioned laws were changed in the meantime: the Law on Private Schools, the Law on Scientific Organizations, and the Vocational School Law. If laws have to be supplemented, this is usually a result of the dynamic development of society, but also of the fact that laws have been passed in a great hurry. The later a specific sector of the education system was legally regulated, the more problems and contradictions occurred.

Vocational colleges did not exist in Estonia before; their relationship to other, similar school types has not yet been sufficiently defined. On account of this deficiency, and also of further problems, the enactment of the relevant law was delayed.

General structure: overview

The general education system comprises the nine-year primary school (*põhikool*) for children aged between seven and fifteen, and the three-year upper secondary school (*gümnaasium*). The school year starts on 1 September. Attendance of pre-school institutions for five- to six-year-old children is not compulsory. The same holds true for those institutions that look after one- to six-year-old children.

With the first Language Law, passed in 1989, Estonian was recognized as the only official language of the country. At that time, Estonia was still part of the Soviet Union; it was thus the first Soviet Republic that legally defined its official language. The societal changes that occurred in the following period necessitated legal changes with regard to official-language usage. On 21 February 1995, the State Assembly (Parliament) declared the law of 1989 null and void and passed a new Language Law, which defines all languages except Estonian as foreign languages. A fluent command of the Estonian language is mandatory for all civil servants who have contact with the general public in state, municipal, and other authorities. Both state and local bodies are to ensure, on the one hand, Estonian-language instruction in all institutions that are under their authority and, on the other, instruction in foreign languages as defined by the law. Paragraph 9 of the Law on Primary and Upper Secondary Schools of 1993 states:

Estonian is the language of instruction in schools. In primary schools, another language may be used for instruction; it is defined by the municipalities and the Ministry of Education and Research for municipal and state schools respectively. In those schools that use a language of instruction other than Estonian, Estonian is to be taught from grade 3 onwards.

The law declared, furthermore, that state and municipal upper secondary schools ought to have completed the shift to Estonian as the language of instruction by 2000. This does not apply to private upper secondary schools. This decision triggered numerous political discussions, which resulted in the postponement of the implementation of the directive first until 2004, and later until 2007.

The Estonian education system has retained Russian-language schools from the Soviet era. In the school year 2003-04, 76% of all pupils were taught in Estonian and 24% in Russian. Children of different national backgrounds also attend Estonian-language schools. In addition to exclusively Estonian and Russian schools, there are those institutions that offer separate classes in Estonian and Russian. The majority of these schools are situated in regions in which the number of pupils is relatively low. While Estonian schools can be found throughout the country, the Russian schools are concentrated in the towns of the districts Harjumaa and Ida-Virumaa. Schools in urban areas are usually larger than those in rural regions; hence the proportion of Russian-language schools is higher than that of pupils that speak Russian as their mother tongue. Of the total of 28,183 pupils that attended institutions of vocational education in 2003-04, approximately 18,435, or 65.4%, were

instructed in Estonian and 9748, or 34.6%, in Russian. Among the 8081 graduates of vocational institutions in 2003, 5660 pupils, or 70%, had been instructed in Estonian and 2421 pupils, or 30%, in the Russian language. At university level, degree courses in all academic fields can be studied in Estonian. In 2003-04, about 65,659 students, or 89%, made use of this opportunity; 6621, or 10%, pursued Russian-language courses while 823 students, or 1%, completed an English-language degree. Only in recent years, and mostly in private institutions of tertiary education, have English programmes been introduced. It can thus be stated that fluency in Estonian among the graduates of Russian general schools has continually increased since independence. As a result, their chances of studying at an Estonian-language educational institution as well as their integration into Estonian society have improved. Special emphasis has to be put on the fact that the didactic and methodological aspects of the subject of Estonian language at Russian schools have been redesigned; the instruction now takes the form of second-language teaching.

Vocational education

The legal status and regulations of vocational institutions of education – vocational schools, in short – are defined in the Vocational School Law of 14 June 1995. This law outlines the procedures that have to be followed when vocational schools are founded, merged, split, or closed down. Furthermore, it includes administrative and budgetary regulations for the schools, forms and requirements for the obtainment of qualifications, and the obligations of pupils. Three-year vocational schools (*kutseõppeasutus*) ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge, skills, and ethical principles that are necessary for entry into the world of work. The task of vocational education and further training consists of taking societal as well as job-market specific conditions into consideration.

The requirements for admission to a vocational school differ between institutions; while for some schools, applicants only need qualifications from the nine-year primary school, others require the completion of upper secondary school. There are, in addition, vocational schools that build upon both levels of education. Under certain conditions, a general school-leaving certificate can be obtained. The Vocational School Law applies to both municipal and state schools; private institutions, in contrast, are subject to the Law on Private Schools. An institution's name comprises its location as well as its main professional sector. State schools are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Research. Teaching contents in vocational schools are laid down in national curricula. These outline the objectives of vocational education, the requirements for admission and graduation, compulsory subjects, and the duration of the training programmes. The curricula are approved by the Government. The regulations of the individual vocational schools define the extent and general contents of all subjects as well as the options and requirements with regard to admission and graduation, including the final project or thesis. For all subjects, individual timetables are to be drawn up.

In order to make the education system responsive to the needs of society and the labour market, professional councils have been established. These consist of representatives of the employers' and employees' associations of the relevant sectors as

well as representatives of professional organizations and the Government. The members are appointed by the Government on the advice of the Minister of Social Affairs, who is also responsible for the employment sector. The professional councils propose syllabi for vocational training programmes and take part in devising measures for further training.

Colleges and universities

In Estonia, two forms of tertiary institutions exist, namely universities (*ülikool*) and colleges (*rakenduskõrgkool*). Universities are those academic institutions in which both instruction and research takes place; they offer all levels of tertiary education. Colleges, in contrast, are institutions without university status; while they cannot award academic titles, they enable their students to obtain a college diploma. The Military Academy is a special form of college to which specific requirements with respect to admission, training, and qualification apply. Private colleges are financed from private funds; their operation is subject to the Law on Private Educational Institutions of 1993.

There are six state universities in Estonia. The oldest of these, the University of Tartu (Dorpat), was founded as early as 1693; the second oldest, the Technical University of Tallinn (Reval), was established in 1918. The universities offer B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. courses, which take between three and four years, two years, and four years respectively. Furthermore, there are seven state colleges, situated in five cities. These institutions in their current form have been in existence only since 1991-92; most of them, however, developed from former technical secondary schools. Degree programmes usually take between three and four years. The first private colleges, finally, were established in 1989; at present, twenty-four of these exist in Estonia.

General schools

According to the Primary and Upper Secondary School Law, both the national and the school curricula determine the teaching contents of the nine-year primary and upper secondary schools. The pupils' performance is evaluated by means of educational standards; when the required knowledge is to be taught is laid down in detailed timetables. The national curriculum is the basic document on education in Estonia. It explains educational goals, the relationship between the national and the individual schools' curricula, binding timetables with the weekly workload and teaching contents, the available choices and requirements as regards the selection of subjects, and the requirements for all stages of education as well as the school-leaving qualifications. The curriculum prepared by each school describes the school-specific objectives; the school's timetables; detailed contents of the obligatory subjects; choices, contents, and requirements for those subjects from which pupils have to choose several; and the conditions of the optional subjects. This curriculum is approved by the head teacher in agreement with the school council and the school's management committee.

In an annual report, the Ministry of Education and Research assesses and modifies the timetables for the nine-year primary and upper secondary schools. The

school year has at least 175 school days. The maximum number of lessons per week are the following: grade 1, twenty hours; grade 2, twenty-three hours; grades 3 and 4, twenty-five hours; grade 5, twenty-eight hours; grades 6 and 7, thirty hours; grade 8, thirty-two hours; grade 9, thirty-four hours; and grades 10 to 12, thirty-five hours. One lesson lasts forty-five minutes.

The pupils' performance is assessed and documented by means of quarterly reports. Those subjects that are taught for one hour per week are evaluated only every six months. This regulation can also be applied to all subjects in upper secondary school at the school council's request. Additional subjects, from which pupils have to choose several, must be offered by the schools; they are not graded, however. These subjects, as well as the optional ones, are not defined in the national curricula, but are decided on by the individual schools. Upper secondary schools can thus specialize, for example, in the arts and humanities, or the natural sciences and technology. When deciding on optional subjects, the schools also consider suggestions from the pupils and take into account the schools' facilities and means.

According to the grade in which the subject starts, foreign languages are called language A, B, or C. The schools choose languages A and B from Russian, English, German, and French. Language C can be selected freely; the school council has to confirm the decision, however. From grade 10 onwards, pupils can replace Russian with another A or B language. At the same time, they should be given the opportunity to continue to learn Russian. The subject social studies is limited to health education in grade 7; in upper secondary schools, psychology and family education are also part of the subject's syllabus. Schools can decide whether to offer religious instruction (R.I.); if, however, more than twenty-five pupils in a city school, or more than ten pupils in a rural school, expressly ask for R.I., the school is obliged to provide the subject. Economics is taught at the upper secondary level for two hours a week as an optional subject, depending on available staff and teaching materials.

If there are more than twenty-five pupils in one class, it is divided into two groups for foreign language instruction. In the event that the pupils in one class wish to learn different languages, the groups have to comprise at least nine children each. Otherwise, pupils from different classes join one group or, alternatively, the weekly workload as laid down in the timetable is reduced by half. In classes with more than twenty-five pupils in upper secondary schools, optional subjects can be taught in these groups. A maximum of fifty hours per week and class are allowed; if a class consists of fewer than twenty-five pupils, this figure is reduced to forty.

Arts and crafts is taught from grade 5, physical education (P.E.) from grade 6 onwards; girls and boys are instructed separately. Parallel and successive classes can be merged if groups are smaller than twenty-four children. In small schools with only one class per year, merged groups must not be larger than fifteen pupils. Classes with only girls or boys are divided into smaller groups if they are larger than twenty-five pupils. The timetable can be adapted so that grades 1 to 9 have three lessons per week and grades 10 to 12 two hours. However, sufficient transfer of knowledge has to be ensured, and the weekly workload must not exceed the prescribed figure. One hour of the three weekly hours of P.E. in grades 11 and 12 is dedicated to national-defence training. This holds only for boys; girls have to attend

health and family education classes instead. Schools can, moreover, allow their pupils in grades 10 and 11 to do internships for ten days per school year.

In both nine-year primary and upper secondary schools, there are classes with extended instruction in foreign languages, music, the arts, maths, and physics. For these classes, as well as for Russian-language schools, special timetables are developed. The timetables for Russian schools differ from those for Estonian schools in the number of lessons in Estonian, Russian, and foreign languages.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

There have been nine Ministers of Education in Estonia since independence was regained (20 August 1990), and one person held the office twice. In 1995, the terms of office of the Ministers were so short that three Ministers of Education held the office within one year. In the period 1992 to 1996, the issues of education and culture were dealt with by the same ministry – the Ministry of Culture and Education. In 2001, the Ministry of Education was removed from the capital Tallinn to Tartu, the second largest town in Estonia and seat of the first Estonian university. The Ministry of Education was the only ministry to be removed and this removal brought about significant staff changes. In 2003, the Ministry was renamed the Ministry of Education and Research. Frequent appointment of new Ministers, reorganizations of the Ministry, and its removal have had a considerable impact on Estonia's education policy. Many an education policy decision has been made in a hurry, without thorough analysis and thoroughly considered foundations. This has brought about the need for repeated amendments of legislation already enacted.

A general trend observed in education policy is the delegation of decision-making power to individual schools and the reduction of centralized management. Estonian universities enjoy extensive autonomy. They own property, e.g. lands, buildings, and equipment; they take decisions on their budgets; elect academic staff, including professors etc; and their decisions need not be confirmed by any authority outside the university.

A new study programme is being worked out for primary schools (grades 1 to 9) and upper secondary schools (grades 10 to 12) to be introduced from 2007 onwards; the new programme is aimed at the acquisition of skills and the promotion of pupils' creativity, instead of the mere knowledge of facts. The principle of reducing the number of pupils per class is to be implemented; in the future, there will be up to twenty-four pupils per class. The number of drop-outs is high, especially at the primary school level. Compulsory school attendance requirements include pupils until they complete primary schooling or reach the age of sixteen. The new programme will require compulsory school attendance until the age of eighteen. Supervision of compliance with the requirements will also be reinforced.

Since 1987, the birth rate has been decreasing year by year; therefore, the number of children starting school has also been decreasing since 1995. This has brought about changes in the school network. Especially small schools in rural areas have been closed down, their pupils have been transferred to schools in neighbouring areas, and local authorities have organized transport at municipal expense for them.

The financial principles of general education schools are being revised. According to the new principles, the so-called uniform capitation fee will be applied, and an amount taking into account the geographical location and characteristics of the school will be added to it. The planned school buildings' renovation programme, partly financed from the national budget, will be implemented. Insufficient motivation of school-leavers to choose the teaching profession is widespread; in order to improve this situation, a gradual increase in teachers' salaries has been devised. In the 2005 national budget, resources were allocated to increase teachers' salaries by 12%. A draft amendment of legislation specifies the process of formation of boards of trustees and their competencies. This draft includes proposals to improve the process of issuing educational licences for pre-school institutions and schools, and to revise the regulations for state supervision. Internal and external evaluation requirements have also been established, with the emphasis on outcome-based evaluation. A transition period has been fixed for implementing the new system by 1 September 2009, when the submission of internal evaluation reports becomes obligatory. The law also decrees that the performance indicators of educational institutions be published on their homepages each year by 1 October. Every school has access to the Internet; the publication of performance indicators will therefore enable interested members of the public to obtain information on school life and to compare the quality of educational institutions.

Modernizing the network of vocational educational institutions will mainly take place by merging the schools of one region. This will result in a reduction in the number of vocational schools. Vocational education is not popular among young people and therefore the number of pupils is decreasing. Formerly, the vocational schools only admitted pupils who had completed primary education (9 grades) and secondary education (12 grades), but as the result of an amendment to the Vocational School Act pupils who have not completed primary education are now also admitted to vocational schools. Upper secondary schools and vocational schools compete for pupils, because school-leavers of primary institutions are entitled to continue their education in both types of school. Upper secondary schools have an advantage for two reasons: Young people have not yet chosen their professional careers, and many upper secondary schools include a primary school, i.e. grades 1 to 9; pupils can thus continue their education in their own schools.

The demographic situation, in which the number of pupils is decreasing year by year, has raised the question of integrating vocational and (general) secondary education. Vocational schools offer study programmes which enable pupils to acquire a full secondary education. A new trend consists of the introduction of special tracks and more extensive pre-vocational training in upper secondary schools that provide knowledge useful for career choices. Pupils who have completed secondary education are entitled to continue their studies in vocational schools and institutions of higher education. The latter have an advantage in that higher education is much more prestigious than vocational education, and young people prefer to continue their studies at institutions of higher education. Vocational schools used to be state schools. The reform of the school network has resulted in some vocational schools' being reorganized into municipal schools; private vocational schools have also been

opened. The Vocational School Act adopted in 1998 made provision for higher vocational education in vocational schools. Some vocational schools introduced such study programmes. An amendment to the law, adopted in June 2002, has implemented this provision including diploma level education to be acquired either at an institution of professional higher education or at a university. According to the amendment, professional higher education can be acquired in a vocational school, an institution of professional higher education, or an educational institution below the university level within a standard period of study of three to four years. Thus, opportunities for acquiring professional higher education are satisfactory and are provided at various qualitative levels. There is no longer any formal admission procedure to diploma level study programmes in institutions of professional higher education. At universities, there were diploma, bachelor, master, and doctoral programmes. The standard period of studies at the diploma and bachelor levels was three to four years, at the master level one to two years, and at the doctoral level four years. As a result of the recent reform, diploma level studies were replaced by professional higher education studies that can take place only in educational institutions below a university. The standard period of four years of studies at the bachelor level was replaced by a period of three years. The change was based upon the Bologna declaration signed also by Estonia. The combined standard period of studies at the bachelor and master levels was established as five years instead of the six years that were formerly the norm. In certain areas, five-year integrated bachelor and master study programmes were introduced. These fields are as follows: medical training, veterinary training, pharmacy training, dentistry training, architectural studies, civil engineering studies, and (classroom) teacher training. The standard period of studies at the doctoral level is four years.

There are state-commissioned student places, i.e. tuition-free student places and student places requiring full payment of tuition fees. State-commissioned, i.e. tuition-free student places are provided by the State, which signs a contract with an educational institution determining the number of graduates by academic levels in a broad group of studies, and the required finances. The contract does not regulate the number of admissions, which is determined by the respective institution of higher education. In previous contracts, finances depended on the number of admissions and the contracts did not cover the number of graduates. The State does not regulate the number of student places requiring full payment of tuition fees; these are established by the institutions of higher education themselves. Therefore, tuition fees vary from institution to institution, and so do the terms of their payment. There are institutions in which tuition fees are term-based, payable at the beginning of each term, and not dependent on the actual curriculum. Others have established monthly tuition fees. In some institutions, a fixed price for a credit point has been introduced, and the term-based tuition fee depends on the total number of credit points of the courses the student takes that term. The educational institution has the right to increase tuition fees on a yearly basis, but the increase cannot exceed the percentage established in the contract concluded between the school and the student for the student place requiring full payment of tuition fees. The number of students paying tuition fees is increasing more rapidly than the number of students studying free of charge on

state-commissioned student places. In certain areas, the output of the higher education system does not meet the needs of society, since the State is unable to influence the number of student places requiring payment of tuition fees or the areas of specialization. Student places requiring payment of tuition fees are established in popular sectors of specialization, but often there are no jobs available. Less than one third of those admitted to doctoral studies actually defend their doctoral dissertation and this has become an increasingly serious problem in terms of academic staff renewal. Appointment to the post of professor or associate professor requires a doctoral degree; liberal arts related domains are an exception.

The Private Schools Act, adopted in 1998 and amended on several occasions, regulates the organization of private schools. For example, the 2003 amendment established stricter requirements on equity capital. The equity capital of universities has to be at least 10 million *kroons* (EURO 1 = EEK 15.6466); the equity capital of institutions of higher education and vocational schools has to be six million and one million *kroons* respectively.

The decision-making powers of schools are extensive; quality assurance in education is thus becoming more and more important. The quality of education provided by schools of general education is assessed through the outcomes of state examinations. These are organized by the National Examination and Qualification Centre under the Ministry of Education and Research. The national accreditation system has been established to evaluate the quality of higher education; the system allows for the evaluation of both study programmes and institutions. Educational institutions have more widely applied for accreditation of their study programmes than accreditation of the institutions themselves. The accreditation system seems to have become obsolete due to the great number of study programmes. There have been discussions about changing the system, but no decision has been reached which would satisfy all interest groups.

Estonia's accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004 increased opportunities to study and seek employment in other countries. The issue of changing the credit point system and adopting the corresponding European system has been raised due to international student mobility and students studying at universities abroad; according to the system presently employed in Estonia, one credit point corresponds to forty hours of study, whereas in the European system one credit point corresponds to forty hours of study. Changes in education have been abundant since Estonia regained its independence, and further changes are to be expected in the foreseeable future.

References

- Statistikaamet. Statistical Office of Estonia: Haridus - Education 2000/2001. Tallinn 2001.
- Ministry of Education. Estonian Academic Recognition Information Center: Higher education in Estonia. Second Edition. Tallinn 2000.
- Rajangu, V.: Das Bildungswesen in Estland: Grundlagen – Tendenzen – Probleme (= Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung. Studien und Dokumentation zur vergleichenden Bildungsforschung. Band 53). Köln 1993.

Rajangu, V. (ed. UNESCO Office in Bucharest (CEPES)): Higher education in Estonia. Bucharest 1997.

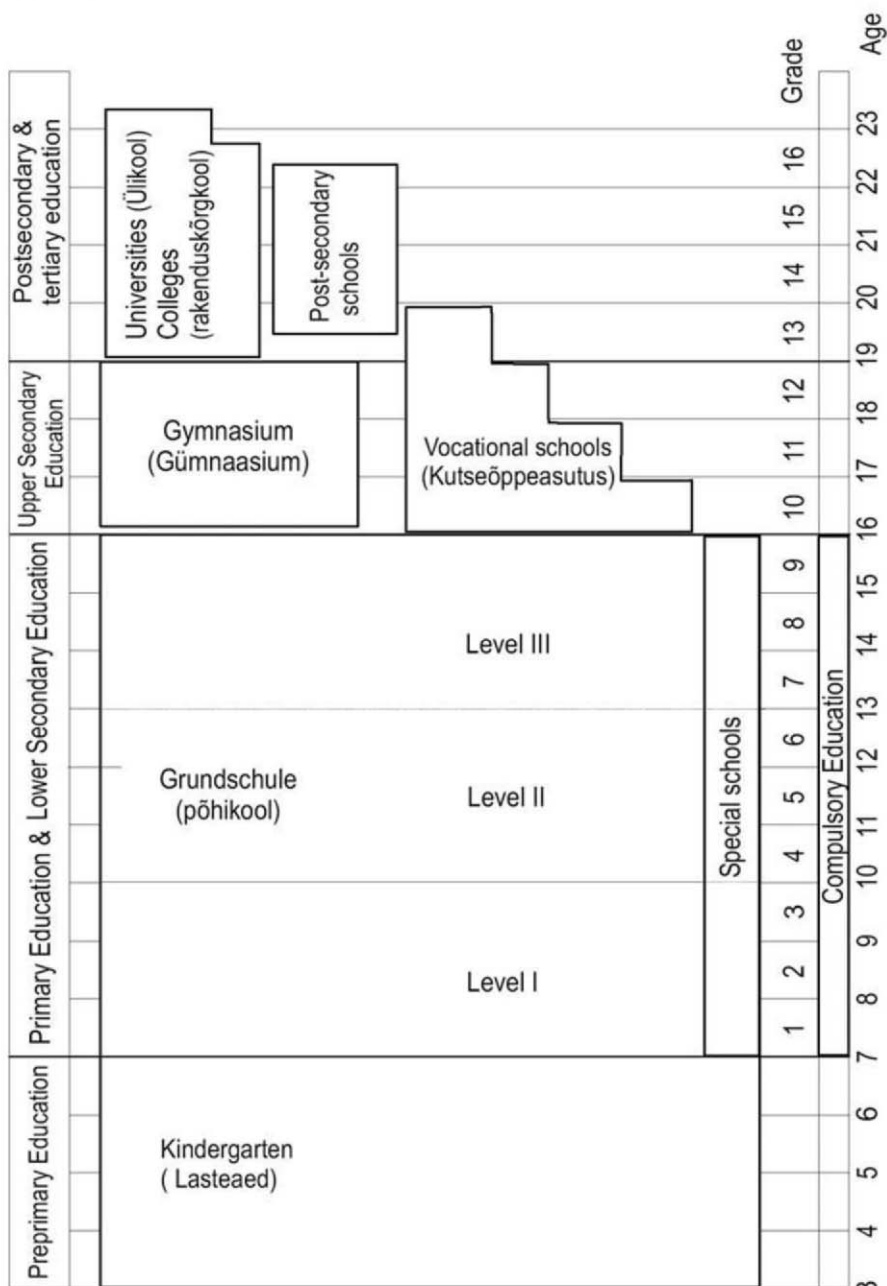
Rajangu, V.: Das Bildungswesen im unabhängigen Estland. Entwicklungen in den neunziger Jahren (= Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung. Studien und Dokumentation zur vergleichenden Bildungsforschung. Band 80). Köln 1998.

Internet Sources:

<http://www.hm.ee/uus/hm/client/index.php?1>

http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/1_Databas/Social_life

Estonia



Wendelin Sroka

Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands are located in the North Atlantic, halfway between Norway and Iceland. The archipelago consists of eighteen inhabited islands, covering an overall territory of 1399 square kilometres. Until 1948, the islands were a Danish county. Since that time, they have been a self-governing territory of the Kingdom of Denmark, as laid down in the Home Rule Act. On this basis, the Faroe Islands have their own legislative assembly (*Løgting*) and their own government (*Landsstýri*). The Home Rule Act declared Faroese, a West Nordic language derived from Old Norse and closely related to Icelandic, as the principal language. Nevertheless, both Danish and Faroese are used as official languages. While responsibility for defence issues and foreign policy is exercised jointly with Denmark, the Faroe Islands did not follow Denmark in 1972 in joining the European Community, and they are not a member of the European Union today. The economy is heavily based on the fishing industry. Around 48,500 people live on the Faroe Islands, 38% of them in the area of the capital, Tórshavn.

By and large, the Faroese education system is very similar to schooling in Denmark. The entire education system is public, and is overseen by the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Mentamálaráðið*). Compulsory schooling begins at seven years of age and lasts for nine years. Primary education (grades 1 to 7) and lower secondary education (grades 8 to 10) are provided by the *fólkaskúlin*. In these schools, Faroese is used as the language of instruction, while Danish is taught from grade 3 and English from grade 5. Small villages often have primary schools, but the last three grades of the *fólkaskúlin* are taught in district schools. Starting in grade 8, the curriculum encompasses both compulsory and optional subjects. Successful completion of the school leaving examination in grade 9 allows pupils to continue their education in an upper secondary establishment either on the Faroe Islands, in most cases in the capital, or in Denmark. Pupils without a grade 9 school leaving certificate can take general education courses in grade 10 of the *fólkaskúlin*. As part of an on-going settlement development policy, considerable efforts are made to preserve primary schools in villages and on scarcely populated islands.

At upper secondary level, the types of course offered to pupils are largely similar to those provided in Denmark. There is thus a three-year general education track, provided by *Studentaskúlin*, completion of which enables pupils to continue their education immediately in higher education. Within this track, pupils may choose between science-based and language-based programmes. Furthermore, a great variety of vocational training programmes are offered by a number of specialized colleges in the areas of business, technology, fisheries, and health. Most of these programmes start with a basic year at college, after which the student either continues his or her studies for two more years in the same institution, or starts practical training in an enterprise. Vocational education on the Faroe Islands includes various

forms of apprenticeship training. In these cases, a college provides theoretical training, while an enterprise takes over the practical part.

The system of higher education on the Faroe Islands encompasses five institutions: the Teachers' College (*Læraraskúlin*) offers training for kindergarten, primary school, and secondary school teachers. Nurses are trained in a four-year course at the *Sjúkrasystraskúli Føroya*. Two other colleges, the Maritime College (*Sjómansskúlin*) and the Marine Engineering College (*Maskinmeistaraskúlin*) are specialized in the training of captains and chief engineers. Lastly, the University of the Faroe Islands (*Fróðskaparsetur Føroya*), founded in 1965, provides degree courses (bachelor's and master's) in a limited number of subject areas. The university's departments include the Department of Faroese, the Department of History and Social Science, and the Department of Natural Sciences. In order to provide professional counselling services to Faroese students and to enhance international student mobility, in 2000 the International Office (*Altjóða Skrivstovan*) was established by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The cultural traditions of the Faroe Islands and the demands of the modern economy have contributed to the development of a great variety of educational opportunities for adult learners. These include courses organized by the evening schools (*kvøldskúlin*), which are established in nearly all municipalities, and by the folk high schools (*fólkaháskúlin*); preparatory courses for higher education, provided by schools; and special courses for adults at the University of the Faroe Islands.

References:

- Altjóða Skrivstovan: The Faroese Educational System. Tórshavn 2005.
Faroe Islands Business Environment: Higher Education. Tórshavn 2004.
Faroe Islands Business Environment: The Education System. Tórshavn 2004.
Guttesen, R.: The Faroe Islands: an Overview. 2005. Online-publication.
<http://www.denmark.dk> [June 2nd, 2005]

Pertti Kansanen and Matti Meri

Finland

History of the school system

Corner-stones of the historical development of the school system

Finland was a part of the kingdom of Sweden until 1809. Education was governed by the Church, and was provided in monastic schools and in the cathedral school established in Turku in the thirteenth century. Instruction was in Latin and aimed primarily at training clerics for an ecclesiastical career. The first Finnish university, the *Academia Aboensis*, was established at Turku in 1640. In 1809, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy under Russia. The legislation and social system from the Swedish era were preserved, however, during the period of autonomy. Russian educational statutes were not applied to Finland and internal conditions remained very much as before. Finland also established its own parliament and maintained autonomy in economic affairs. During the nineteenth century, basic education was greatly developed and expanded. The municipal elementary school was established in the 1860s. From 1898 onwards, local authorities had to provide formal educational opportunities for all school-aged children, and compulsory schooling was introduced in 1921.

Finland became independent in 1917. From the very beginning, the extension of education to all citizens and all parts of the country, along with continuous efforts to increase the level of education constituted one of the young nation's central policies. In the Constitution, enacted in 1919, the provision of general compulsory education and of basic education free of charge were established as an obligation. Up until the 1970s, compulsory education was provided in the six-year primary school. After four years of primary school, a part of each age group moved up to secondary school, which was divided into the five-year lower secondary school and the three-year upper secondary school. In the 1970s, the comprehensive school, a nine-year compulsory school common to the entire age group, was created on the basis of the primary school and lower secondary school.

The network of universities expanded gradually after the Second World War to cover the entire country. During the 1990s, a non-university sector of higher education, consisting of almost thirty polytechnics, was created parallel to the university sector.

The main principles of Finnish educational policy

The main objective of Finnish educational policy is to offer all citizens equal opportunities to receive an education, regardless of age, domicile, financial situation, sex, or mother tongue. Education is considered to be one of the fundamental rights of all citizens. Firstly, provisions concerning fundamental educational rights guar-

antee everyone the right to free basic education; the provisions also specify compulsory education. Secondly, the public authorities are obliged to guarantee all citizens equal opportunities for obtaining education besides basic education according to their abilities and special needs, and for self-development that is not hindered by economic hardship.

A major objective of Finnish education policy is to achieve as high a level of education as possible for the whole population. One of the basic principles behind this has been to offer post-compulsory education to whole age groups. A high percentage of each age group goes on to upper secondary education when they leave comprehensive school; more than 90% of those who complete comprehensive school continue their studies in upper secondary schools or vocational upper secondary education.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Finland has been an EU member state since 1995 and is the fifth largest country in Europe (338,000 square kilometres). However, Finland has a population of only 5.3 million people, most of whom live in the south-central and south-western parts of the country. Finland is a sparsely populated country; there are great differences between the regions with respect to their population density. The capital of Finland is Helsinki; together with neighbouring towns, it has nearly one million inhabitants.

The language of the great majority, about 94%, is Finnish. Finland also has a Swedish-speaking minority of about 6%. Foreigners make up nearly 1.7%. Finland has two national churches: about 87% of the population belongs to the Lutheran church, and about 1% to the Greek Orthodox church. About 10% has no religious affiliation. The third language spoken in Finland is Sami (Lappish), which is spoken by approximately 1700 people (0.03% of the population) as their mother tongue. The Sami-speaking population lives in the northernmost part of Finland, Lapland, and its members also have the right to social services in their mother tongue.

The distribution of employment by sector in 1998 was as follows: agriculture and forestry 6%, industry and construction 27%, services 67%. There are over three million mobile phones, and more than 75% of households have a mobile phone. Nearly half of households have a personal computer; practically all of the primary and lower secondary, upper secondary general schools, and vocational schools and colleges are connected to the Internet.

Administration and funding

The Finnish Parliament decides on educational legislation and the general principles of education policy. The government, Ministry of Education, and National Board of Education are responsible for the implementation of this policy at the central administrative level. Almost all publicly funded education is subordinate to or supervised by the Ministry of Education.

The National Board of Education is the national planning and evaluation agency responsible for primary and secondary education as well as adult education. The

Board prepares and adopts the core curricula and is responsible for the evaluation of the Finnish education system, with the exception of institutions of higher education. Local administration is managed by the municipal authorities. There are 452 municipalities in Finland. Municipal decision-making powers are exercised by the elected municipal council. The council appoints the municipal executive board and the specialized boards. There is at least one education board or equivalent body elected by the municipal council in each municipality. Each local authority is obliged to provide basic education for all children living within the municipality.

There are approximately 4300 comprehensive schools in Finland, of which eighty-six are maintained by private education providers and thirty by the State; the remaining schools are owned by municipalities or federations of municipalities. Municipalities provide 95% and private organizations 5% of general upper secondary education. Among the providers of vocational education and training, 15% are municipalities, 35% federations of municipalities, and 40% private entities. The State maintains six special vocational institutions. Polytechnics are either municipal or private. All universities are maintained by the State and enjoy extensive autonomy.

The responsibility for educational funding and the construction of schools is divided between the State and the local authorities or other education providers. In addition to their own funding, local education providers are entitled to receive a state subsidy for the establishment and operating costs of their institutions. The funding criteria are the same irrespective of ownership. Instruction is usually free of charge at all levels of education. Basic education is completely free of charge for the pupils, but at higher levels study materials, meals, and transport may have to be paid for.

Quality of education

Finland constructed its basic education infrastructure in previous decades and is now at the stage where special emphasis must be laid on the quality of education. One tool for quality assurance is the evaluation of educational outcomes. In recent years, decision-making powers have been delegated to the local level; evaluation has thus also been a significant tool for steering educational policy and practice. Through legislation, evaluation duties have been assigned to both education providers and the authorities.

Organizational context of the current school system

The Finnish education system consists of comprehensive school (nine years for all children from the age of seven), secondary education (three years of general education in the upper secondary school or three years of vocational education), higher education, and adult education. Voluntary pre-school education is offered to six-year-old children.

Class teachers handle the lower stage, grades 1 to 6; they are responsible for the entire age group and teach all the subjects, thereby guiding the overall personal development of the pupils. Subject teachers teach the upper stage of comprehensive school, grades 7 to 9, or the upper secondary school grades, and they usually teach

one or two subjects. More than half of the pupils go on to upper secondary school after completing comprehensive school (three years, ages sixteen to eighteen) and aim to take the matriculation examination, which is usually required in order to apply to universities. A little fewer than 40% go directly to different types and levels of vocational education, some of which also open paths to the universities. However, many matriculated students go into vocational educational programmes and polytechnics after completing upper secondary school.

Students may continue their studies at polytechnics and at universities. The higher education system as a whole offers openings for 66% of the relevant age group (universities 29%, polytechnics 37%). As a result of structural changes in industry and the labour market, lifelong learning has become an important principle in education policy. Adult education is arranged by universities and polytechnics, public and private vocational institutions, adult education centres and summer universities, adult upper secondary schools, study centres, sports institutes, and music institutes.

Most adult learning takes place outside the actual educational institutions, and is provided by the employer at the workplace or in the form of in-service training. One special form of adult education is labour market training, which mainly comprises job-specific courses purchased by the labour authorities from education and training providers for the unemployed and persons threatened by unemployment.

As a rule, adult education maintains close links between the workplace and the labour market, but it does not necessarily relate to jobs and qualifications. A wide range of social studies and civic education courses are available for mature students, who also often pursue studies merely for personal gratification and self-development.

Qualification of pedagogic staff and headmasters

Following the reform of the Finnish school system in the early 1970s, the responsibility for teacher education was transferred to the universities in 1974. Some years later, in 1979, a fundamental reform of the university degree system was carried out. As a result, all first university degrees became Master's degrees, assessed by examinations and a Master's thesis consisting together of 160 credits. Teacher education for class teachers (mainly responsible for grades 1 to 6), and for subject teachers (mainly responsible for grades 7 to 9 and upper secondary school grades) thus consists of a Master's degree; this is a compulsory requirement for all teachers working in comprehensive upper secondary schools. The main subject for class teachers is education, and they apply for a study place in the department of teacher education at the university where they have chosen to study. Studies for a subject teacher begin in the appropriate faculty; in the department of teacher education students take the so-called teacher's pedagogical courses, which give them the qualifications required to teach in school.

Since 1995, kindergarten teacher education has also taken place at universities. The programme consists of 120 credits and leads to a Bachelor's degree. Teacher education for vocational education takes place in institutions specialized in this field. There are no systematic studies or requirements for head teachers in addition to the

teaching degree; however, many universities and adult education institutions arrange voluntary courses for this purpose.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Finland has nine years of comprehensive school for all children. Every Finnish citizen is required to complete comprehensive education. The comprehensive schools are primarily run by local authorities; there are, however, a few private schools. Public education in comprehensive school is free of charge; the government contributes to the financing of all schools. In practice, all the costs of education are financed by the local municipalities. This includes books, supplies, meals, and even medical and dental check-ups. The pupils also receive one free warm meal a day; this tradition is already fifty years old. Transportation is arranged for those children who live more than five kilometres from school.

Children start school at the age of seven. Before comprehensive school, six-year-olds may attend voluntary pre-school at a day-care centre or comprehensive school. In the near future, the aim is to offer all children one year of free pre-school education in association with the local comprehensive school. Compulsory schooling lasts nine years; almost all children attend comprehensive school. The government determines the core subjects for all children. The government also determines the national objectives for education and the number of hours allocated to each subject. The school year consists of 190 school days, which are divided into autumn and spring terms. The autumn term begins in the middle of August and ends before Christmas. The spring term begins at the beginning of January and ends at the beginning of June. According to statistics, 99.7% of children from a specific year (about 65,000) complete compulsory schooling. The drop-out rate is thus one of the lowest in the world.

Pre-primary education

Pre-school (pre-primary) education in Finland consists of the systematic education of six-year-olds who will start comprehensive school the following year. Pre-school education is provided on a voluntary basis at day-care centres and in special school classes in comprehensive school. There are no specific admission requirements for the pre-school program, and its purpose is to create a learning environment which offers an opportunity for the pupil to grow and to develop. There is no formal evaluation, but the children's development is followed closely. The curriculum is not divided into different subjects or lesson hours; rather, the activities are organized according to different subject fields and objectives. Over 60% of potential pupils receive pre-school education and the percentage is increasing continuously. The aim is to expand pre-school provision to cover all six-year-olds in the immediate future. Furthermore, kindergarten is provided before pre-school education for younger children.

The comprehensive school

'The objective of basic education is to support pupils' human growth and ethically responsible membership of society, and to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary in life. The instruction shall promote equality in society and the pupils' abilities to participate in education and to otherwise develop themselves during their lives' (Basic Education Act 628/1998). All Finnish citizens are obliged to enter education at the age of seven and to complete the comprehensive school curriculum. This obligation expires, however, when pupils reach the age of seventeen. Pupils are free to acquire the skills required in the curriculum outside of formal schooling; in practice, however, almost all attend the nine-year comprehensive school.

Comprehensive school is meant for the whole age group; it provides general education and is free of charge for all citizens. Children start school in the year in which they turn seven. Children can choose, if possible, their comprehensive school from those located within the municipality in which they live. The home municipality is obliged to organize teaching for those children who for health or other reasons cannot attend the ordinary school. Only a very small proportion of the age group does not complete comprehensive school (in 1993-94 the figure was approximately 0.2%). All schools are co-educational and an extra tenth year may be provided for those who have completed their compulsory education. After completing comprehensive school, pupils have fulfilled the requirements for compulsory education.

The network of comprehensive schools covers the entire country. Schools offering instruction in the first six grades are situated particularly close together in order to avoid unreasonably long school bus journeys. If the school journey is over five kilometres long, transportation is provided free of charge. Teaching groups in basic education are formed according to year classes, i.e. forms. During the first six years, class teachers are responsible for classroom instruction; they teach all or most subjects. Instruction in the three highest classes (grades 7 to 9) is usually in the form of subject teaching, where subject teachers are responsible for different subjects. Basic education also includes pupil counselling and, if necessary, special education.

Broad national objectives and the allocation of teaching time to instruction in different subjects and to counselling are decided by the government. The National Board of Education is responsible for the common framework of the curriculum. Based on this, each provider of education prepares the local basic education curriculum. The basic education syllabus includes at least the following subjects: mother tongue and literature (Finnish or Swedish), the other national language (Swedish or Finnish), and foreign languages. Environmental studies, civic education, religion or ethics, history, and social studies form another sector of the curriculum. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and geography comprise the scientific courses in the curriculum, while physical education, music, visual arts, crafts, and home economics provide more practical instruction.

Upper secondary education

After completing the comprehensive school programme, pupils can choose between general upper secondary education and vocational upper secondary education. Gen-

eral upper secondary education consists of general education courses to prepare for the matriculation examination. The principal objective of the vocational programmes is vocational competence. Approximately 94% of each age group starts general or vocational upper secondary studies and some 82% complete this educational level. Lower secondary education, on the other hand, is part of compulsory basic education. About half of those completing comprehensive school opt for upper secondary school. Admission to an upper secondary school is competitive and based on the pupil's record in comprehensive school.

Upper secondary school

Upper secondary school provides three years of general education for pupils who are usually aged from sixteen to nineteen. The purpose of upper secondary school is to prepare pupils to qualify for all forms of higher education. The upper secondary school ends with the national matriculation examination, success in which provides pupils with the general qualification to apply to a university or to an establishment for higher vocational studies.

The upper secondary school curriculum is three years long, but pupils may complete their education in a longer or a shorter time. The national matriculation examination consists of tests in the mother tongue (Finnish/Swedish/Sami), the second national language (Finnish/Swedish), the first foreign language, and either mathematics or general studies. Pupils may take additional exams in order to improve their possibilities in higher education. The teaching programme is divided into seventy-five courses, forty-five to forty-nine of which are compulsory. Some upper secondary schools specialize in a particular subject or field. Because of the different options, personal curricula and thus personal progress can be quite individual. There is a system of counselling available to pupils for guidance in learning, career planning, and choice of further studies. The same kind of counselling is available in comprehensive school. The purpose is to guarantee that pupils have a clear plan for their future and are aware of their options and choices.

There are also upper secondary schools for adults in addition to the usual day schools. These are intended for persons aged eighteen and older, and instruction usually takes place in the evenings. Practical and arts subjects are not taught in adult upper secondary general schools, and there is also less face-to-face interaction than in day schools. About 57% of pupils in upper secondary school are girls; this situation has been unchanged for some years. The network of upper secondary general schools covers the entire country. The schools are therefore rather small. In the 1998-99 school year, day schools had 253 pupils on average. The largest schools had over 800 pupils, and there were six with fewer than fifty. Mergers of schools in recent years have increased the average size of the day schools in some towns.

Vocational upper secondary education

In vocational upper secondary education there are basically two learning avenues: vocational institutions and apprenticeship training. The completion of an initial vocational qualification takes, in principle, three years, depending on the background of the pupils. Instruction is given in multi-disciplinary or specialized voca-

tional institutions. A three-year vocational qualification gives the right to progress to higher education. Applications to study are made through the national joint application procedure.

Initial vocational education is highly differentiated; there are, however, some common subjects for all pupils: the mother tongue, the second national language, mathematics, physics and chemistry, many kinds of social studies, physical education and health, and arts and culture. The courses primarily aim at the acquisition of the vocational skills necessary for work. Opportunities for individual progress in the study programmes have been increased. Instruction is also offered to adults, and is adjusted to their circumstances. Apprenticeship training has been systematically developed in recent years. Apprenticeship training leads to the same vocational qualifications as those provided by the vocational institutions. The pupil's knowledge and skills are measured by a skills examination. An apprenticeship is a fixed-term agreement between the apprentice and the employer; the length varies from six months to four years. Most apprenticeship training involves learning in actual work situations supplemented by theoretical instruction at educational institutions. During the apprenticeship, the apprentice is paid a salary that is usually equivalent to the minimum wage for the field. The employer receives compensation from the government for the costs of training the apprentice.

Vocational upper secondary education offers a rich variety of alternatives from which to choose. The basic principle is to combine good professional skills with a solid general education. Individual growth and development, and the cultivation of independent initiative are central aims in all vocational education.

Higher education: polytechnics

After upper secondary education, pupils can continue their studies at universities or at polytechnics. Polytechnics (AMK institutions) provide non-university, vocational higher education for those who have completed either the matriculation examination or an upper secondary level vocational qualification. They are mostly multi-disciplinary and consist of several departments. The completion of a polytechnic degree takes three and a half to four years (140 to 160 credits). The Finnish polytechnic system was constructed during the 1990s to create a non-university sector in higher education. It was founded on the institutions that previously provided post-secondary vocational education; these were transformed into a nationwide network of regional institutions of higher education, i.e. polytechnics. They are maintained by municipalities, federations of municipalities, or private organizations.

Polytechnics provide instruction for professionals in the sectors of natural resources, technology and communications, business and administration, tourism, catering and institutional management, health care and social services, culture, and the humanities and education. The study programme consists of basic and professional courses, optional studies, theoretical and practical courses to boost occupational skills, and the completion of a thesis. The Ministry of Education approves the degree programmes, but the curricula are independently determined by the polytechnics. Polytechnics select their students themselves; application takes place through the national joint application procedure. Lecturers are required to have a

Master's degree and principal lecturers must have an academic postgraduate degree. Teachers are required to have completed pedagogical studies and have three years of work experience. Basic funding for polytechnics is granted by the State and local authorities. Instruction is free of charge.

Higher education: universities

There are twenty universities in Finland: ten multi-disciplinary universities, three universities of technology, three schools of economics and business administration, and four art academies. In addition, university-level education is provided at one military academy. The network of universities covers all regions of the country and provides a student place for almost one third of the age group. All universities are owned by the State, engage in both education and research, and have the right to award doctorates. The completion of a Bachelor's degree (from 1 August 2005 comprising 180 credits) takes three years and that of a Master's degree (300 credits) about five years.

Universities select their own students independently. Competition for student places in higher education is intense, and an annual intake quota applies to all fields of study. Various types of entrance examinations form a central part of the selection process. The total intake of the universities provides a study place for about one third of the relevant age group. Students who have completed a higher degree may go on to take a doctorate-level degree. Graduate schools were established in 1995 to supplement the existing arrangements for researcher training. The purpose of the reform was to increase the efficiency of doctoral education. The graduate schools form a network ranging from units concentrated in a single faculty or locality to nationwide establishments combining the resources of several faculties. The graduate schools cover all the main areas of research.

Women receive over half of the degrees at all levels except the doctorate, where they earn 40% of degrees granted. The proportion of women rose rapidly in the 1990s. Women represent over 80% of the students in health science, veterinary medicine, and pharmacy. Students do not have to pay for tuition and they can apply for financial assistance from public funds.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Language programme

Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish; both are obligatory subjects in comprehensive school. For the majority, Swedish is in practice a foreign language, while most of the Swedish-speaking population is bilingual. Both languages are quite small, and the need for a world language is urgent. English is the language that most pupils learn as a first official foreign language. About 20% of lower secondary level pupils learn German and about 10% French, mainly voluntarily. The language programme is thus substantial in size and occupies a large part of the curriculum. In practice this means that there is less room left for the other subjects. The struggle for course content is constant between the different subjects in

the curriculum; the position of Swedish and religion in the school curriculum is a special problem at certain intervals. Currently the situation seems to be balanced.

School-based curricula

During the 1990s a great change took place in national school administration. The centrally-governed system was transformed to a decentralized system. The practical consequence was that the National Board of Education prescribed only a loose curriculum framework and the schools had to write their own curricula. This reform emphasized the role of the teachers; in practice teachers became curriculum-makers. During the first round of curriculum design, teachers engaged in extensive discussions on the purpose of schooling and the aims and goals of the curriculum. These discussions took place among the teaching staff and with parents. Pupils also had the opportunity to participate in the creation of the curriculum. Later development has been less energetic, although the idea behind the original decentralization was continuous reform of the curriculum.

Information society

The government is implementing an extensive information society programme in all fields of administration. During the 1990s, Finnish educational institutions were equipped with computers and connected to information networks with the aid of increased state support. By and large, the technological objectives that were set have already been achieved, and the focus of development has shifted to content production, teacher education, and utilization of information networks.

Marketing and specialization

Increasing decentralization has brought many market characteristics to academic life. Parents and pupils may choose to a certain degree between various schools, which introduces competition and profiling into curriculum design. Schools try to appeal to parents and pupils, and have started to call them clients to whom they sell schooling. This phenomenon is, however, restricted because there are practically no private schools in the country. Nevertheless, competition and profiling have made the atmosphere more competitive, and this has also resulted in increased evaluation. As a consequence, comparisons between schools have increased, creating a certain informal ranking among schools. Schools are also increasingly seeking to attract private money to augment public funding. In summary, it may be said that the second wave of decentralization has brought a continuous and controlling system of evaluation that may cancel the advantages achieved through local curriculum design. An additional feature of this process is the continuing closure of small rural schools as the number of children diminishes. The children are transported to larger school units despite the protests of parents.

Increasing multicultural features

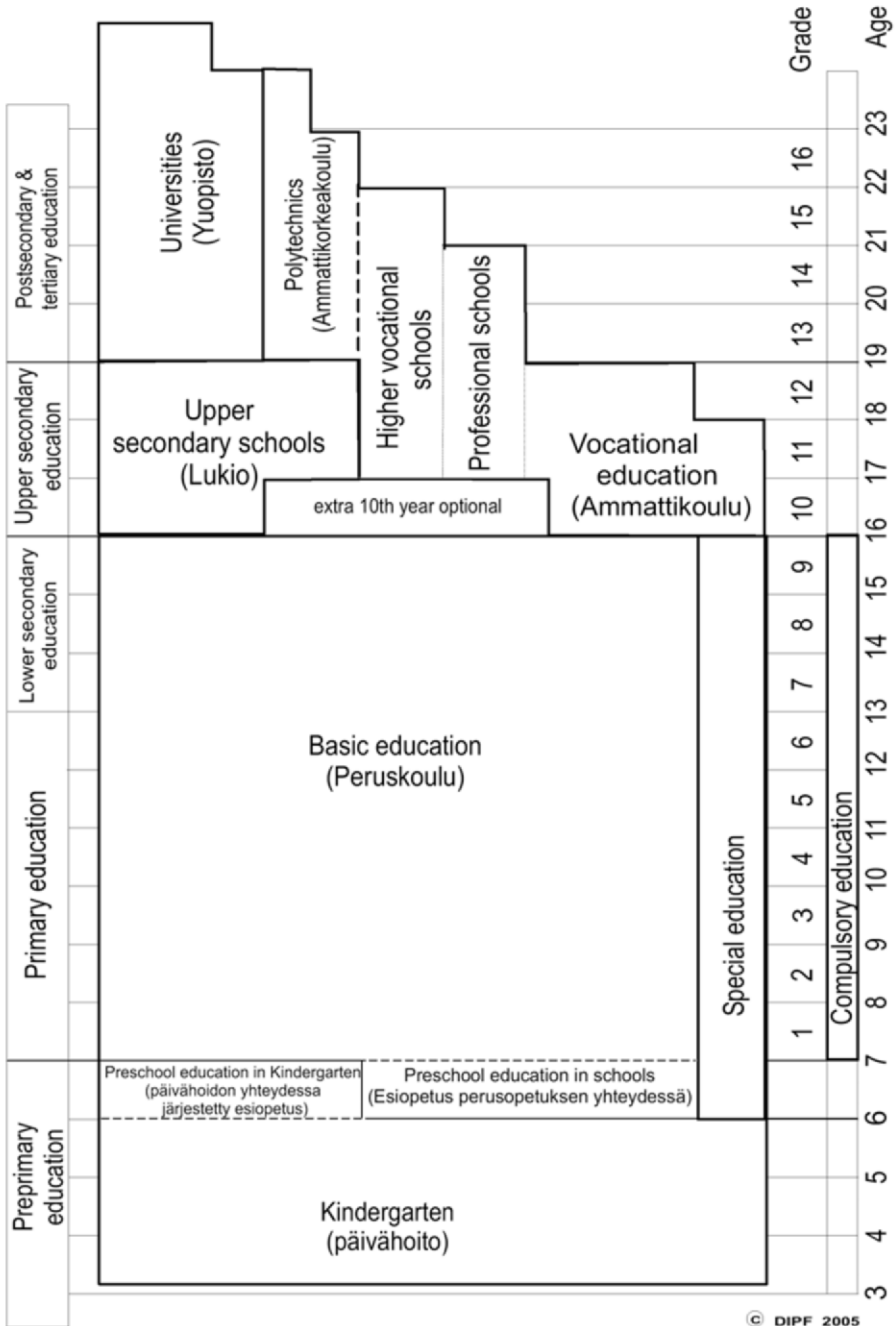
Finland has been an extremely homogenous country with regard to race, religion, and language. Economic equality has also been relatively balanced; extreme devia-

tions have been negligible compared with most EU countries. In recent years, however, the situation has changed greatly. With the influence of many kinds of immigrants, a cultural diversity has emerged that has changed school life to some degree. The total number of immigrants is not particularly large; they are, however, concentrated in certain regions of the country. It is easy to predict that increasing multicultural features will affect the development of curricula and create new requirements in the future.

References

- CEDEFOP, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities: Vocational Education and Training in Finland. 1997.
- Havén, H. (Ed.): Education in Finland. Statistics and indicators. SVT Education 1999:4. Statistics Finland. Helsinki 1999.
- Ministry of Education: Developments in Education 1990-1920 Finland. Reference Publications 16. Helsinki 1992.
- Ministry of Education: Education & Research. Development Plan for Education and University Research for 1995-2000. Helsinki 1996.
- Ministry of Education: Higher Education Policy in Finland. Helsinki 1998.
- Ministry of Education: Education in Finland. Helsinki 1999.
- Ministry of Education: Information Strategy for Education and Research 2000-2004. Implementation Plan. <http://www.minedu.fi/minedu/education/priorities.html>
- National Board of Education: Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School 1994. Helsinki 1994.
- National Board of Education: Framework Curriculum for the Senior Secondary School 1994. Helsinki 1994.
- National Board of Education, Helsinki 1999 and database of Eurydice network, Eurybase 1999: The Education System of Finland 1998.

Finland



Wolfgang Hörner

France

History of the school system

Cultural context and cornerstones of the historical development of schooling

The French educational system received its theoretical foundations through the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789; the basis of its real shape, however, was conferred only at the end of the 19th century by the education acts of the Third Republic concerning, in particular, primary education. Indeed, the promoters of the French Revolution did not have the financial means at their disposal to realize their ideas concerning 'education for all'. The priority of educational policy under Napoleon's regime, however, was rather the extension of secondary education (the *lycée*) in order to train the elite for the new state (Hörner 1996, p. 83).

The construction of a primary education system was an initiative of the Third Republic. Induced by the defeat of 1871, interpreted as the 'victory of the Prussian school master', the founders of the new republic wanted to create a system of compulsory education able to integrate all children of France (even Basques or Bretons) in love of the unique French fatherland. Their central aim was to instil them the loyalty of (secular) republican values based on the ideas of enlightenment in opposition to the Catholic schools of past times. Whereas in many other western countries the process of secularisation ended in a common non-denominational Christian morality as a basis of the values transmitted in school, the French notion of '*laïcité*' (secularity) as the ideological foundation of the republican school had an imminent anti-clerical character, as the Catholic church in the past had sided with the enemies of the republic.

According to this logic, the foundations of French compulsory education were laid in a series of education acts whose essentials are still valid. Ever since then, school has had to be: compulsory (*obligatoire*), free of charge (*gratuit*) and secular (*laïque*) i.e. ideologically neutral. Religious instruction was only possible outside school. In order to allow parents to send their children to religious instruction one day of the week was kept free of lessons.

The school legislation of the late 19th century only concerned primary education. Secondary education was a quite different part of the school system having its own elementary classes, as distinct from primary schools for children of bourgeois families. As it was also possible for performing primary pupils to go to the upper cycle of primary education (*école primaire supérieure*) or to follow complementary courses (*cours complémentaires*) in order to prepare the entry examination of a teacher training school (*école normale*) whose completion gave the equivalent of the baccalaureate, one can say that until the second half of the 20th century there were in France two different school systems which had no real contact between them: the primary education cycle with the possibility for the best pupils to go to higher edu-

cation by a devious route of primary teacher training on the one hand, and the system of secondary education with its own elementary classes on the other. It was only after the Second World War that an entrance examination to secondary education for primary pupils was introduced and the elementary classes for secondary schools were abolished - the very last ones in the late 1950s (cf. also Prost 1986).

Reforms and innovations

In fact, the first attempts to create a common school for all go back to the end of the First World War. After the Second World War these endeavours gained fresh impetus. From 1945 to 1959 there were many attempts at a great school -reform, but these propositions did not receive a majority in parliament. It was only at the beginning of the Fifth Republic (the era of de Gaulle) that a rather pragmatic process of secondary school reform was initiated in small steps. At its provisional end there was a new Education Act in 1975, promoted by the Conservative majority. The new act provided a school system organized at different horizontal levels. Its core was a non-selective secondary school for all young people, embracing grades 6 to 9. After this common core a ramified system of upper secondary education embraced different tracks of general, technical and vocational education. This fundamental structure was only modified in certain details during subsequent years. It was confirmed in the Education Acts of 1989 and 2005.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

In the collective awareness of the French nation education has a pronounced value. This value has its historical roots in the consciousness of the French nation concerning its cultural mission to the world (*rayonnement de la civilisation française*) that goes back to the era of Enlightenment. Indeed, this idea of Enlightenment has an universal range: the 'light of reason' must shine for everybody in the same way without distinction. Moreover, French has been for long centuries the language of the crowned heads of Europe and is still nowadays the language of diplomacy.

So, cultural self-consciousness is closely linked to French language, literature and philosophy. This particularity is rooted in the history of French education: in the 17th century the French interpretation of European humanism in the *collèges* of the Jesuit Fathers was marked by a rhetoric character (whereas in Germany it was rather the philosophical side that was stressed). The great value of language-based education as a favourite expression of national culture is indicated by the broad public debates of curricular reforms in mother tongue education or, as another example the great interest that mass media have on the national level in the topics of the written final examination (*baccalauréat*) in the field of mother tongue education or philosophy.

The high societal value of schooling in general has its roots also in the revolutionary impetus of the principle of *égalité* as one of the three fundamental concepts

of French society. The link between school and society is provided by the meritocratic principle: the allocation of social positions is provided by personal achievement, initially grounded in school achievement. Thus school, as an objective institution, distributing life chances according to its own criteria, assumes an immense importance in the life of society. The fact that since the 1960s French sociologists have demonstrated again and again the subtle social mechanisms by which school serves the reproduction of existing social conditions is not a contradiction but rather complementary to the first observation.

The uncontested value of school is apparently grounded in students' awareness too, for students in French schools record a significantly greater contentment with their schools compared for example to German students (Czerwenka 1990).

The high societal value of schooling is legally reflected in the guiding principles of the Education Act of 1989 published under the symbolic date of July 14th 1989, two hundred years after the French Revolution (see Loi 1989): The Education Act states that by the end of the century, 80% of children are to enter the last grade of upper secondary education obtaining the right to pass the *baccalauréat* examination. This aim meant not less than the doubling of successful secondary education leaver rates (in 1986 only 47% of an age class arrived at the last grade of secondary education). 'Secondary education for all' as a 'national aim' in France is in no way a topic of certain (left wing) parties, but constitutes a political consensus of the political class independently from the political orientation.

However one thing has to be made clear: the *baccalauréat*, as the final secondary examination (see below), concerns not only the general academic track, but includes technical and vocational tracks too, giving together the right to enter Higher Education. These technical diplomas already give a certain qualification for the labour-market. Nearly half of all secondary education diplomas giving access to Higher Education concern these 'double qualifications'. The official statistical data of the *bacheliers* in 2000 show that this educational policy target has been (slightly) missed: the quota of successful school leavers was 62% (Renault 2001).

These guiding principles of educational policy mirror a phenomenon that has characterized the French education system since the beginning of the 19th century: The tension between egalitarian mass schooling and the forming of elites has its historical roots in the afore-mentioned double tracks of modern French schooling in the revolutionary conceptual heritage taken over in the strict meritocratic hierarchy of the Napoleonic state. The tension gets its structural forms in the polarity between the claim for 'secondary education for all' and a highly selective tripartite system of Higher Education with the 'Grandes Ecoles' at the top (see below).

Socio-economic context

The focus of educational policy is linked to the *baccalauréat*, for this examination can be considered as the central tool for determining a person's place in French society. This logic corresponds to the guiding data of the French economic system, both on the macro- and on the micro-level. In French industrial plants, there is a great number of highly qualified people on the basis of a *baccalauréat* compared to

other European countries, a fact that evidently affects the place of *bacheliers* on the labour market (Maurice et al. 1982).

Such a policy, oriented to mass education on a high level, has evidently to overcome a certain number of social obstacles. In 1999/2000 (latest data available – see RRS 2004, p. 71) 5.9% of all children in primary education had a foreign nationality. Almost half of them - 45.9% - came from North-Africa, 12.9% from Black-Africa and 10% from Portugal. In the same year the immigrant quota for secondary education was 5.1% – it fell to 4.3% in 2003/04. Since the 1980s the percentage of immigrant children is constantly decreasing. The falling rate of immigrants in school is due to a more restrictive immigration policy and to an easier naturalisation policy. However, this form of naturalisation does not necessarily mean social integration. On the other hand, the immigrant rate shows regional disparities: it is particularly high in the districts of Paris, Corsica and Strasbourg. In any case, the integration of the children with a immigration background constitutes a great challenge to the French school system (Lacerda 2000).

Social position of the teaching profession

Traditionally, French primary teachers had a tremendous role in the society of the Third Republic as they had to disseminate the values of the nation in the newly established republic against the opposition of the Catholic church still powerful in rural areas. These '*black hussars of the republic*' had the quasi-religious mission as of 'secular' priests and hence a high social standing – alongside the doctor and the Catholic priest in rural society.

Secondary teachers had an important social role too. They were to disseminate French civilisation – the fruit of Enlightenment. For the rest, the teaching profession was not unattractive. Teachers on the two levels were civil servants, when they had passed their *concours* (entry competition, see below), they needed not fear unemployment, and they had a relatively good salary particularly in secondary education.

Today things have changed a great deal. With the rise of media society, the cultural mission of the teachers has diminished even in rural areas: the teacher no longer has a monopoly of knowledge neither in relation to pupils, nor parents. However, even under the changed conditions, the teacher has maintained certain social prerogatives: he (or she - the profession has now a majority of women, even in secondary education) is still member of the civil service (*fonctionnaire*). Primary teachers' salary increased with their newly gained academic status, which compensates to a certain degree their loss of social prestige. Moreover teachers still use to have particular roles in the community. More than other professions they have leading functions in cultural or civic associations: for example theatre clubs, clubs for the protection of environment, political parties and trade unions (Thevenin/Compagnon 2005, pp. 54f.). The self-concept of teachers is to a significant extent revalued by these roles. As for primary teachers, there is a relatively stable feeling of social recognition, particularly emphasized by young *professeurs des écoles* (see below). This is not surprising for their status has improved. At the beginning of the 1990s secondary teachers did experience a feeling of increased social prestige concerning their profession, but this feeling changed later on; in 2002 only one third of secondary

teachers felt that their status was sufficiently recognized by society (French Report Working Group 2004, pp. 238f.). Therefore it is not by accident that after 1999 several official reports about the situation of teachers have been ordered by the ministry. They confirm what has been explained above (e.g. Obin 2002).

School and the role of the family

The value attributed to schools by students has its equivalent in the case of parents. The numerous parents' associations and their activities in the field of educational policy are indicators of the great importance that the latter attribute to school. This interest in educational matters is reflected in TV and print media at the beginning of the school year after the summer holidays (*la rentrée*), which in France is the signal for the 'rebirth' of the whole social life. As for school life, school administration communicates all innovations via the media, parents go public with all problems still present, being ready to organise local and national strikes if the conditions of learning in the schools are not satisfactory.

Since 1968 parents have been formally represented in school councils (in primary schools) or administration councils (in secondary schools). This has been affirmed in the Education Act of 1989. The parents' associations constitute an important interface between school and parents in France. They alone have the right to present voting lists for the election of parents' representatives. The elected representatives of the parents in the school councils are entitled to participate in decision-making concerning the school profile (*projet d'école*), the school rules, the organisation of the week (free Saturday or not) etc. In secondary schools the budget of the schools is approved in the corresponding council too.

Another level of parents' representation is the 'class council' which decides on the further (school) career of the pupils. On the regional level, in the departmental commissions of allocation of the students parents representatives help decide upon the school types in which students may continue. But parents are present, too, in consultative bodies on the national level.

As for the personal level according to a 1998 survey 90% of the parents declared that they had at least one meeting with teachers during the school year, but for most of them it was in the setting of a parent's evening, only 35% had a personal appointment with the teacher. It is striking that in most cases only the mothers hold the contact with the school and, finally, contacts are strongly linked to social background. Lower class or immigrant parents rather seldom come to the school (French Working Group 2004, p. 230).

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, philosophy of governance

The right of access to education and vocational training is accorded by the French Constitution of 1958. In the 1789 tradition, instruction in schools has to be without any influence of the churches (private schools excepted), schooling on all levels of the educational system is organised or at least controlled by the state. The actual key texts in school legislation are the above mentioned Education Act of 1989, replaced

by the recent Education Act of 2005 whose regulations will only come into force progressively. The historic Act of 1989 published the day of the bicentenary of the French Revolution defined education as ‘first national priority’ (Art. 1,1). The ‘national target’ was to give to all young people up to the year 2000 at least a vocational qualification on the level of a qualified worker (which means the radical reduction of existing drop outs) and, as already mentioned, an enormous rise of the quota of students preparing a *baccalauréat*.

The traditional centralised structure of the curriculum system will be maintained (with the ‘intrusion’ of external experts as consultants in the development of the national curricula). On the school level the divergence to the centralist model is even clearer: individual schools will have to elaborate individual development plans (*projets d’établissements* – cf. Obin/Cros 1991) which allow particular profiles of the individual schools – however, it is evident that all this has to happen within the framework of the national targets.

The functioning of universities is essentially organised by a Higher Education Act dating from 1984. The fundamental legislation in the field of Further Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) outside schools dates from 1971, actualised by an Act on Lifelong Learning of May 2004 extending the obligations of the firms to finance actions of continuing education for their staff.

The French state is highly important in its role of organising and controlling education (see below). Moreover, it has the monopoly of controlling examinations. All school exams – including firm-based vocational training – are organised by the state that awards the ‘national’ diploma. School administration has its central point still on the national level, the Ministry of National Education. All teachers are recruited and paid by the National Ministry (except assistant teachers with temporary contracts). On the regional level there are 28 regional areas of school administration, the ‘*académies*’. These *académies* coincide in the most cases with the political ‘regions’ created within the framework of ‘deconcentration policy’ in the 1980s. Similar to the political regions the significance of the *académies*, too, grew perceptibly over the last 20 years. On the top of each regional area of school administration, there is a *Recteur d’Académie* nominated by the Minister. At department level, the *Recteur* is represented by an inspector (*Inspecteur d’Académie*) who is the primary education supervisor. The pedagogical supervision of secondary teachers is in the hands of a special inspectorate (*Inspection générale*) that works on the national level. The municipalities do not have particular competences in the educational system – they have only the responsibility for the material infrastructure of preschools and primary schools.

The Ministry of Agriculture traditionally has its own network of secondary schools in rural areas. In 2003 this encompassed no more than 3% of secondary students. The percentage of private schools in the rural sector however is very high (about 60%).

The link between school and society is manifested in consultative bodies which are to represent stakeholder’s interests (parents’ association, representations of the social partners etc.). These bodies have to give their advice in all important questions of educational policy, though the Ministry is not obliged to follow it. Since the

notable efforts made in the 1980s to de-concentrate French administration, schools have become 'local public instructional institutions' (*établissements publics locaux d'enseignement – EPLE*) (Auduc 1998, pp. 58ff.). This means that only the teachers' salaries are in the responsibility of the central state; all material costs have to be assumed by local bodies.

The headmasters on the secondary level have a double function: On the one hand, they are representatives of the Ministry (the central state) and therefore responsible for the execution of central orders. On the other hand, they have to execute the decision of the administration council, the 'parliament' of the school chaired by the head. The administration council is composed in equal parts of teachers, students, parents and representatives of the school administration. It has the right to make decisions about strictly defined issues like the school budget, the school profile (*projet scolaire*) etc.

The school's pedagogical autonomy resides essentially in the splitting up of the global number of teaching hours given by the school administration, the division of the students in classes and learning groups, the selection of curriculum content specific to the school profile and the definition of optional learning activities. Thus a compromise between the central structure of the national curriculum and the implementation of particular school centred curricula is attained. It is striking however, that most of these domains of 'pedagogical autonomy' are linked either to optional curriculum elements or to the scope given between the minima and maxima in the timetables.

Financing

Almost the totality of the French school system is financed by the public budget. In primary education the central state pays the teachers, whereas the costs of non-teaching staff – quite considerable in French system, where the school day only ends in the late afternoon – are taken in charge by the local authorities. In secondary education, the financial contribution of the local communities is diminishing. The ministry of education also covers the cost for non-teaching staff, though the local authorities have to pay for school transport.

As for the level of *lycées*, the functional and investment costs are in charge of the Regional Councils (*Conseil régional*). However, on this level, private enterprises participate in financing of technical and vocational schooling by paying an apprenticeship tax, if they do not train apprentices themselves. In private schools the state takes care of the costs of the teaching staff and an important part of their functional costs, if the private schools follow the public curricula, by signing a contract with the state authorities.

Public – Private Schooling

The great majority of French students attend public (state) schools. The proportion of private schooling in 2004 was only 13,7% in primary education, 20,3% in secondary education (RERS 2004, pp. 61 and 79). Almost all of these private (mostly Catholic) schools have a contract with state authorities which means that they follow the public curricula and they are submitted to state control. By this they have the

double advantage of receiving state subsidies and having the right to take public examinations.

Historically these private schools are a concession made by the secular state to compensate for the exclusion of religious instruction from state schools. Parents ought to have the possibility of sending their children to a denominational school, giving religious instruction if they want it. Meanwhile the function of private schooling has changed. The religious element has all but disappeared, private Catholic education on the secondary level has become an opportunity in particular for less able children of the upper middle classes to prepare the *baccalauréat* under better conditions than in the state schools (smaller classes), a fact that gave to these schools the nickname of *boîte à bachot* (*baccalaureate boxes*). Nowadays, after the introduction of the common *collège*, middle class parents often consider private schools as a means to avoid public primary schools or *collèges* of their district situated in a 'difficult' area (e.g. with a high percentage of immigrants). This fact is complained by official reports on educational policy (La mixité 2002).

In any case historical reasons give rise to great regional differences in the net of private schools. So in Brittany (Bretagne) the quota of private schools attains 40%.

General standards of the school education system

On the macro-level of the curriculum system, the central structures are still almost unbroken. The curriculum content is defined for each subject in national curricula (*programmes*). Their implementation is supervised by a national inspectorate (*Inspection générale*). The elaboration of the national curricula has been (and formally still is) the task of the *Inspection Générale* although in the 1990s a 'National Curriculum Board' (*Conseil National des Programmes*) was appointed in order to create a broader platform for the elaboration of curriculum innovation guidelines oriented to societal needs. Thus the new curricula in the 1990 were worked out by a new type of commission in which more teachers and representatives of Higher Education participated. It was only after a long process of discussion of these curriculum drafts among the teachers that the new curricula became based upon students' competences rather than upon curriculum content. The role of this board was strengthened in the new legislation of 2005.

Quality management

Quality monitoring traditionally is carried out by the inspectorate on the one hand, and by (anonymous) national examinations, in particular the baccalaureate giving the right of access to Higher Education, on the other hand. The written *baccalauréat* examinations elaborated in a very sophisticated procedure are the same for all candidates of an Académie. In the collective awareness of the French people the anonymous character of the examination is the guarantee of its objectiveness. It distinguishes not only the successful students but their schools and their teachers too. Another old mode of quality control is the school inspectorate visit during classes. The inspectors have to evaluate the quality of teaching and to make suggestions for its improvement; thus they are an important criterion as for the promotion of teachers.

The most important newer form of student evaluation is the national assessment of student performance introduced in 1990. The assessment consists of national target based tests at the beginning of each new learning cycle, if the students have reached the educational objectives of the previous cycle. These assessments are made in an alternating rhythm at the beginning of the 3rd, the 6th and the 10th grade. These assessments are not to rank the students' nor the teachers' individual performances, but to inform the teachers of the new classes about possible deficiencies, in order to enable them to attack these problems by means of more individualised and modularised teaching. In other words they are diagnostic assessments. Moreover, these evaluations have a second function. They may assess the performance of the key elements of the national educational system as a whole.

Supporting Systems

The problem of school failure (*échec scolaire*) was considered as a special challenge by all French governments, in particular, but not only, by those constituted by left wing parties. School failure very often goes together with social deprivation. In particular in the suburbs of great agglomerations like Paris, Lyon or Marseille, but in many cities of middle size too, there are social focuses – high density of immigrants and of people without work – with all signs of social anomie (vandalism, violence etc.) and with its consequences for schooling. Already in the 1980s, the French government tried to react to this situation by defining ‘priority areas of education’ (*Zones d’Education Prioritaires – ZEP* and *Réseaux d’Education Prioritaires – REP*). The guiding idea of this campaign was that the ‘School of the Republic’ must combat inequality of opportunity – *égalité* being one of the three guiding principles of the French society since 1789. Therefore the deprived zones of French suburbs – or lonely rural areas – could only be helped by positive discrimination. Measures of positive discrimination have been special funding for special pedagogical measures, special in-service training for teachers teaching in smaller classes, mounting projects, opening their classrooms to the neighbourhood etc. For the official reports about these measures, the *ZEP* are rather successful, in the sense that they prevent social desegregation and still more school failing in these areas. In many ‘burning points’ (critical locations) the special pedagogical measures served to re-motivate young people to attend school and to get taste for learning (e.g. *Education et Formations* 2001, in particular Chaveau 2001).

A remaining problem, made evident during the campaign of the *ZEP*, was how to resolve the problem of the special needs of immigrant children. In the *ZEP* areas the percentage of immigrants is on average about 20%, but it may increase up to 67%. Some critiques of educational policy in France point out that the school system considers immigrant children rather a problem than a chance for cultural enrichment. Given that two of the most important languages of immigrants in France are Arabic and Portuguese it would be good to introduce these languages as second languages in *ZEP*'s with a high quota of immigrants – not only in order to show that they are very important languages in the actual world, but also that they have made very important contributions to the world culture.

But also in ‘normal’ areas, the French school system has a variety of measures for supporting pupils with low performance or learning difficulties. Traditionally, repeating a class is extremely frequent for underachievers. There is no special social discrimination associated with this, at least not in secondary education. The statistics of students finishing secondary education indicates that French students theoretically have 12 years for the attainment of the baccalaureate, but in reality two thirds of all students repeat at least one class during their primary or secondary education before arriving in the *classe terminale* (Dix-huit questions 2003, p. 26).

But from the beginning, French primary education has a certain number of special support measures in order to help pupils whose school success is problematic. These support systems are evidently for immigrants too. Mostly there are classes with a reduced number of pupils, serving to link weaker achievers to normal classes by using adequate pedagogical methods (measures of differentiation). Even if these classes are not especially created for immigrant children, these are clearly over represented at twice the quota they come up to in the whole population. Especially for immigrant pupils, special ‘Initiation Classes’ may be created on the primary level, ‘Introductory Classes’ in the *collège*.

In lower secondary education since the end of the 1990s ‘differentiated learning ways’ (*parcours différenciés*) have been initiated to overcome the problem of heterogeneous classes. This means that teachers are free to adapt their own curriculum to the learning abilities of the individual students, including special support actions for the weakest (Derouet 2003, pp. 133ff.).

The current school system

General structure

Since 1975 France has had a horizontally structured education system beginning with non-compulsory but almost inclusive preschool education for children from 2 to 6 years of age functionally linked with a five-grade elementary school. All pupils then follow a non-selective lower secondary school followed by a differentiated upper secondary level including academic, technical-academic and technical-vocational tracks. It is only on this level that the common curriculum is differentiated according to the desired diploma. Higher Education has a tripartite hierarchical system with post-secondary non-academic institutions like the *Sections de Techniciens Supérieurs* and the *Instituts Universitaires de Technologie* on the lower level, the (classical) universities in the middle and the highly selective *Grandes Ecoles* at the top.

Pre-primary education

Preschool education is offered free of charge for all children from 2 to 6 years as a part of the regular school system. Even if it is not compulsory – compulsory schooling begins at the age of 6 and goes up to 16 – almost all children from 3 to 6 years and 40% of all children between 2 and 3 years attend the *école maternelle*. As with all types of schooling in France, preschool education too goes from the early morning to the late afternoon (including lunch if wanted). The inclusive character of this

educational policy is an efficient measure to promote social and family policy: indeed France combines a high rate of working women and a high birth rate for which it ranks second in the European Union (behind Ireland). Preschool education in France therefore has a triple aim: supporting child development, preparing for compulsory schooling and relieving parents. An obstacle to greater pedagogical success is the high number of pupils in a group (still more than 25 children). The teachers in the *école maternelle* have the same status and the same type of teacher training as the primary teachers. As in the 1990s a common teacher training structure was introduced including the same title for all teachers (*professeur*), educators in preschool education in France may be called *professeurs des écoles maternelles*.

Inclusive schooling of all children between 3 and 6 years reinforces the functional link between preschool and primary education in France. However, for a long time, the transition between *école maternelle* and primary education has been paradoxically a critical issue in the French education system. Pedagogical concepts from the new education movement were used to bridge the gap: opening of schools to their environment and implementing 'active' teaching methods stressing pupils' independent learning. These pedagogical measures seemed to be effective in lowering the high rate of pupils already repeating classes even in primary education. The quota of pupils having repeated at least one class at the end of primary school has decreased from 25.4% in 1990 to 19.5% in 2000 (latest data available, RRS 2004, p. 65).

The pedagogical innovation of pre-primary and primary education was accompanied in the beginning of the 1990s by a new structure. Pre-primary and primary education were considered as a whole to be divided in three phases of three years each. This was supposed to demonstrate the unity of the two school forms. However, this was only possible if pre-primary education began already at the age of two. Thus, the first three years of the *maternelle* constitute their own learning cycle (*cycle des apprentissages premiers*). The last year of pre-primary education and the first two years of the primary school build a bridge between the two institutions in the sense that together they constitute the 'cycle of fundamental learning' (*cycle des apprentissages fondamentaux*). In other words, officially, fundamental learning in France already begins in the last year of preschool education. The third cycle comprises the forms three to five (*cycle des approfondissements*). It is evident that the three cycles, including the whole period of pre-primary and primary education, have to integrate both, the functional and the structural links between the two institutional forms of education.

Primary education

The main task of primary education is giving literacy. In this field the main problem is still the relatively high number of functional illiterates at the end of primary education; it is only slowly decreasing. Therefore the main curricular topics in this field are mother tongue education (9 hours per week in the two cycles); mathematical literacy has however only 5 hours. Elements of scientific and social problems are put together in a new discipline 'discovering the world – civic education' which has four hours per week. In the third cycle, in order to make the transition to secondary edu-

education easier, the traditional names of the disciplines (physics, history, geography) are re-established. The principle of subject-centred instruction – the main didactic form of secondary education – is being thus prepared. Further subjects in the third cycle are sports and fine arts having together 5 1/2 hours per week. Two hours per week are reserved for support measures following the teachers' diagnosis. Together with the new learning cycles national assessments of the pupils' learning outcomes have been introduced.

Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education in France has its place in the common *collège* which has four grades with a common curriculum for all students. There is a certain paradox in French school legislation. School is compulsory from 6 to 16 years (ten years). However the compulsory school types, primary school and lower secondary school together normally last only 9 years. Implicitly, school administration assumes that those pupils who do not continue their education in upper secondary education (rather a minority) repeat a class at least once during their compulsory school career.

When the common secondary education was introduced in 1975 no differentiation at all was foreseen; the only possibility of differentiation was a contingent of three hours of additional teaching for underachievers in French and in Mathematics. However, in the French *collège*, there was from beginning a hidden form of differentiation: the choice between English, Spanish and German as a first foreign language. However, German is considered to be difficult for beginners to learn having a complex morphology (like Latin). Therefore German as a first language is chosen mainly by performance-oriented parents of the upper middle class. As the school classes are very often constituted according to the foreign language chosen, the children of socially advantaged families with a high school performance often come together in these classes. Thus, the choice of the first foreign language becomes a hidden mechanism of social selection in which German takes over the function formerly assumed by Latin.

Until the 1990s, after grade 8 the weaker pupils had the opportunity to get out of the normal tracks of the common secondary education system and to begin special classes preparing for Vocational Education and Training (VET) which were already a part of the system of Vocational and Technical Education. As these structures evidently seemed to contradict the spirit of the common *collèges* the left wing government created another form of differentiation: the 'technological classes' within the *collège*. These classes had a curriculum with much more practical topics, to be done as technical projects rather than through traditional instruction. The aim of these measures was to create positive learning experiences in order to finish lower secondary education successfully. As a matter of fact, the lower secondary education diploma was the first means of raising the number of upper secondary education diplomas (as mentioned before, since the 1980s it was the main aim of French educational policy to raise the participation rate in the final year of upper secondary education (preparing the *baccalauréat*, see below) to 80% of the age cohort).

Although French educational policy closely approached its quantitative target of increasing the number of full lower secondary diplomas, the question how to cater

for a heterogeneous pupil population was not yet answered. In the midst of the 1990s new reform ideas were tried. The four *collège* classes were divided in three cycles. The first class, the *collège* entrance was structured in an 'adaptation cycle' in order to smooth the transition between primary and secondary education. The following two classes (7 and 8) had no special function, they were the 'central cycle', but the last class (class 9) of the *collège* was given the function of serving as 'orientation cycle' in which almost all students made decisions about their future educational plans.

The change of name was a signal for further curricular changes, all aiming at a solution of the differentiation problem. By giving more flexibility to individual school's time table, they could better adapt it to the individual *projet d'établissement* (the special profile of the school). Special support could be given to underachieving students in order to compensate for their lacks, either within heterogeneous classes or in special 'consolidation groups' according to each school's needs and predilections. In any case, the 'pedagogical team' organising these measures of consolidation is to work on a volunteer basis (not by order of the headmaster), if the action should be successful.

By so-called supervised individual tasks the students are to become acquainted with the special work methods of secondary education (i.e. self controlled work). The logic of these forms of differentiation – more internal differentiation than differentiation by homogeneous learning groups – finds its continuation in the subsequent classes. For all subjects a range between minimal and maximal time tables are given – the schools may choose following their needs. The students may have 'diversified personal curricula', which means that the students at the end of the cycle may have reached the same learning targets in different ways. By these individual detours the students' special competences are to be manifested. Each school is to define the differentiated curricula for the students concerned. For those students who have major learning difficulties, special support lessons – not more than six hours per week – may be offered. This may concern those students who do not master sufficiently the basic techniques (the three 'r's': reading, writing, arithmetic) necessary to be successful in learning. In order to diagnose these cases intensified cooperation between primary and secondary teachers is recommended.

Upper secondary education

The main structural characteristic of the of upper secondary academic tracks is an increasing profiling into general academic and technical academic education ending in a general or technical baccalaureate which gives, independently of the profile, the right to enter Higher Education without any restrictions. In order to avoid the problems of early specialisation, a reform of upper secondary education began in the early 1990s to keep open as long as possible the choice of the baccalaureate track. Therefore grade 10 is still without any profile (*seconde de détermination*). There is no separation between general and technical tracks. As its French name suggests in this form progressively the student's further profile in the educational system is to be fixed. In fact at the end of grade 10, there is an orientation procedure, students have to choose the general or technical baccalaureate track and within these two

tracks, their special profile. In case of missing achievement targets in grade 10, they are 'reoriented' to vocational schools or apprenticeship.

Another important objective of this reform was to abolish the 'imperialism of Mathematics' as a means of stratifying general upper secondary education. Until this reform, the social prestige of upper secondary profiles has been dependent on the weight of mathematics taught there. The number of profiles was reduced to three in the academic track:

- L: languages and literature
- S: sciences
- ES: economic and social topics.

Thus the reform essentially reduced the former three scientific profiles (physics, biology and technology) into one integrated profile.

Whereas before, the choice of profile determined the whole curriculum without major modifications, the students now have the opportunity to choose, besides the core curriculum of a profile, within a range of courses offered, a personal curriculum integrating for instance more mathematics in a non-scientific profile or more foreign languages in the scientific profile.

By this optional system, the rather rigid 'sections' of upper secondary education were to be smoothed and transformed in individual profiles. Within the technological track, the pan of profiles was reduced too. There are no more than four sections offered in the fields of industrial arts, biological and medical technologies and technology of services and administration. In the last mentioned 'tertiary' section the overwhelming majority of the students are girls, which has the result that in sum, female students constitute more than 50% of all technological profiles .

Vocational education and training (VET)

Besides the technical track for a baccalaureate, the French education system has two other forms of VET: vocational upper secondary education (*second cycle professionnel*) in vocational colleges (*lycées professionnels*) and apprenticeship in a firm with additional courses in schools similar to the German dual system. Over two or three years both tracks prepare a diploma as a qualified worker or employee. Apprenticeship traditionally does not have a high prestige in French society. Only 28% of all VET participants on this level are apprentices (10% of the corresponding age group - RERS 2004, pp. 135ff.).

With a qualified worker/employee diploma, young people can continue their vocational education for two years to prepare a *baccalauréat professionnel*. This diploma confers all prerogatives of the general or technical baccalaureate (access to higher education); however, most graduates either take jobs in industry or continue their studies in non-academic post-secondary education. The creation of the *baccalauréat professionnel* was an important means of increasing the bacheliers quota as planned by educational policy.

As a matter of fact, there is a clear trend towards higher level diplomas to the disadvantage of the qualified workers diploma. Between 1990 and 2002 the numbers of qualified workers' diplomas decreased from 443,000 to 364,000 per year,

whereas the number of diplomas on the next higher level (*baccalauréat*) increased from 148,000 to 237,000 (RERS 2004, p. 209).

Special education

For physically and mentally handicapped children and children with special learning problems and special educational needs there are various possibilities: they may be integrated in 'normal' classes, they may constitute special classes or even sections in 'normal' schools, but they may also be concentrated in their own 'special school' system (*enseignement spécialisé*). In the midst of the 1990 1.3% of all children on the primary level frequented a special education school. A certain number of these schools work under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. Among the special education sections integrated in the *collège*, there are the 'sections' for adapted general and vocational learning. The main objective of this adapted learning is to make the children able to master simple handicrafts jobs. Most of these children come from special sections in primary education.

Postsecondary and tertiary education

The organisation of postsecondary education has particular forms in France. We can reduce it to a tripartite system.

- 1) Outside the Higher Education institutions in a strict sense – that is on a tertiary level – there is a two-year course offered in technical *lycées* giving the opportunity to successful *bacheliers* to prepare a Higher Technician diploma (*Brevet de Technicien Supérieur – BTS*). This course is increasingly chosen by the holders of the *baccalauréat professionnel*. In the 1960 this course was to be replaced by a new equivalent diploma the *Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie* prepared in University institutes (*Institut Universitaire de Technologie*), however, the social demand for the BTS – considered as closer to the practical needs of the economy – was too strong. Both courses – in school and in university – exist side by side: in 2004 the number of students preparing a BTS double that of the students in IUT (RERS 2004, pp. 162 and 170).
- 2) The 'classical' university is open for all holders of a *baccalauréat*, whatever the type might be. There is no entrance selection, but the selection becomes relevant in the course of the study (after the first year). The traditional structure of the studies in Humanities and Sciences (DEUG – *Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales* after two years, *Licence* after three years, *Maîtrise* after four years of studies) is going to be replaced by the 'LMD-structure'. This abbreviation, standing for *Licence* (=Bachelor) after three years, (*Master*) after five years and giving the right to prepare a *Doctorat* (doctoral studies) is the French version of the Bologna-Process. It may be surprising that France was one of the first and fiercest promoters of the new European (or rather global) system of higher education.
- 3) The most distinguishing characteristic of French higher education is the system of elite institution – the *Grandes Ecoles*. There is no direct access to these institutions but the entry is by competition (*concours*). This means that only a small

number of places is opened to the best candidates. The examination (*concours*) giving the basis of a ranking list must be prepared in a two year post-secondary course given in some well known *lycées* in subjects relevant for the future studies.

In order to be admitted in these *classes préparatoires* students must have an excellent baccalaureate. Every year about 10% of the *bacheliers* try this way. Those students who did not have the chance of succeeding in one of the *concours* may ask for the equivalence of the first two years of university studies (DEUG).

In this manner (by *concours*), not only the great internationally renowned institutions of French Higher Education like *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, *Ecole Polytechnique* or *Ecole de Hautes Etudes Commerciales (HEC)* recruit their students, but also most of the institutions training engineers. Students often do several competitions at the same time in order to multiply their chances.

Having succeeded in the *concours* of one of the *Grandes Ecoles*, the student has many advantages compared to university students: a low staff-student ratio, a generous scholarship and the assurance of belonging to a social network that guarantees an interesting post in the management in economy or administration.

This system has been very often criticized for its socially selective character and the lack of reliability of the selection criteria: as a matter of fact, the performance gap between the last candidate admitted and the first who has failed may be extremely small (a tenth of a point). In spite of all these critiques, the *Grandes Ecoles* have resisted all attempts at reform. However, they will have to change the recruitment into the Bologna-Structures.

Teacher education and training

Teacher education in France for a long time followed the structure of the school system: Education and training for primary teachers was given in teacher training at the end of grade 9, the end of the former upper primary cycle (*école primaire supérieure*). The teacher trainees received a complement of general education (*culture générale*) and an integrated training combining courses in psycho-pedagogy and practical training. With the primary teacher diploma, they got the equivalence of the baccalaureate and by this the best performing young primary teachers had the possibility to go on to higher education.

Secondary teachers followed at least a four year higher education course (*licence* + preparation of the *concours*) of academic studies in a special subject (or a compulsory combination of subjects like physics and chemistry) in order to enter a special competition (*concours*) giving access to practical training. The competition was highly selective, the selection criteria were exclusively of an academic nature. At the end of the practical year the successful candidates got the *CAPES/CAPET (Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat de l'Enseignement Secondaire/ Technique)* and by this, tenure in secondary education.

A particular feature of French teacher education is the category of the *professeur agrégé* in secondary education. The *agrégés* are recruited in another special competition (*concours*) after 5 years of academic studies. They are not obliged to follow practical training (they often pass directly to higher education) and they have a lot of

advantages compared with 'normal' secondary teachers (with CAPES): fewer hours to teach, higher salary and the right to teach in the preparatory classes for the *grandes écoles*.

In the 1980s, there was a progressive 'academisation' of primary teacher education that culminated in the creation of new institutions, the IUFM (*Institut Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres*) which gave a common setting for education and training of all categories of teachers. This meant, above all, an academic upgrading of primary teachers who hence had to follow a three year course at university before being admitted into the IUFM in order to prepare their respective *concours*. The year of practical training for all teacher categories is transferred to the IUFM.

In other words, education and training of the primary teachers is shaped according to the model of the secondary teachers. They get the prestigious title of '*professeur (des écoles)*', even if they work in preschool institutions, and more important, their salary is harmonised with that of secondary teachers.

Current Problems, discussion and perspectives of development

When in the crucial year 2000 the quota of students getting the baccalauréat was not more than 62%, and the proportion of students in the last grade was about 75%, with a certain disillusionment it became evident that the aim of the '80%' was not reached, although the failure was not very great. In fact, in the second part of the 1990s after a long period of increasing numbers, the quota of *bacheliers* stagnated. The policy of expanding upper secondary education by increasing the number of *bacheliers* came to an end before having attained its objective completely. One of the possible reasons for this (relative) failure was the fact that it has become more and more difficult to increase the number of students who finished the *collège* successfully, as this form of inclusive schooling came to its limits. Thus, one key to the democratisation of the French school system seems to be the issue of integrative lower secondary education and in particular, the handling of the heterogeneous population of its students.

Therefore, in the actual discussions about French school we may distinguish three main topics:

- the problem of better handling of the heterogeneous population of school students (how to organise the *college*?);
- the issue of the strict secular character of the school apparently threatened by Islamic school girls wearing the headscarf as a sign of their religious faith;
- the reform of higher education and its repercussion on teacher training.

Some of these problems are the topics of new education acts promulgated in 2004 and 2005.

The issue of the islamic headscarf

The problem of the 'Islamic headscarf' (*le foulard islamique*) appeared for the first time, when a school headmaster in 1989 forbid three North-African girls to wear the headscarf within the school area, as he judged that this headscarf was an external sign of religious convictions and therefore in contradiction with the secular, neutral

character of the school. This measure provoked a great discussion about the open and tolerant society and violent controversies. The debate was particularly intense as the feminist point of view considered the headscarf as a symbol of the women's oppressed status, intolerable in an egalitarian society. Finally, by the High Court recommendation, the minister referred the decision to the school council of the individual school: it was the school council that had to decide whether the wearing of the headscarf in the school building was to be allowed or not.

However, the quarrel was not over by this measure. As other incidents followed where pupil were prevented by their Islamic parents from participating in certain subjects, the school system finished by not tolerating these signs of segregation of certain communities. Since 2004 by a special law, the bearing of the Islamic headscarf is formally forbidden within the school area, as it is considered as an ostensible sign of religious affiliation.

The new Education Act

In spring 2005, after very long public preparation a new Education Act replaced that of 1989. In the mind of its promoters the new act was necessary, after 16 years, as many things had changed in the French social system since the act of 1989. According to the slogan 'more justice, more efficiency, more openness' the act presented three main axes of action. The future school curriculum should define a common basic knowledge and basic competencies, formulated in an operationalized form and controlled by national assessments in the 3rd and the 6th years of compulsory schooling. These assessments would serve as feed back on the students' acquired competences during their schooling in order to give the opportunity of improving them (a sort of formative evaluation). A new national examination at the end of compulsory education (the actual *brevet des college* served as a summative measure of achievement).

Together with the new legislation new methods of curriculum development were established, giving more competence to the National Curriculum Council (*Conseil National des Programmes*) and reducing the power of the inspectorate in this matter. Early attempts to do so already in the 1970s had failed (Hörner 1979). By this enlargement of the social basis of curriculum development associating other social groups with this process the social relevance of the defined basis competencies should be stressed.

To the 'efficiency line' of the new legislation we may count a new practical regulation for class-room organisation: the replacement of absent teachers (until now in the hand of the regional school administration) is henceforth given to the individual school. The headmaster has to make his own staff to do the job for missing colleagues with a small budget in order to pay for supply teaching. This increased autonomy of the individual school should simplify the organisation, but the measure has been vividly criticized because the replacement teachers are not necessarily subject specialists in the same discipline.

As for the aim of social justice, according to the law, 'equality of opportunity' is to be enhanced by the introduction of personal learning programs as special support systems. An improved scholarship system in particular for socially deprived students

on the basis of good school performance should ensure the material side of equality of opportunity.

'Openness' aims in two directions: the world of work on the one hand, and the world outside the national borders on the other hand. The first aim should be approached by the upgrading of vocational education and training in society. For this, the new education act creates a new school type, the 'college of professions' (*lycée des métiers*) which should include different VET levels from basic to higher vocational training and which should hold particular partnership with industry. Not only these 'links with industry' but also the introduction of a systematic career education (*enseignement de la découverte professionnelle*) should serve to a better insertion of young people in the labour market.

The window to the world should be opened by enhanced foreign language teaching during compulsory education. The first foreign language will henceforth begin already in grade 3 of the primary school, the second language in grade 7 (the second year of *college*). In order to improve the quality of language education, foreign language lessons are given in smaller groups (50% of the class).

Higher education and teacher training

It is evident that the early beginning of language teaching has implications for the training of primary teachers. In the future, primary school teachers will have to pass a compulsory examination in language education. On the whole, all these aims and measures to improve schools will have direct repercussions on teacher training in general within all three domains discussed above. In order to improve the academic standard of teacher education, a closer integration of IUFM into the universities is planned. They will become like 'schools of education' within the universities being responsible for the whole process of teacher education which will have the opportunity to be linked to the new Master's degree. But also the pedagogical content of teacher education is to be improved. The new legislation requires teachers to learn a better handling of heterogeneous classes. In the same context they will receive an initiation in religious knowledge in order to understand better the reaction of their Islamic students.

In sum, as far as teacher education is concerned, the new Education Act aims at a more professional teaching force.

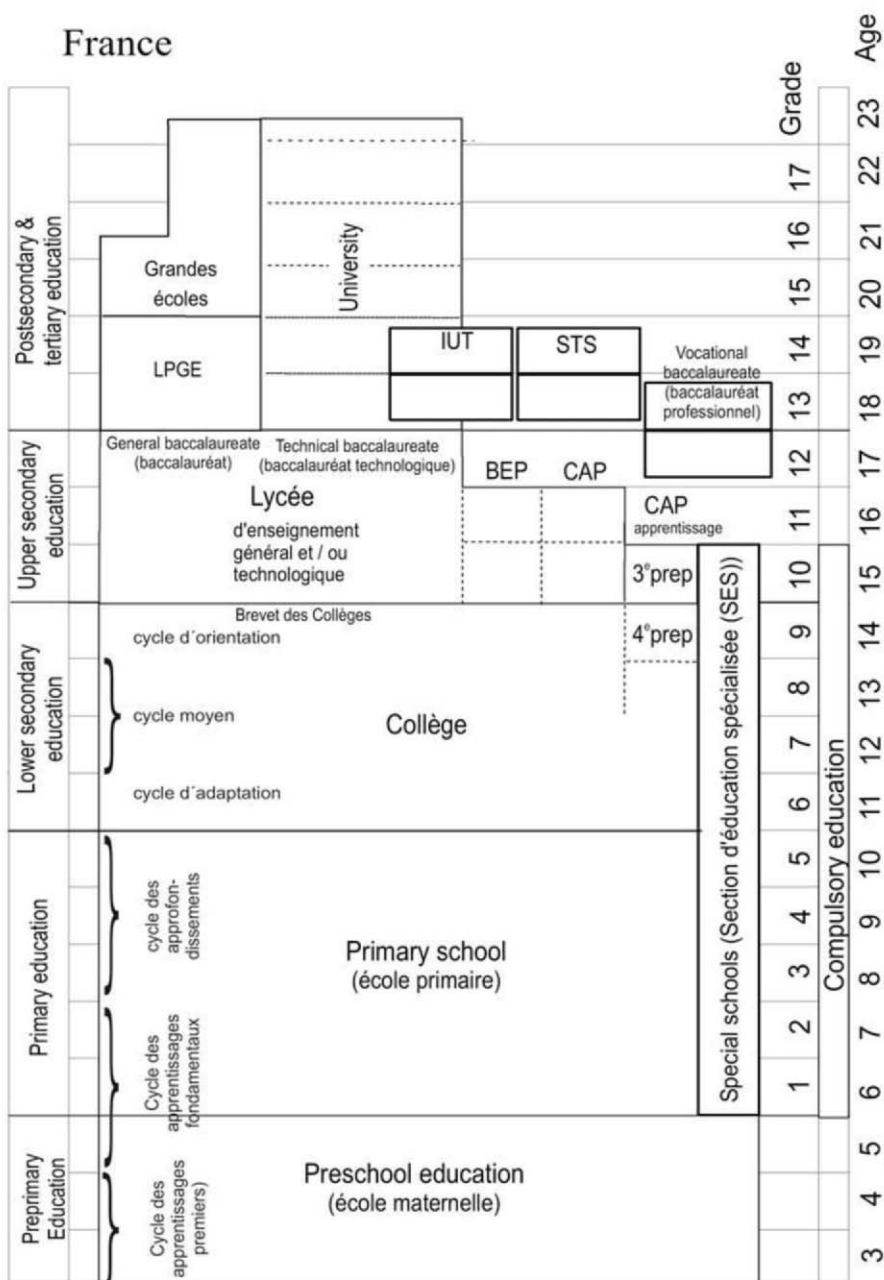
References

- Auduc, J.-L.: Les institutions scolaires et universitaires. Paris 1998.
- Chaveau, G. : La réussite scolaire dans les ZEP. In : Education et Formations, Nr 61, October-December 2001, pp. 147-151.
- Czerwenka, K.: Schulsystem, Selektion und Schulzufriedenheit in Frankreich. In: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 36 (1990), pp. 849-875.
- Derouet, J.-L. (Ed.) : Le collège unique en question. Paris 2003.
- Dix-huit questions sur le système éducatif. Synthèse de travaux de la DEP. In : Éducation – Formation Nr 66, Special Number, July-December 2003.
- Education et Formations, Nr 61, October-December 2001 [Thème: Les ZEP]

- French Report Working Group: France. In: Döbert, H./Klieme, E./Sroka, W. (Eds) Conditions of School Performance in Seven Countries. A Quest for Understanding the International Variation of PISA-Results. Münster, New York 2004, pp. 219-297
- Hörner, W.: Curriculumentwicklung in Frankreich. Probleme und Lösungsversuche einer Inhaltsreform der Sekundarschule (1959-1976). Weinheim 1979.
- Hörner, W.: Frankreich. In: Anweiler, O. et al.: Bildungssysteme in Europa. 4th completely revised edition. Weinheim 1996, pp. 83-107.
- Lacerda, E. de : Les écoliers de nationalité étrangère. In: Note d'Information du Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie 00.03 (February 2000).
- La mixité sociale à l'école et au collège. Rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de l'Éducation nationale présenté par Jean Hebrard. Paris : Ministère de l'Éducation nationale 2002.
- Loi d'orientation sur l'éducation (No 89-486 du 10 juillet 1989). In: Journal Officiel de la République Française du 14 juillet 1989, pp. 8860-8864.
- Maurice, M./Sellier, F./Silvestre, J.-J. : Politique d'éducation et organisation industrielle en France et en Allemagne. Paris 1982.
- RERS - Repères et références statistiques sur les enseignements, la formation et la recherche. Paris : Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche 2004.
- Obin, J.-P./Cros, F. : Le projet d'établissement. Paris 1991.
- Obin, J.-P. : Enseigner, un métier pour demain. Rapport au ministre de l'éducation nationale. Mars 2002.
- Prost, A. : Histoire de l'enseignement en France, 1800-1967. Paris 1986.
- Renault, C. : Le baccalauréat. Session 2000, résultats définitifs. In: Note d'Information du Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie 01.24 (May 2001).
- Thévenin, A./Compagnon, B.: L'école en France. Au carrefour des valeurs républicaines. Toulouse 2005.

Web-source

<http://www.education.gouv.fr> [with further links]



Georgia

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

Georgia (in Georgian, Sakartvelo), situated in the southern Caucasus region on the border of Europe and Asia, is a mountainous country with an area of 69,700 square kilometres and a population numbering 4,600,000 (July 2004 estimate). Some 60% of the nation's inhabitants live in cities. The population is concentrated mainly along the coast of the Black Sea and in the river valleys. Previously one of the fifteen republics of the former Soviet Union, the territory of Georgia today includes two autonomous republics – Abkhazia, which has severed relations, and Adjara (also spelt Adzharia),² which is on reasonable terms with the central Georgian government – and one autonomous region, South Ossetia.³ Tbilisi is the capital and the largest city.

Abkhazia separated violently from Georgia in 1992-93 and is currently outside of Tbilisi's political and economic sphere of influence. It is a rather sensitive issue, and will continue to be so until a final solution for its future status is agreed upon.⁴

Georgian identity has been closely tied to religion since the introduction of Christianity in the early fourth century. In the Middle Ages, the church was responsible for education, which it provided in monasteries and writing schools. The coexistence of secular and ecclesiastical schooling ended after the collapse of the Tsarist Empire in 1917.

Today, Georgia has an adult literacy rate of 99.5%, a result of the Soviet emphasis on free and universal education with compulsory primary and secondary schooling. In 1989 some 15.1% of adults in Georgia had graduated from a university or completed some other form of higher education. About 57.4% had completed secondary school or obtained a specialized secondary education. Georgia had the highest proportion among the Soviet republics of citizens with higher or specialized secondary education.

¹ The author is grateful to Malgorzata Matuszek of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun and to Daniel Gromotka from the Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf, for their research contributions. The author is Chairman of the NGO Knowledge Transfer (*Wissenstransfer e.V.*), which focuses on the exchange of knowledge between countries of the European Union and Eastern Europe, and Chief Executive of IBA International Media and Book Agency.

² Adjara is an autonomous republic of Georgia. The Adjarians are ethnic Georgians who profess Islam.

³ The republic of South Ossetia is a *de facto* independent republic within Georgia; however, its separation from Georgia has not been recognized by any other country.

⁴ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, and the United Nations continue to insist that Abkhazia remain part of Georgia.

The official national language, Georgian, is a member of the South Caucasian (or Kartvelian) family of languages. For fifteen centuries, Georgian was unique among the South Caucasian family in its use of its own ancient alphabet. Ossetian and Abkhazian are also spoken, and of course Russian, as the outcome of more than 200 years of Russian rule. Georgia experienced considerable economic difficulties in the decade after independence. Today, the country's economy is slowly recovering, showing a real GDP growth rate of some 5.5% for 2003 and an inflation rate of 5% for consumer prices (estimate 2003). Nevertheless, more than 50% of the overall population lives below the poverty line.

The collapse of the Soviet Union severely isolated the economy of Georgia by disrupting established trade patterns. Three separate armed conflicts and several years of political instability created even more serious damage. Georgia became increasingly dependent upon foreign financial and humanitarian aid. Beginning in the mid-1990s, however, increasing political stability allowed Georgia to make remarkable progress towards renewed economic growth. Since 1995, with the assistance of the IMF and the World Bank, substantial economic progress has been made, with an increase in growth and a huge fall in inflation. Major structural reforms were implemented focusing on the transfer of almost all small-scale enterprises to private ownership and on the reduction of the role of the State in the economy.

Under Soviet rule, the performance of the Georgian education system was fully controlled by the Communist Party and centralized Moscow-based authorities. For most of the Soviet period, the education system in Georgia was an integrated part of the larger Soviet system; consequently Russian was the main language. Only in the late 1980s did the first reforms allow changes placing more emphasis on Georgian language and history. By 1988, two thirds of all school pupils were taught in Georgian-language schools. Some 25% were taught in one of the acknowledged minority languages, mainly Abkhazian and Ossetian until the fifth grade. Thereafter the language of instruction was either Georgian or Russian, depending on the subject and teaching material.

The process of establishing an independent Georgia – the overwhelming majority of Georgians voted for independence in April 1991 – with a new social system and a market economy also brought about substantial changes in the education system. Budgetary shortages and various drawbacks during the first decade of independence complicated the transition process and the implementation of reforms. Since independence, all levels of education in Georgia have been insufficiently funded, with the consequence of decreasing educational standards. Most schools are state-operated and provide tuition-free teaching, but the role of private schools is increasing.

Reforms and innovations

After coming to power, the new administration under President Mikhail Saakashvili promised to make every effort to improve the education system. Like other former Soviet republics, Georgia had inherited a centralized and Moscow-focused

education system which was based on an organizational infrastructure well equipped with teaching personal.

Education was one of the few sectors that continued functioning to some extent during the period of civil war and economic instability. The dramatic cut, however, in education funding to less than 2% of GDP has put the sector under serious pressure. The quality of education has decreased considerably. A far-reaching reform programme was developed with a strong focus on improving the quality and efficiency of primary and general secondary education, on strengthening institutional capacity, and on mobilizing public and private resources. This programme was given legislative backing by the Law on Education in June 1997. Further legal directives and regulations are intended to produce more changes in the education system, with a new definition, for example, of compulsory primary education, while, in contrast to the former Soviet system, secondary education will be voluntary. A programme of reforms with a clear focus on primary and pre-school education had been prepared in the mid 1990s, but was enacted only very slowly, mainly because of lack of funding; it was based on recommendations of UNESCO.

Georgia receives international assistance to bring its education system up to international standards. The Education System Realignment and Strengthening Programme, a World Bank Project begun in 2001 with funding of US\$ 25.9m, aims to re-establish universal primary education. The programme's objectives focus on improved quality and relevance of primary and general secondary learning outcomes, which will mean that pupils are better prepared to meet the demands of a market economy in a democratic society. Within this project, an outcome-based national curriculum for primary and general secondary education is being developed and implemented, which includes the development of a national assessment system. The first results of this new assessment system, introduced by the National Examinations and Assessment Centre (NAEC) are already available.

Further achievements of the reform process can be seen in the following areas:

- The new structure of the pre-tertiary education system comprises 12 grades instead of the former 11 grades.
- New curricula have replaced Soviet-type subjects with corresponding items of a national and international character. Social sciences, for example, have been radically reformed, whereas sciences have not needed such drastic amendments.
- A two-stage testing of teachers' abilities was carried out in 1997 and in 1999. The areas evaluated included academic knowledge, professional skills, creativity in teaching, team-work skills, communication skills, and discipline in conducting work.
- Economic activity in schools, for instance renting out facilities, has been legalized. The additional income thereby produced seems to have been mostly used to increase teachers' salaries.

In a survey of the development of the first decade of the post-independence Georgian education system, the difficult period up to 1995, with its extreme political tensions; the civil war; the rebellion in Abkhazia; and the upsurge in the number of armed bands have to be considered. All this contributed to a decline in social condi-

tions for most of the population. Schools were either destroyed or occupied by refugees during the civil war. As a consequence, the enrolment of children entering the first grade of primary school decreased. The second half of the decade brought, however, political stability and peace. School admissions reached high levels, especially because many children who had had no access to education in previous years were now enrolled.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

The first decisions made by the new administration after the Velvet Revolution in 2003 confirmed its readiness to continue and improve policy on educational reforms, with a focus on student achievement, high standards of teaching and learning, accountability, free choice of learning environment, and teacher quality. Many of the reforms were initiated by international organizations. The Constitution states that basic education is universal and obligatory: 'education is equally guaranteed to all'. Nevertheless, at present a number of children lack access to education, as they live in the most remote regions or come from disadvantaged families. The interests of national minorities have also been taken seriously into account: Armenians, as citizens of Georgia; Azeris and Ossetians; and Russians enjoy the same constitutional rights as Georgians, and will therefore receive primary education in their mother tongue.

The most noticeable change was the introduction of new subjects such as religion and culture. New minimum content standards were introduced for all subjects in basic education, confirming the importance of assisting students in developing their intellectual skills in addition to acquiring factual knowledge.

Georgia is still working on the problem of defining the societal goals of schooling and on the renewal of teaching contents based on systematic, synchronic, didactic guidelines and generally determined objectives. These include research and development in the production of textbooks, teaching methodologies, and assessment structures. Teaching needs to adopt a more cognitive approach that supports personality development and critical thinking abilities.

The education reforms aim at empowering schools to prepare young people to:

- Acquire communication competences (writing, reading, speaking, and listening, first of all in their mother tongue, but also in foreign languages) and teamwork skills;
- Be able to use technology to access information, assess and analyse its value, and use it for personal benefit;
- Be responsible citizens, lead an independent life, and be able to make independent decisions;
- Understand the need to respect life and human dignity, especially in times of violence and armed conflict;
- Acquire knowledge about and engage in community activities in order to promote solidarity; and

- Be tolerant and law-abiding; appreciate personal responsibility towards the nation and traditions, the State, and fellow citizens; and respect and protect human rights.

Socio-economic context

Statistical figures show that around 99% of the population aged fifteen years and over can read and write. These statistics, however, do not consider young people under the age of fifteen, thus leaving aside all the children who did not attend school for various reasons – according to (albeit contradictory) statistical sources nearly 20% – including those from disadvantaged families and homeless children not included in current statistics. An important step that the education authorities could take would be to assist disadvantaged families by providing them with social security and by creating the necessary conditions for their children to attend school.

In 1990 practically 100% of the school-age population attended school, but many parents subsequently took their children out of the country because of the difficult political situation. Emigration intensified during 1992 and 1993. The proportion of children completing grade 5 thus fell to 70.3% in 1992 and to 66.4% in 1993. The intake of basic schools was well below 90% up to 1995, after which it increased again, reaching 97% in 1997-98. By 1994 the situation had become more stable, and schools began to function again; schooling returned to comparatively normal conditions with the rate of completion of basic schooling rising to 91.9% and 98.1% in 1998.

Georgia is a multi-ethnic country composed of a Georgian majority comprising some 70% of the population, followed by Armenians (8.1%), Russians (6.3%), Azeri (5.7%), Ossetians (3%), Abkhaz (1.8%), and others, mainly Yezedi Kurds, Meskhetians, Jews, and Greeks (5%). While most of the population originating from the Caucasus region understand other regional languages to some extent, Russians often do not have a good command of Georgian, as this was not previously required.

Georgian is spoken by some 71% of the population. Abkhazians also use their national language, mainly in Abkhazia. Russian is used by 9% (with knowledge of Russian definitely higher than this official figure), Armenian by 7%, and Azeri by 6% of the population. Although the fundamental importance of native languages has been recognized, the language of instruction at pre-school institutions as well as in primary schools is mainly Georgian; during the 1990s there was a retrogressive development, as textbooks for children of national minorities were published in Georgian only.

Nevertheless, local administrations of regions where the regional minority group is in the majority have the right to establish appropriate pre-school institutions teaching children in the mother tongue of the minority. The Minister of Education confirmed that minority schools have the same rights as Georgian ones. The administration does not classify minority schools as Armenian, Azeri, or Russian, but rather as Russian-language, Armenian-language, and Azeri-language schools. Consequently, they are required to follow the Georgian curriculum. Out of some 3500 schools in Georgia around 15% are schools for children of ethnic minorities.

Social position of the teaching profession

Having focused for the most part in the past on communicating content at a low cognitive level, teachers are now expected to become facilitators of the students' individual process of knowledge acquisition. This requires teachers to have expertise in relevant subjects and the skills to guide students.

The present level of teacher training and qualification is not fully satisfactory, with considerable differences in expertise and didactic skills. Teachers in Georgia graduate from higher teacher education institutions like the Pedagogical University, and acquire further skills during training seminars dedicated to subject and/or regional issues. However, their level of qualification is usually only that achieved in the former Soviet education system, as students at university study with textbooks from Soviet times, and all their teachers¹ were educated during that time.

The younger generation has lost interest in the teaching profession, as it is not prestigious and career and income prospects are also not good. In 1990 there were more than 80,000 teachers in active service, by 1998 only 52,000 remained. The majority of teachers, and especially men, left for more profitable jobs in order to better support their families. Between 1995 and 2000, teachers received a total pay rise of some 175%. Salaries have increased further, but are still in the range of only 30 to 120 Lari (approximately €15 to €60) monthly; pre-primary and primary teachers in the regions are at the lowest end of this scale.

The majority of teachers in primary schools are female (some 93%). From the fifth grade on, male teachers constitute a larger proportion, although they do not make up 50% of any grade.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels, and philosophy of governance

Following the Education Law, the education sector consists of four levels:

- The central government, represented by the Ministry of Education,
- Twelve regional departments of education (territorial units),
- Sixty-eight regional (district) divisions of education, and
- Individual schools.

The Ministry of Education supervises the entire sector from the pre-primary up to the tertiary level, ensuring that adequate funds are allocated in the annual budget, for which the Ministry of Finance is responsible. The education reform process is supervised intensively by various ministerial departments and the regional authorities. Their task is to monitor, to analyse, and to report results to the governing body of the Ministry, which prepares annual reports for the government on the implementation and sustainability of the reforms.

The Ministry of Education takes the main decisions on universal-compulsory education, drafts curricula, develops and approves standards, introduces educational schedules, and has final responsibility for the development and implementation of

¹ With the exception of some Western lecturers who spend one or two semesters at a university in Georgia, but mostly for research, rather than teaching.

textbooks. It also licenses higher education facilities. In general, the Ministry is independent in its decisions as long as it operates according to state education policy; however, policy and budgetary decisions have to be ratified by the government. Regional education departments subordinated to the Education Ministry support and supervise the implementation of state education policy in their respective region. They do not manage budgets directly, but they are responsible for ensuring that adequate funds are allocated in local budgets. At the next level, district education divisions have a distinct role in providing pedagogical support and educational counselling on issues such as syllabus development, training, and teaching methodologies. As a result of the decentralization process, in the late 1990s elected local councils were established as the lowest administrative level in order to represent the interests of the respective communities. They have a say on annual local budgets and the amounts allocated for educational and school purposes. At school level, management activities are performed by the directors and their deputies in co-operation with a teachers' council formed by members of staff. The law provides these councils with certain rights to assist the director in fundamental issues.

Financing

Elementary and secondary schools are funded from the budgets of local authorities. In the current financially starved system, however, these authorities cannot afford to run the schools under their charge properly. Authorities can only make free schooling possible by covering budgetary lacks through the neglect of areas such as efficiency, quality, and the retention of the best-qualified teachers. The central government participates on a national scale in the financing of schools by reimbursing a major share of the expenditure of local authorities from the state budget. Transfers from the state budget are above all used to pay teachers' salaries.

The worsening financial situation forced school officials to look elsewhere for additional finances. Expenditure on items such as the repair of school buildings or the purchase of equipment, including computers, is almost exclusively funded by grants from international donors or wealthy Georgians. Thus, the education system is based on contradictory principles. In 2000 the overall state budget suffered a substantial mid-year cut as a consequence of lower than forecasted state income; for general education this involved a reduction of some 40% (higher education 34%) of the original budget. Financial setbacks such as this cannot be compensated.

In 2000 overall expenditure on education reached 4.9% of GNP, of which 2.2% of GNP came from the state budget. In 2001 the share of the state budget increased to 2.5% of GNP.

Public and private schooling

The clear majority of schools at all levels are public. The role of private schools providing universal education is, however, increasing annually. In 1999 150 schools out of a total of 3387 (0.5%) were private. The growing importance of private schools is a source of increasing concern and discussions. Although private schools are supported by owners and donors, parents have to contribute considerable amounts in tuition fees, making admission for many children practically impossible.

These schools can thus afford an improved teacher to student ratio, making it easier to offer a better quality of teaching and to achieve outstanding education results.

Private kindergartens began to appear after 1992. In addition to officially established private institutions, many non-registered kindergartens were opened in private flats. Parents seem to believe that private institutions under their own supervision take better care of their children than state-run ones.

At university level the situation is different; a number of prestigious private institutions were established, partly as international branch institutions with support from the mother institution, partly funded by Georgian individuals or bodies. Once again, statistical data vary considerably; some Georgian sources report more than 200 institutions at the bachelor's level.

Quality management

With the process of political change, the focus of quality management shifted to a more outcome-oriented form of monitoring based on a new educational philosophy. A two-fold approach is now preferred that takes into account both basic educational contents and an assessment of pupils' general skills.

The newly founded National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC) was commissioned by the Ministry of Education to develop new university entrance tests.² The NAEC has also assumed responsibility for improving educational quality in schools by developing and administering the examinations that are held at the point of transition from elementary to secondary school in grade 6, and at the end of grades 9 and 12 of secondary school.

Another quality issue relates to higher education. A new evaluation system consists of four stages:

- Institutions have to be licensed before they can begin operating. The teaching staff must have the required pedagogic skills and be competent in the teaching subject; this is generally demonstrated by the academic degree held.
- Quality assurance regarding performance, based on regular peer reviews by experts from outside the institution. These must demonstrate that the conditions for an extension of the licence are met.
- State accreditation of higher education programmes and institutions carried out by the Ministry guarantees that the degrees awarded by the institution are recognized by the State. This is the condition for obtaining non-profit status.
- Georgia has signed the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region, which sets out a framework for the recognition of qualifications giving access to higher education, of periods of study, and of higher education qualifications.

Georgia has not participated to date in the OECD PISA study, nor in any other similar international educational assessment. In September 2003, the NAEC published

² The proficiency standard that was developed includes the assessment of verbal understanding, reading comprehension, arithmetical skills, and logical conclusions; for predictive validity, the emphasis should be on analytical thinking skills.

the results of a comparable survey, investigating literacy abilities as core competences learned at primary school. The findings show that approximately 40% of pupils ranked very low and low in their performance.³ Girls performed better than boys, and there was a gradual decline in abilities from urban regions to rural areas, with pupils in the mountainous regions performing worst.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The Georgian education system includes three levels of education,⁴ with the first one, basic education, being mandatory. The first level consists of four years of primary and two years of elementary education, and is followed by two levels of secondary school taking a total of six years; the completion certificate of the first level of secondary school provides entry into upper secondary education with a technical, vocational, or other profile. Upper secondary diplomas, obtained after three years of schooling, provide access to higher (tertiary) education. The school system possesses a number of basic characteristics that apply to most public schools (private schools can be more flexible):

- Lessons are held from September to June.
- The length of daily school attendance is determined by the level of the school; at primary school it is three hours per day, at secondary school it increases to six hours, and at the upper secondary higher level it amounts to seven hours per day.
- The average class size depends on the school's location and varies from very few pupils in rural mountainous regions to up to thirty-five or even forty pupils in urban schools.

The government policy that school textbooks should be funded and bought by parents has led to a serious shortage of textbooks in schools; in secondary school only some 50% of pupils had access to current textbooks. The new administration plans to establish a library network to alleviate this problem.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education in Georgia consists of three types of institution: nursery school (up to three years of age), combined kindergarten–nursery school (from one to six years), and kindergarten (for children from three to six years). First grade classes in some primary schools are combined with kindergartens. The educational tasks of these establishments are outlined in a Manual of State Standards. Pre-primary institutions work independently, employing programmes, methodologies, and supplementary literature developed and published under the guidance of the Ministry of Education. By 2000, there were 1241 state pre-primary institutions; 1206 of them were under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, and the remainder

³ Enrolment in elementary/ primary education, ages six to twelve, is 98%; for secondary level 1 and 2, 57% (other sources report up to 73%); for tertiary education, ages eighteen to twenty-four, 15%.

⁴ The *Sashualo Skolis Atestati*.

were run by companies or service organizations.⁵ Approximately half of the total were kindergartens, the other half were combined kindergarten and nursery schools. While the number of state-run institutions has significantly decreased, private kindergartens have been opened, generally with the permission of local authorities and mainly in private flats run by groups of parents.

Pre-primary institutions have to manage their financial resources and income independently; the State partly subsidizes those establishments under its jurisdiction on the condition that parents also contribute to their funding through fees. The authorities determine the amount of their expenditure and decide on the level of nursing and education fees per child on the basis of state financial norms.

Primary education

Primary education should prepare pupils to live in a constantly changing world, to develop and maintain their learning abilities, to be prepared for changes, to be critical and creative, and to take an active interest in their community, country, and environment. The first level of education consists of basic education, and is sub-divided into four years of primary school and two years of elementary school.

According to available statistics, intake rates for first graders ranged from nearly 100% in 1990 to around 85% in 1993, the second year of the war in Georgia. By the end of the 1990s they had climbed back to 98% of the relevant age group.

Two-level secondary education

After completing elementary school, children are obliged to proceed to the first level of secondary education (grades 7 to 9), which focuses on basic knowledge. The second level of secondary school, which is optional, now comprises three-year programmes in the streams of technical, vocational, and general liberal arts studies. The gymnasium is the only institution of upper secondary education which has the right to select its students on the basis of entrance examinations. With its broad basic and classical education, the gymnasium is designed as an institution preparing the future intellectual elite of the country. Another option for graduates of compulsory education is the lyceum, where various professions are taught at an introductory level. Lyceums have special vocational profiles and their graduates are able to enter higher education institutions with a corresponding profile after passing final examinations.

The third type of upper secondary school focuses on vocational and technical programmes providing pupils with the necessary credits either to continue studies at post-secondary colleges with a technical orientation, or to enter the job market.

In the teaching plan of the common secondary school, Georgian literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and Russian language are the principal subjects. Minor subjects include computer studies, basics of law, and social sciences. Prelimi-

⁵ Originally established in industrial enterprises and other organizations, these pre-primary institutions catered to children of employees during working hours. The economic depression ruined this system; many of the institutions closed because funding was no longer available. They have decreased in number from 805 to forty-seven.

nary military training as a subject is justified by the authorities with reference to the period of war in the 1990s and the still tense situation in the whole area.

Level 2 certificates are considered by most pupils to be an entry ticket to a prestigious department at a leading institution of higher education. Each level 2 curriculum provides pupils with the credits they need to meet the entrance requirements of universities and colleges. To receive their credits and secondary school certificates, pupils have to pass the compulsory and optional courses in their programmes. Until 2003, applicants for a place at a university or at any other higher education institution had to pass competitive entrance examinations. In the future, twelve examinations will replace the university entry examination. It is said that admission into the university system was (and still is) often gained through bribery. As one part of the education reform, the period of study at the upper secondary level was prolonged from eleven to twelve years in 2003. This implies the introduction of external assessment of pupils' performance at grades 6, 9, and the newly introduced grade 12 in order to grant certificates at the end of each cycle; at elementary and level 1 (lower) secondary schools, the first external exams have been reported to be a success.

Special education schools

The official policy for special education is to provide disabled persons with an appropriate general education and, where required, therapeutic training in special schools devoted to this purpose. It should be mentioned that three pre-primary institutions are dedicated to disabled children: one for children with impaired hearing, the second for children with impaired eyesight, and the third for children requiring speech therapy. Because of the great need for speech therapy groups, these have also been set up at numerous ordinary pre-primary institutions.

In general terms, special education makes use of specialized curricula, syllabuses of instruction, and teaching methods. Special vocational and technical courses are aimed at enabling graduates to undertake a relevant profession and gain employment, and at improving pupils' physical and psychological well-being. In 1996 there were eighteen special boarding schools. In total, some 200 pupils were enrolled in these institutions. Special schools are maintained by the State, but charity organizations have played an increasingly important role since the early 1990s. They contribute not only to running costs, but also to the costs of specialized teaching and learning equipment, of medical treatment, and of physical therapies.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Georgia has some 240 institutions of higher education; twenty-six are public, including eight universities and fourteen technical and specialized institutions. In addition, some 200 private institutions of higher education have been established during the last decade.

Public institutions offer the full programme of bachelor's, master's, and doctorate studies in all their faculties, whereas private establishments focus mostly on bachelor's programmes in subjects such as law, economics, computer science, and medicine. However, some leading private establishments also offer master's courses.

Generally speaking, study programmes at private institutions are more practice-oriented than those at public universities; in many programmes traineeships are obligatory.

The overall reform agenda of the education system,⁶ which has been in place for a couple of years, includes a decree on the Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia. This will be reflected in the Law on Higher Education, which is currently being prepared. The reform programme includes some policies that will take longer to be carried out, such as a full accreditation process, and others that are more easily introduced, such as standard assurance initiatives. One of the principal policies is the diversification and decentralization of higher education, through both the creation of new structures and statutes, and the participation of those concerned in internal governance. New educational institutions have been established, primarily private ones, and changes in curricula and the European credit point system (ECTS) have been introduced; this latter is an important step towards harmonization with European education criteria. Major universities have already introduced the four plus two years model of undergraduate and graduate studies leading to bachelor's and master's degrees, followed by postgraduate studies. All of these aspects - the curricula of study programmes, the credit point system, and accreditation criteria - have to be adapted in order to comply with new international standards.

Students are offered a choice of more than 300 different subjects; some are highly specific, but each involves numerous courses.

A survey among university graduates on the impact of their universities' reputation on employment found that 86% of graduates of the five biggest and most renowned private universities found employment shortly after leaving university. The highest employment ratio of graduates from a public university (26%) was that of students from the Faculty of Communications of Tbilisi Technical University. Graduates from other faculties of this university were much worse off, with an average of only 3-4% finding employment.

In the academic year 2001-02, more than 40% of students enrolled at state universities paid study fees. Only those with above average marks study for free. 41% of the universities' budgets was financed from the state budget, and 56% was raised through tuition fees. 3% was covered by donor organizations; these figures may vary according to university and academic year. There is a remarkable demand for university places; one reason is that starting graduate education in whatever subject releases male students at least temporarily from compulsory military service.

Private institutions of higher education have a strong focus on self-supporting subjects. The reputation and the quality of lectures at these institutions varies considerably, but all of them have to be cost-effective in their performance. They therefore contract well-known university professors, who are often in need of a second salary, and thereby benefit from their competence. The material resources of private facilities are in fact mostly quite limited; they usually do not have their own teaching venues, but rather have to rent classrooms. Some of them offer distance teaching.

⁶ Based on the Law on Education adopted in June 1997 addressing each educational sector.

Current problems and perspectives for development

Education in Georgia has many problems. The system continues to follow a vertical structure of transfer where knowledge is passed on from teachers to students without the latter learning how to learn independently. Education does not yet focus on developing skills to solve problems which students have not previously encountered.

The reform process is widely supported, but is not making much headway, the result of which is the impression that the reforms are not seriously intended and that the process of decentralization is only implementing cosmetic changes. Schools continue to depend on administrative supervision, because the traditions of centralized administration are still rather strong, and do not encourage initiative on the part of subordinate authorities. Schools typically have weak leadership and receive no encouragement to move beyond their institutional boundaries.

Educational institutions face practical, basic issues that place heavy burdens upon them, such as:

- Insufficient public financial contributions to guarantee quality performance on the one hand, and inefficient use of actual resources on the other;
- Poor technical equipment and lack of computerization combined with a lack of understanding of the benefits of IT for education;
- Unstructured decision-making processes regarding educational policies, and no strategic action plan to further the enforcement of educational legislation nor to make the multi-stakeholder reform process effective;
- Overloaded curricula and out-dated textbooks - the new generation of textbooks has only just been announced;
- Insufficient further education and training of teachers as a response to changing contents and new methodologies;
- Ineffective regional and central administration of the educational sector; and
- Poor conditions of school buildings: many of them have not been repaired since the end of the Soviet period, and they often have damaged interior equipment and no heating in winter.

It is to be hoped that the on-going transformation process, and particularly the new administration of President Sakashvili, who has been in office since the end of 2003, will introduce changes in policy approaches. It has already been announced that from the academic year 2004-05, beginning in secondary schools, new textbooks will be introduced. In the middle term, each textbook for each grade and subject will be revised according to a new curriculum, which will be developed in close co-operation with schools.

In addition, the relevant authorities have drafted a new act regulating the role and performance of secondary schools, and the development of the Law on Higher Education is being continued. Of utmost importance will be the fight against corruption in the education sector.

Most teachers of the older generation feel insecure about the changes, and many of them have not updated their teaching methods for a long time, but they are aware

that only a new concept can offer an acceptable solution. They would probably all agree that under the new conditions:

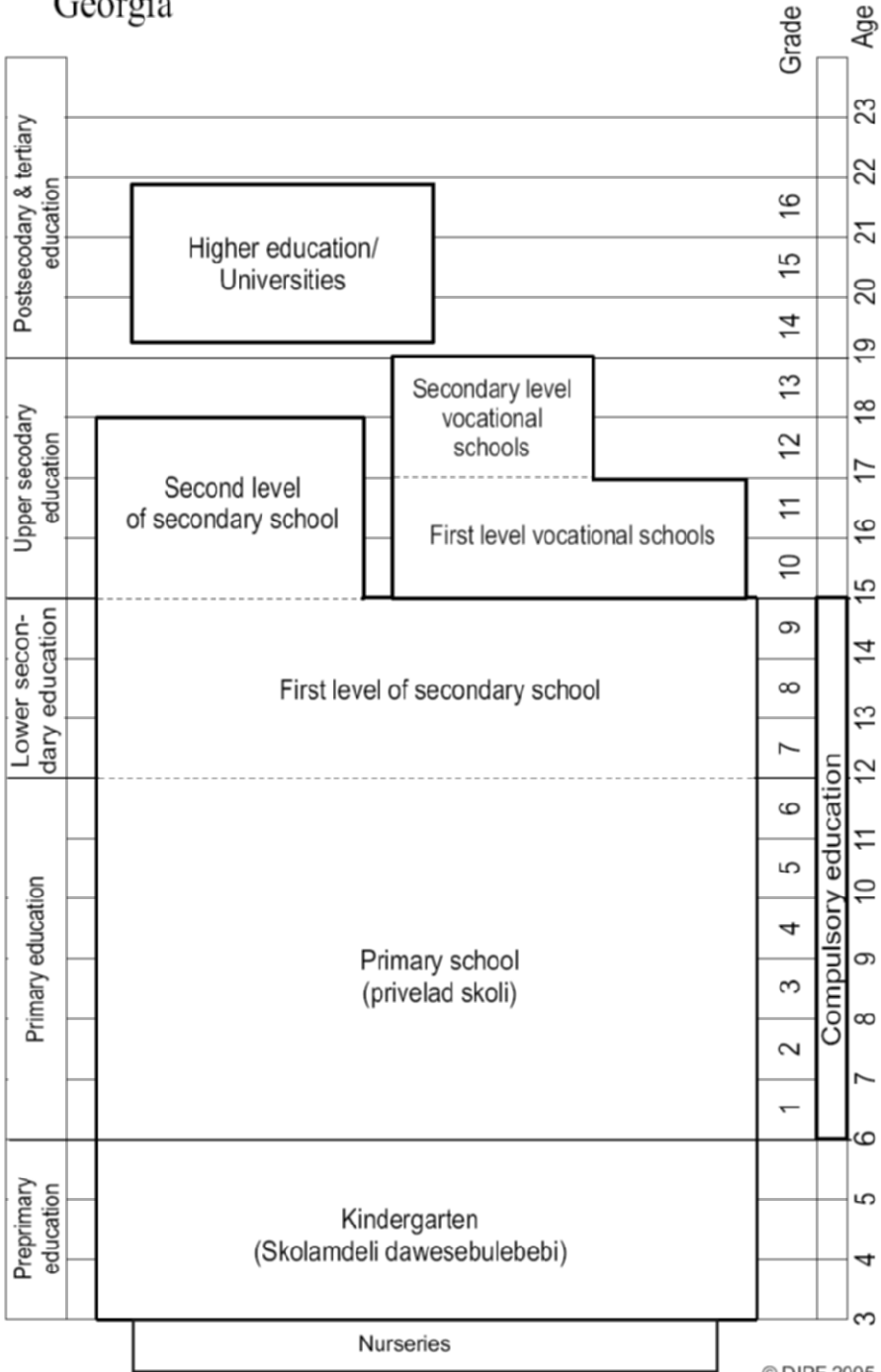
- Effective curricula should provide teachers with the knowledge of what pupils are expected to learn in each subject;
- Newly developed standards should be measurable and specify in particular exactly which skills are to be taught, with a detailed statement for each grade; and
- Teachers will contribute to the improvement of standards in the country's public school if they know what to teach and which goals should be reached.

Information and communication technologies can improve access to quality learning opportunities. The ability to use and to manage IT is becoming an increasingly important success factor. The revision of curricula announced by the new administration offers the best opportunities for incorporating computer and technology standards in the education system; these should include key competences and skills that correspond to practical applications, at least at level 2 secondary school, where basic improvements have planned but unfortunately have not yet been implemented to a satisfactory degree.

References

- Decree of the Minister of Education, N° 208, dated May 18, 1998.
- UNESCO: Education Planning for 2000. Mexico, 26 September, 1990. Recommendation Modules of the UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning and Administration. Paris 1994.
- <http://www.undp.org.ge/nhdr99/chpt4.htm>
- http://www.parliament.ge/LEGAL_ACTS/CONSTITUTION/consten.html
- http://www.mes.gov.ge/files/280_345_477847_ganaTlebis%20saxelmwifo%20mizanebi-proeqti.pdf
- <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gg.html>
- <http://www.georgia-gateway.org/index>
- http://www.eppm.org.ge/pdf/sitanalysis_Georgia; Ministry of Finance
- UNESCO, Global education digest 2004
- www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/Georgia/rapport
- <http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/georgco.htm>
- <http://www.aqa.org.uk/support/iaea/papers/miminoshvili-kutaladze.pdf>;
- <http://www.eppm.org.ge/activities.htm>
- www.aic.lv/rec/Eng/leg_en/lisb_expl.htm
- <http://www.eppm.org.ge/activities.htm#6>. Higher Education Law; adopted by Parliament on March 1, 2002.
- <http://www.eppm.org.ge/pdf/Private%20HE%20in%20Georgia.pdf>
- http://www.eppm.org.ge/pdf/sitanalysis_georgia.pdf
- <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=3424>

Georgia



Hans Döbert

Germany

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

The beginnings of the German school system can be traced back to ‘monastery schools’ (*Klosterschulen*), which are documented from the ninth century, and to cathedral and collegiate schools (*Dom- und Stiftsschulen*), documented from the twelfth century. The monastery schools are considered to be the precursors of the later grammar schools. In the Middle Ages, especially in the context of the growth in trade, the emergence of cities, and the institutionalization of handicrafts, competencies in reading, writing, and numeracy became necessary for larger and larger portions of the population. In response to these needs, private and later communal schools were established in which elementary skills were taught. The heyday of these German schools for writing and mathematics stretched from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, and they are regarded as one of the roots of the *Volksschule* (‘people’s school’), which later became the *Hauptschule*. The emergence of the broader middle class from the eighteenth century led to the establishment of the *Realschule*. Its guiding principles were to cater for those who desired an education which went beyond that of the *Volksschule*, but did not intend to pursue an academic career. The education imparted at this school differed from both classical humanistic and popular education. During the course of the nineteenth century, a three-track school system came into existence, whose role was essentially to cater to and stabilize the social interests of the three-class society of Germany.

The modernization process in the education system that began at the turn of the nineteenth century strengthened the role of the State in the school system (Tenorth 1992, pp. 136ff.), and met the educational interests of broad strata of the population. Since the end of the eighteenth century, schools and universities have as a rule been state institutions, and they can only be established and operated with the approval of the State in the form of the governments of the *Länder*. The diversity stemming from the federal system and from state and confessional contradictions, along with the continuing homogenizing ideal of national educational unity, characterize the history of German schools in the nineteenth century and beyond (Anweiler 1996, p. 31).

Neither in the German Empire (1871 to 1918), nor in the Weimar Republic (1918 to 1933) were there any unitary regulations on schooling or higher education.

Only the national Act on Primary Schools (*Reichsgrundschulgesetz*) of 1920 established, through the introduction of a four-year primary school, a statutory regulation in Germany. The same applied to compulsory education; until 1918 there was only a duty to provide instruction, which could also take the form of home schooling (Tenorth 1992, p. 37). The Weimar Constitution (Article 145) was the first to stipulate general compulsory school education. During the national socialist regime (1933 to 1945), no all-embracing changes to the three-track school structure were introduced in Germany.

Following the breakdown of the NS regime, the *Länder* in the three western zones, later the Federal Republic of Germany, largely adopted the pre-1933 school structure and developed their school systems in the tradition of federalism. This means that the *Länder* have legislative as well as administrative competency. In contrast, in the Soviet Occupation Zone and then the GDR an eight-year comprehensive school (*Einheitsschule*) and a four-year upper secondary school were introduced, which were later replaced by a ten-grade general education polytechnical high school (*Polytechnische Oberschule*). Thus, from 1949, the education system of West Germany and its federal structure were diametrically opposed to the centralized structure of East Germany (Anweiler 1996, p. 32).

From the beginning onwards, furthermore, the education system of both German states displayed major differences in their organization, structure, goals, and contents, as well as in their treatment of the 'results of education'. Even if one considers only the school structure, a significant difference becomes visible. On the one hand, there are the three classic types, born out of historical tradition, of the general-education school system in the Federal Republic of Germany: the *Volksschule* (after 1964 the *Hauptschule*), the *Realschule*, and grammar school or *Gymnasium* (to which must be added, from the beginning of the 1960s, comprehensive schools). On the other hand, the GDR had the ten-year general-education high school for all pupils. Since the first years of the Federal Republic of Germany, educational reforms aimed at changing this three-track structure have made hardly any progress. However, parliamentary democracy and pluralistic public life as a whole have turned out to be a decisive gain for the education system (Geißler 2002b, p. 17). In contrast, educational reform in the GDR lacked any real perspective, in spite of many radical measures and a programme focused on equality of educational opportunity up to higher education, not least because reform-oriented and educational discussions were increasingly ruled by ideology and politics.

Reforms and innovations

In the mid 1960s, a phase of educational reform initiatives began in the Federal Republic of Germany. These arose from various sources, not least the awareness of a looming 'educational catastrophe' (Picht 1964). In particular, the German Educa

tion Council (*Deutscher Bildungsrat*)¹, founded in 1965, aimed to promote and academically monitor educational reforms through a number of recommendations and studies. All levels of the education system, from primary school to the upper secondary level of the grammar school and right up to the universities were forced to undergo changes, albeit not radical ones. Furthermore, new educational institutions were created, for example comprehensive schools, *Fachoberschulen* (a specific type of upper secondary vocational school), *Fachhochschulen* (universities of applied sciences), and new universities. Finally, broad admission to institutions of further education was made possible and the proportion of *Abitur* (university entrance qualification) holders rose to 30% of each age group. The changes carried out or introduced at that time still determine to a large extent the educational landscape in Germany. In the contemporary GDR, there were remarkable efforts to modernize both the structure and the contents of the school system. On the other hand, the system had the clear function of selecting pupils on socio-political criteria (for example only about 12% of each age group had *Abitur*). The fall of communism in the GDR in the Autumn of 1989 resulted in the demolition of an education system developed in the course of more than forty years. The ‘Round Tables’, which had arisen mainly from the citizens’ rights movement, first sought to reform the GDR education system, and later attempted the balancing act between the most tried and tested elements of the GDR school and the fundamental structures of the federal German school system. In the end, however, the efforts invested in the process of ‘bringing both systems together’ mostly led to the adaptation of the East German to the West German order. Since the reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990, the federal structure has also been applied to the newly formed East German *Länder*. In effect, the West German tracked system was introduced in 1992-93 into all five new *Länder*, though in slightly modified versions.

Even if a new phase of educational development started in Germany with the German Reunification, the antiquated state of the education system only became a real public concern after the results of international surveys on student performance (TIMSS, PISA) were published at the end of the 1990s and at the end of 2001. The recommendations² on five issues spanning many fields of education made at the end of 2001 by the *Forum Bildung*³ (Forum for Education) were an important contribution to the discussion on changes in the German education system. These five recommendations focussed on future educational and qualification targets, the promotion of the equality of educational opportunities, quality assurance in the context of international competition, lifelong learning, and the new culture of learning and

¹ The *Deutsche Bildungsrat* [German Education Council] existed from 1965 to 1975. This panel of academics and government representatives was established to formulate development plans for the German education system, proposals for structural changes, and recommendations for long-term education planning.

² With the *Forum Bildung*, which was established in 1999 as a joint effort by the Federation and the *Länder*, an ‘Alliance for Education’ was created which offered the chance to discuss the reforms of the education system and possibilities for implementing them across the boundaries of legal competencies.

³ *Empfehlungen des Forum Bildung* [Recommendations of the Forum for Education]. Edited by the work team of *Forum Bildung* at the office of the BLK. Bonn 2001.

teaching. Nevertheless, the recommendations of the *Forum Bildung* were unable completely to fulfil the role assigned to them as initiators of an educational reform in Germany. Furthermore, they failed to play their intended part in the public discussion, and were even marginalized by the PISA results. A whole range of recommendations are found in the measures of the *Länder* governments decided upon in December 2001 for the improvement of school education in Germany as a consequence of the results of the PISA survey. These measures concentrated on seven fields of action: linguistic skills, interlocking the pre-school domain and primary school, primary-school education, the promotion of educationally disadvantaged children, securing quality of instruction and of schools, professional development of teachers, and all-day schools.

In general, recent years have seen the launch of a whole range of developments, some of which may be seen as long-term and sustainable reform and innovation strategies. These developments include: the tendency, influenced above all by the new *Länder*, towards flexible institutional solutions within the existing structures (for example a double-track secondary level); the step-by-step implementation of a new type of school system governance through the limitation of central requirements and the promotion of the responsibility of each school; an emphasis on the quality of school and instruction as the core of school development; a paradigm shift of school system governance towards output-oriented governance; and the introduction of continuous system monitoring and quality assurance.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

As a continuation of a tradition reaching back a long time in German history, German federalism, as it is laid down in the Basic Law (Constitution) can be seen as one of the most important structural features of the German education system. Article 30 of the Basic Law stipulates: ‘Except as otherwise provided or permitted by this Basic Law, the exercise of state powers and the discharge of state functions is a matter for the *Länder*.’ For the education system, this means that the *Länder* have legislative competency in all issues pertaining to cultural policy and cultural administration – from radio to state libraries, theatre, schools, and higher education. This division of competency is described as the ‘cultural sovereignty of the *Länder*’.

Competencies of the Federation

The cultural sovereignty of the *Länder* is restricted by a variety of far-reaching regulations in the Basic Law. For example, the Federation has the genuine right to legislate on these matters if ‘the establishment of equal living conditions throughout the federal territory or the maintenance of legal or economic unity’ (Article 72(2)) can only be reached by doing so. Specifically, the Federation has competencies for a number of areas in the education system, such as wage and employment law issues, work-based vocational training, the extension and construction of institutions of higher education, financial support of pupils and students, educational planning, and funding of research.

Competencies of the Länder and the municipalities

For all other areas of the education system, competencies rest with the *Länder* and the local authorities. The division of competencies between each *Land* and its local authorities (municipalities, districts, and urban and rural municipalities within districts) can be described – for the sake of clarity – in terms of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ school matters. The building and maintenance of school premises; the appointment and financing of non-teaching personnel (school secretaries and service employees); and communal school development programs, which involve making sure that the school premises are correctly located, that the school has the right operational size, and that it is available at the right time, are major external school matters for which the local authorities are responsible. Internal school matters, for which the *Länder* are responsible, are all educational issues in the narrower sense. In particular, these are: the aims and contents of instruction (curricula, timetables, textbooks, transfer to the next grade, and examinations); the training, appointment, and financing of teaching staff; and the structural form of the school system (school forms and duration of schooling). Co-ordination measures between the Federal Government and the *Länder* take place as necessary in the *Bundesrat* (Upper House), and in the Commission of the Federation and the *Länder* for Educational Planning and Research Funding (*Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung*), which serves as a permanent discussion forum for all matters concerning not only the Federation, but also the *Länder* and the promotion of research. They also take place in the *Wissenschaftsrat* (Science Council) and in the Planning Committee for University Construction. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - KMK*) is an organ that enables co-operation and co-ordination in educational matters between the governments of the *Länder*. Its decisions only have the status of recommendations. On the basis of a convention between the *Länder* with regard to the standardization of the school system (Hamburg Convention), which was concluded in 1964 and amended in 1971, the following features of the education systems of the *Länder* were unified: the beginning and the duration of full-time compulsory education, the dates of the beginning and the end of the school year, the length of holidays, the descriptions of the various educational institutions and their organization, the possibility to move from one school type to another, the beginning of foreign language instruction and the sequence of the foreign-language options, the recognition of leaving certificates and state examinations in the context of teacher training, and the definition of a scale of grades for school reports and for teacher-training examinations.

In Germany, school instruction is evolving between the conflicting priorities of material and formal education. Although the imparting of subject-related knowledge and skills is at the forefront, general, cross-curricular aims of classroom instruction have great importance. The *Länder*, responsible for shaping the school system, decide on their own on the aims and contents of institutionalized education. Cross-curricular objectives of education laid down in legislation and in relevant documents include the ability to act on one’s own initiative and areas of social competences

such as the ability to learn, to judge, to co-operate, to communicate, to criticize, and to solve conflicts. Those objectives are found as explicit or indirect requirements in the list of guiding principles of nearly all *Länder*. Alongside numerous similarities, it is also possible to distinguish different focal points and weightings. For example, preparation for the world of work is clearly stated as an educational goal in the school laws of only five *Länder*. On the other hand, the school laws of all but three *Länder* make at least general references to targets such as the ability to take part in economic and vocational life, and the fulfilment of vocational tasks.

Socio-economic context

German society is characterized by great cultural and social heterogeneity. On the one hand, this provides people with chances to shape their lives individually. At the same time, however, common principles of coexistence are losing their importance. The education system can contribute to social cohesion in a particular way. This primarily means that the education system is open to everybody and provides support to everybody: adolescents from all strata of the population, with and without an immigration background; boys and girls; and young people from large cities and rural areas. Presently, both integration and segregation are taking place in the education system. These aspects have to be more clearly specified in order to understand the peculiarities of the school system in Germany.

The plurality of secondary school forms is the one feature in the German school system that best illustrates the principle of segregation aimed at homogenizing separate learning groups. In this context, pupils are allocated to different education tracks at the end of the primary level, a decision that is commonly taken at the end of school year 4 and which, from an international perspective, is implemented particularly early. This system allows for later corrections in the form of changes in the type of school attended and leaving school before completion. The fact that school years can be repeated should also be mentioned in this context. The decision for a specific type of secondary school is governed by different rules in the *Länder*. In most of the *Länder*, parents now have the last say on the choice of secondary school (exceptions to this are Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Saxony and Thuringia). Theoretically, school years 5 and 6 are considered in many *Länder* to be 'trial periods' (described for example as 'observation level' or 'promotion level'), but practice shows that, because of resource-allocation policy, it is in the interest of every secondary school to keep pupils once they are enrolled, so a comparatively low number leave the school.

The allocation of pupils to the different types of secondary school is influenced to a large extent by their social background. Studies have shown that children whose parents attained a low level of education have to achieve far higher performance levels in order to be recommended for grammar school, compared to those whose parents hold a higher education degree (Lehmann e.a. 1997, 1999). Therefore, it is generally established that success at school greatly depends on social background. This is especially obvious in the case of children and young people with an immigration background. A whole range of different learning environments arise, so that individual pupils, in spite of having the same learning abilities, develop in quite

diverse ways. On the other hand, girls are considered to be more advantaged than disadvantaged.

The homogenization already effected by the allocation of school track is intensified by the change of school tracks, which is possible at the end of the 'probationary period'. Learning requirements increase particularly at the beginning of instruction in a second foreign language from year 7 onwards, which leads to further transfers to a less demanding school track. This so-called 'downward mobility' as well as comparatively high repetition rates are characteristic features of the German school system. The frequency of class repeats varies from *Land* to *Land*, from school track to school track, and from school year to school year. Research shows that around a quarter of the pupils in years 5 to 9 repeat a year at least once.

Social position of the teaching profession

In the academic year 2000-01, around 900,000 teachers were teaching in Germany at general-education and vocational schools. Of those 900,000, 90% were in full- or part-time employment. Women make up more than 60% of the teaching workforce. In Germany, teachers are commonly trained at universities, in a few cases, at teacher-training colleges. After a standard period of study of six to ten semesters (depending on the type of teacher training), teacher training at university is completed with the first state examination. This is followed by a two-year practical traineeship phase, the *Referendariat*, which mostly takes place at schools, and by the second state examination. After this, education-degree holders can apply for a teaching position. Teachers who find a job are generally given civil-servant status (in East German *Länder*, this generally only applies to school directors). Because of this social protection and the relatively generous old-age pension which they can expect, the teaching profession enjoys high social prestige. Furthermore, in Germany the wages of teachers are significantly above average earnings. The remuneration of a teacher is dependent on the level of training achieved, on the school type in which he or she is employed, and on his or her age. The highest wages are paid to grammar-school teachers, the lowest to primary-school and *Hauptschule* teachers. The deployment of teachers is carried out according to school types and on the basis of the hours to be taught (mandatory periods). According to school type, teachers have to teach between twenty-three and twenty-eight periods of forty-five minutes per week.

School and the role of the family

School and family fulfil specific functions in the process of education, upbringing, and socialization. These functions are strongly influenced by the social-strata specific cultural environment of the family. The family plays a special role as an educational institution that prepares children for school and accompanies them while they attend school. The development and promotion of performance are particularly affected by the social and cultural conditions of the family. According to the Basic Law, the upbringing of children is both the natural right and duty of parents. The mission of schools therefore includes as a fundamental principle the observance of parental rights. The interaction of school and family is regulated by regulations at

Land level. Parents' representatives, elected at regional and supra-regional level in classes, schools, and regions have varying yet definite rights to voice their concerns about basic issues of educational policy, such as the design of the curricula.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The Federal Republic of Germany is a democratic and social federal state. This means that any survey of the education system should consider not only Germany as a whole, but also each one of the sixteen *Länder* with its own legislation and government. Mandates for the education system are regulated by the federal structure. The Basic Law contains only a few fundamental regulations on education, culture, and science. For example, it guarantees the freedom of the arts, science, research, and teaching. It also guarantees the freedom of creed and philosophy of life (*Weltanschauung*), the free choice of a profession and of a professional training establishment, equality before the law, and rights of parents as legal guardians. Furthermore, the whole school system is under state control.

According to the Basic Law, it is the responsibility of the Federation to pass legislation relating to the support of children and young people within the framework of social legislation. This also applies to the provision of nursery schools and kindergartens. The *Länder* are expected to give this legislation more concrete form by passing their own laws. Where the *primary level* is concerned, the Basic Law and the constitutions of the *Länder* contain a range of fundamental regulations on the school system (school supervision, rights of parents, compulsory education, religious instruction, and private schools). The legal bases for primary school as the first level of compulsory schooling for all children are contained in school laws, laws on school system administration, and school regulations for primary schools, which are passed by the ministers of education of the *Länder*. The *secondary level* comprises general-education as well as vocational school instruction. Grounded in educational legislation, the laws of the *Länder* concerning school administration, compulsory education, and school regulations for general-education and vocational schools contain detailed provisions on the contents of the courses and of the leaving certificates and qualifications that can be acquired at the end of the lower and upper secondary level. The legal regulations for vocational training in industry and handicrafts are contained in the Act on Vocational Training and the Act Regulating Handicrafts. At the *higher-education level*, the Framework Act for Higher Education and the legislation on higher education of the *Länder* provide the legal basis. On the basis of regulations, which are kept rather broad, the laws on higher education of the *Länder* provide concrete guidelines for individual matters. The regulations apply to all higher-education institutions, including private ones, and thereby constitute a systematic basis for the higher-education system, which comprises over 300 institutions. One regulation of the Basic Law refers to the expansion of higher-education institutions and establishes that the construction of higher-education buildings is the common task of the Federation and the *Länder*. Adult education is ruled by the state to a lesser extent than the other educational sectors. State activities in the field of

continuing education are limited to laying down fundamental rules and regulations related to organization and financing. Here, too, detailed regulations are under the competency of the *Länder*.

In Germany, 'input control' has traditionally dominated in accordance with the classical basic understanding of educational policy control. Great importance was attached to input (for example financing, qualification of personnel, deployment of material resources, and the extension of the administration) into the school system in the hope that the expected 'output' would then more or less 'automatically' ensue. This input control through various central specifications meant that every school enjoyed a rather modest 'autonomy'.

After the publication of the TIMSS results, there was a paradigm shift in the organizational and steering philosophy of the German education system from input to output control. The steering model, which was at first practised in municipal administration as the so-called 'new steering model' according to the Dutch model, also found entry into educational policy. At the core of this policy is an emphasis on 'result-oriented' steering procedures. On the one hand, this emphasis implies a clear tendency towards greater freedom for individual schools in nearly all of the *Länder*. On the other hand, it means that the previous scepticism towards empirically-based comparative studies was widely abandoned, and empirical evaluation received an increasing amount of attention in the area of educational policy. As a result, standardized tests in the course of school careers, which are organized at the level of the *Länder*, and national and international *Large Scale Assessments* are gaining ground.

Financing

The financing of the education system from public money rests on the following rules. Most education institutions are financed by public authorities. They generally finance themselves through direct funding from the public budget and only to a very small extent through school or study fees. Decisions are taken at all three levels of the political and administrative hierarchy in Germany (Federation, *Länder*, municipalities) on the financing of education, yet 90% of the funds are provided by the *Länder* and municipalities. The pre-school sector is not part of the state school system, so attendance at nursery school or a kindergarten is generally subject to a fee. The institutions of the pre-school sector are co-financed by public and non-public bodies, i.e. by the municipalities, welfare associations, and the churches. Public as well as voluntary services receive allowances for material and staff costs. Furthermore, parents have to pay fees in order to cover the costs. The amount of fees that parents have to pay depends on their income. The state school system is financed on the basis of the division of competencies between the *Länder* and the municipalities. Attendance at school is free of charge. Every *Land* supports the municipalities through funding, e.g. grants for the construction of school buildings or for certain operating costs. The payments made by the municipalities cover around 20% of the costs of the school system, while the *Länder* carry around 80% of the total costs of the school system. Public institutions of higher education are financed to a level of 95% from the budget of the ministries for science and research of the *Länder*. As a general rule, institutions of higher education (with the exception of some private

institutions of higher education), charge neither fees, nor semester fees, nor examination fees - yet⁴. This applies to both German and foreign students. The continuing education sector is operated by public authorities, private enterprises, corporate groups, and institutions of continuing education. The governing bodies of *private schools* are granted subsidies by the *Länder* in various forms. Authorized private schools have the right to a regulated financial grant, which covers the staff and material costs that a comparable public school would have. Public grants depend on the type of school, e.g. authorized private schools (replacement schools), recognized private schools (complementary schools), boarding schools, and church replacement schools.

In 2001, over 187 billion euros were spent in Germany on education, science, and research (spending of public bodies, private bodies, and companies). The State, the economy, and private persons spent 131.7 billion euros of this on the carrying out of the education process and the promotion of participants in education (see *BLK-Bildungsfinanzbericht* (financial report for education) 2001-02). From 2000 to 2001, spending on education rose by around 2.3%. For the schools, the institutions of higher education, and the promotion of the education system, spending for the years 2001 and 2002 was increased again, although spending on education in Germany as a percentage of GDP is still below the OECD average. Compared to other European countries, Germany expends its resources particularly strongly on older pupils and students (in 2002 the spending per pupil or student was 6% above the OECD average), whereas many other European states do more for nursery schools, kindergartens, and primary schools (in Germany the spending per pupil in the primary sector was 8% lower than the OECD average).

Public and private schooling

School legislation in all the *Länder* states that private schools may be set up in addition to public schools. Schools financed by private bodies (private schools) serve about 5.7% (1999) of pupils and thus play a marginal role, fulfilling a replacement and complementary function. They are divided into replacement schools recognized by the state, whose leaving certificates enjoy unrestricted recognition, and schools permitted by the state (complementary schools), whose pupils have to take examinations at a state school, or as 'external examinees' at a school recognized by the state. Most private schools are replacement schools. The governing bodies of private schools can be churches or other institutions under public or private law, but also private persons. Private schools recognized by the state are subject to state control. Curricula and learning targets correspond to those of state schools. Leaving certificates are controlled by state examination commissions. Private schools receive as a rule part compensation for costs (90%), or have all of their costs covered by the state. However, only those costs are covered that the state would spend on a comparable student at a state school. Since most private schools have smaller classes and more facilities, the costs are significantly higher than in state schools. Therefore,

⁴ According to the current ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court, the *Länder* have the right to charge tuition fees for higher education. It is therefore expected that such fees will be introduced as from 2006.

most private schools charge varying amounts of school fees. Supplementary costs also occur in boarding schools.

General standards of the school education system

The specifically German understanding of education received its formative basis in the late Middle Ages. Since then, it has constantly stood under the influence of both tradition and debates on the virtues of practice-remote, 'superior-quality', general education as opposed to practice- and work-oriented education. School education and its targets are given concrete form in subject contents, which define what is considered to be 'necessary to know'. The goals and contents of school education are fixed in timetables, teaching plans, and curricula that have enjoyed relative stability for nearly a hundred years. The discussion on education in Germany was given a twist through the introduction of the notion of competency, whose consequences for the determination of targets and contents of institutionalized teaching and learning are only gradually becoming clear. 'Competency' and 'education' (*Bildung*) differ from one another in both their formal and their content-related aspects. It must be noted that PISA clearly follows a competency-oriented approach to learning at school, which unequivocally differs from the traditional German understanding of education.

The central instrument with which the *Länder* implement and control the school policy that they each follow in the context of their competencies is *school supervision* (*Schulaufsicht*). Every one of the sixteen *Länder* possesses its own educational administration, which is comprised of several instances in charge of school supervision. The organization of school supervision varies from *Land* to *Land*. Above the level of school supervision there is in any case a ministry, which is responsible for schools and other sectors. The main specifications of school development are determined by this ministry. As far as they concern central areas of the school system, these rules and regulations must be passed by the legislative, that is, by the current parliament. These regulate in particular: the quantity and distribution of subjects of instruction (timetables), curricula, the recognition of textbooks, pupils' careers (grading, progression to another class, and transfer to another school track), the number of pupils per class, and the number of teachers. School supervision includes the areas of academic supervision, related to issues concerning school subjects and methodological questions of instruction and education; legal supervision, which, unlike academic supervision, does not address the schools, but the (municipal) school governing bodies; and staff supervision, which evaluates the performance of employees. In the context of the debates on a stronger decentralization of the school system, school supervision is nowadays expected to focus more on counselling and support services.

Quality management

To date in Germany school governance – and the quality assurance associated with it – has been mainly implemented by legal and administrative regulations. Since the whole school system is under the control of the State, the State created school supervision in the narrower sense of an instrument. In a broader sense, there is a net-

work of regulating factors, including teacher training, subject lessons, teaching plans and curricula, textbooks, timetables, and school supervision. Above all, state regulations quantitatively concentrate on three major areas. The first major area concerns what children should learn at school. This means timetables, subject-allocation plans, curricula, and procedures for licensing textbooks. The timetable acts as an important instrument in this area, which corresponds to the subject-teacher principle and time rhythms. A second area is concerned with standardizing status-relevant school-career decisions, that is the examination, transfer, admission, and leaving-certificate regulations. These regulations ensure the formal continuity of assessment performance and standardized assessment procedures at school. The third area concerns regulations on the organization of instruction, such as the fixing of numbers of pupils per class, the number of teaching hours, or the type of instruction-related differentiation. While exact legal and administrative regulations apply in these cases, fewer standards apply to the preparation and implementation of instruction, educational work outside of the classroom, co-operation among teachers, and in-service training.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, there have been plans in the *Länder* aimed at intensifying quality assurance. At the centre of these plans is the strengthening of the independence of the individual school, and at the same time the reduction of school administration and of the control function of school supervision (linked with an extension of support and counselling services for schools). Mainly as a result of the PISA survey and of a supplementary PISA for Germany's *Länder* (PISA-E), the Federation, the *Länder*, and schools in Germany have increasingly put their conventional system of quality assurance to the test, and have intensified their search for new solutions.

The decision of the KMK of June 2002 to elaborate national educational standards in key subjects for certain school years and final years is a major step in developing quality management in the German school system. Regular checks will be carried out through Germany-wide comparisons and comparative research. Such a measure rests on the recognition that a quality-development effect arises from binding standards that are directly reflected in the work of the individual school and in the shaping of instruction by the individual teacher. In order to support the efforts of the *Länder* in the assurance and improvement of educational outputs, an institute for quality development in the education system (*Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen* - IQB) was founded. Its mission is to further develop, operationalize, standardize, and check educational standards in Germany. Educational standards represent an important instrument for the documentation and assessment of the successes of educational work. By implementing educational standards, indicators could be developed that would enable long-term quality management. In addition to the creation of the IQB, there are developments tending towards new forms of quality management in all the *Länder*, such as quality and evaluation agencies, school inspections, changes in school supervision, etc. The governance of the school system therefore poses a problem that is new to Germany, which is how to deal with this manifold steering information in a concrete and practice-promoting way.

Educational policy in Germany also responded to the demand for continuous monitoring, transparency, and controls in the form of a regular system of reporting on education. In Germany there was previously no continuous and overarching monitoring of the development of the education system (system monitoring), even though information existed on individual areas of the education system. This was unable, however, even when brought together, to provide a complete picture of the education system.⁵ In the autumn of 2003, a report on education in Germany was compiled and published for the first time.⁶ Such reports on education in the perspective of lifelong learning, which in the future will appear regularly, are on the one hand expected to serve as a basis for further educational planning, and on the other hand inform the public about the present state of development of the education system in Germany. An indicator-based report commissioned by the Federation and the *Länder*, which will be the next report to be issued, will provide a picture of the whole education system. It is expected to be available at the beginning of 2006.

Support systems

The term ‘support systems’ has only in recent years entered the vocabulary of educational policy, above all in connection with the decentralization of school administration and the strengthening of the independence and self-responsibility of individual schools following the paradigm shift from the ‘administered’ to the ‘learning school’. In this context, support systems are seen as instruments that support the ‘educational performance’ of the individual school as well as the activities of teachers and school management. This support stands in a close relationship to control of the schools, so that ‘control and support systems’ are also often spoken of as instruments of state governance of schools. More specifically, the following sectors belong to the ‘support systems’: school supervision, school counselling, in-service training of teachers, school-related counselling by experts, evaluation of schools, regional co-operation among schools, psychological services, school social work, school expert information, and media services⁷.

New models of school support systems aim at combining support measures either at *Land* level in service centres encompassing teacher training, school development, and IT-services – for example the *Land* institutes for school and media (*Landesinstitute für Schule und Medien*) – or in regional educational centres, which fulfil

⁵ Particularly: Schulstatistik der Kultusministerkonferenz [School Statistics of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany], Grund- und Strukturdaten des BMBF [Basic and Structural Data, published by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research], Berufsbildungsbericht (BMBF) [Report on Vocational Training, published by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research], Berichtssystem Weiterbildung (BMBF) [Report System on Continuing Training, published by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research], etc.

⁶ Bildungsbericht für Deutschland: Erste Befunde [Report on Education in Germany], edited by H. Avenarius, H. Ditton, H. Döbert et al. Opladen 2003.

⁷ More detailed explanations on the whole field of ‘support systems’ can be found in Döbert, H./Klieme, E./Sroka, W. (Eds): Conditions of school performance. A quest for understanding the international variation of PISA results. Münster e.a. 2004, pp. 298-372.

core tasks (among them school supervision, school counselling, and the organization of teacher in-service training) and in addition set their own areas of emphasis.

The current school system

General structure: overview

For all children in Germany, *compulsory schooling* begins at the age of six years and generally consists of nine years of full time school (ten years in Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, and North-Rhine Westphalia). After finishing compulsory schooling, pupils who are attending neither a general-education school at upper secondary level nor a full-time vocational school have to attend a part-time school, generally for three years (the duration of school attendance is based on the duration of the apprenticeship years of recognized vocational-training professions). In some *Länder* there are regulations according to which pupils who neither attend a general-education school at upper secondary level, nor start an apprenticeship, must attend a full-time vocational school. Furthermore, in most *Länder* there is the possibility of completing a tenth school year, thereby acquiring supplementary qualifications. Compulsory schooling also applies to children and young people with handicaps. Depending on their special-schooling and support needs, they attend either a school together with non-handicapped pupils or a special school.

In structural terms, the school system in Germany is at best a ‘partly integrated system’ that, after a relatively unitary elementary and primary level, splits into different parts at lower and upper secondary levels, at higher-education level, and at the level of further education. This structure, which is different from *Land to Land*, and covers both school forms of varying levels and institutions of vocational training, confers upon the German education system, and especially the school system, a degree of differentiation, visible at an early stage, and numerous transfer decisions that make Germany stand out in international comparison. Currently, the manifold and differentiated general-education school system in Germany comprises:

- Primary school (compulsory education from six years of age), whose duration is of four or (in Berlin, Brandenburg and in some primary schools in Bremen) six years.
- The lower secondary level, which is organized in a different way in nearly every *Land*.

The only school form that exists in all the *Länder* is grammar school – *Gymnasium* – which starts in year 5 or year 7, with *Abitur* after year 12 or 13. Tracked systems in the ‘classic’ fashion, comprising *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and grammar school are in place in Baden-Württemberg and in Bavaria. In Berlin, Hamburg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia, and Schleswig-Holstein, these three school forms are complemented by a range of comprehensive schools (co-operative or integrated, and with or without the upper level of grammar school). In most of the new *Länder*, and now also in many ‘old’ *Länder*, there is a two-track school system: the *Mittelschule* in Saxony (with a leaving certificate combining the *Hauptschule* and the *Realschule*), the *Sekundarschule* in Saxony-Anhalt (with the same leaving certificates), and the *Regelschule* in Thuringia (likewise with leaving certificate for the

Hauptschule and the *Realschule* from year 9). In Brandenburg there are currently *Realschule* and comprehensive schools (as from the school year 2005-06, these two school forms will be replaced by an upper school), as well as grammar schools. In Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, there is, next to *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, comprehensive schools, and grammar schools, the integrated form of the regional school (for school years 5 to 10). The most varied school landscape is found in North-Rhine Westphalia: alongside *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, comprehensive school, and grammar school there are the regional school (comprising the instruction of *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*) and the ‘dual upper school’ (*Duale Oberschule*), which aims at linking general education to vocational training. Moreover, in all *Länder*, there are special schools for children with special needs. Often years 5 and 6 are run as ‘probationary periods’ of the transfer phase from primary school to the secondary level; this is supposed to foster, monitor, and orient the pupils.

- The upper secondary level comprises educational and training courses at general-education schools (upper level of grammar school), vocational full-time schools, and vocational courses under the dual system (in the vocational sector, there are around fifteen different school forms).
- Schools run by private bodies (private schools), catering for around 5.7% of pupils. There is a distinction within this type of school; some are recognized by the state as replacement schools, whose leaving certificates enjoy unrestricted recognition. Other schools are permitted by the state (supplementary schools); pupils at these schools have to sit examinations at a state school or at a school recognized by the state.
- Furthermore, there are various courses at ‘second chance’ schools, such as colleges, evening *Realschule*, and evening grammar school.

The upper secondary level is followed by higher education, which can also be acquired through a second-chance education course. Not only from outside Germany is it difficult to recognize a specific German school system among the diversity of structural characteristics of schools in the single *Länder*.

Leaving certificates and qualifications (admission requirements)

Corresponding to the traditional three-track school structure, there are, in the German school system, generally three school-leaving certificates: the *Hauptschule* leaving certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*), the *Realschule* leaving certificate (*Mittlere Reife*), and the *Abitur*. Holders of the *Hauptschule* leaving certificate are entitled to entry to a vocational school, and it is the admission requirement for an apprenticeship and for training as a skilled worker in the industrial and commercial professions.

The *Realschule* leaving certificate (*Realschulabschluss*) and its equivalents, the *Mittlere Reife* and *Fachschulreife*, qualify for further school education at upper secondary level in a general or vocational grammar school (generally a certain minimum grade is required). Once vocational education is completed, these qualifications also qualify for the vocational upper level (vocational college). They further constitute the admission requirement for training in skilled professions (for example industrial clerk, bank clerk, dental technician, technical drawer, amongst others).

The advanced technical college entrance qualification (*Fachhochschulreife*) qualifies for admission to a university of applied sciences. The *Abitur* or general higher-education entrance qualification allows admission to a course at university, an institution of higher education, or a university of applied sciences. In some *Länder*, the acquisition of the general higher-education entrance qualification can contain an expert vocational element. But such a leaving certificate only qualifies for certain university courses. The leaving certificates obtained after successful completion of the different school types qualify for certain admissions, which can, however, be restricted, for example by a *numerus clausus*. In other words, the leaving certificate must have a given grade or above in specific subjects, or a certain average grade. Incidentally, for broad sectors of state and especially private education careers, there is no legal regulation stipulating what leaving certificate qualifies for what. The requirements are set by the school operators and their organizations – the guilds of the trades and handicrafts, chambers, and associations – according to their own judgement. Increasingly in the state and above all in the private further and higher education sectors, schools and other educational institutions no longer require only a leaving certificate but, additionally, a pass in an entrance examination or ability test.

Pre-primary education

All children who have not reached compulsory education age belong to the elementary sector. Pre-school education, which caters to children aged three to six, is provided primarily in nursery schools and kindergartens. Nursery schools and kindergartens or other care centres for children of pre-school age are mostly municipal institutions or institutions run by independent bodies. Normally, parents have to pay a fee for pre-school education. As a rule, children begin school at the age of six. For children who are of school age but who are not sufficiently physically or intellectually developed to attend school, there are pre-school programmes in school kindergartens. Whereas pre-school education is the responsibility of the Youth Welfare Service (for whom the social ministries, as a rule, are responsible), a few *Länder* have, as part of the school system, specific pre-school classes for five-year-olds, who are not yet of school age, or school kindergartens for six-year-olds who are not 'mature' enough to attend school.

Primary education

Compulsory schooling starts with the primary sector. The primary sector covers years 1 to 4 (in Berlin, Brandenburg, and partly in Bremen school years 1 to 6), which means that, as a rule, children attend primary school together from the age of six to ten (or twelve). During the two first years, primary school children are given neither numerical grades nor a school report. Instead, they receive detailed assessments of their learning behaviour, their learning progress, and their behaviour within the group. It is only from year 3 that verbal assessments are gradually replaced by numerical grades. At the end of primary school, pupils once more receive a verbal assessment, this time in addition to their numerical grade, along with a recommendation for the school they should attend at lower secondary level. For the transfer from primary school to the next level, the wishes of parents have precedence over

the right of the state to regulate. The regulations for progress to the next school, which differ from *Land* to *Land*, provide for co-operation between school and parents, whereby the parents have to be counselled, the school gives a recommendation, and, if need be, an aptitude test is carried out. After the selection period, the procedure that is most frequently applied can be described as follows: in the majority of cases, parents and pupils are already informed about the type of school that the pupils will attend in the school year that precedes the transfer. This information is generally provided by the teaching staff of the school, by representatives of the higher school, or by members of the school administration, as well as through visits to the higher school ('open days'). During the last primary-school year, the children or their parents receive a 'primary-school recommendation'. The basis for this recommendation is basically the median grade obtained in the school report. In some *Länder*, additional selection procedures are used. If the parents heed the recommendation, they can enrol their child at the higher school. If the parents wish to deviate from the recommendation by sending their child to a school with a lower status, for example by sending a child recommended for the *Realschule* to the *Hauptschule*, there are no problems. However, sending a child to a school of a higher status than the one he or she was recommended for is linked to certain conditions (entrance examination and average grade, amongst others). In nearly all *Länder*, the first three months or the first half year are treated as a probationary period, at whose end a final decision is made. This whole procedure has been repeatedly criticized. The core of the criticism is that it is hardly possible to make a safe school-career prediction for a ten-year-old child. Pointing to the possibility of a later transfer from one school type to another (permeability of the school system) does not make the problem go away.

Lower secondary education

For more than three decades, the lower secondary level has been one of the most debated sectors of the German school system, both from an academic point of view and with respect to school policy. At the centre of the debate are always the questions of the relationship between the fostering and integration of all pupils on the one hand, and appropriate differentiation according to skill and performance on the other. Until the beginning of the 1980s, this problem had culminated in the following question: is differentiation according to various types of school, or rather internal differentiation within a comprehensive school the solution to be implemented on pedagogical and organizational grounds, and should the three-track school system (*Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, grammar school) be preserved or be replaced partially or completely by a comprehensive school system? For more than two decades, discussion concerning the form of the lower secondary level revolved around the controversy in Germany over structural alternatives. Debate on the competing systems at the lower secondary level subsided following the agreement of the KMK on school types and courses at the lower secondary level in 1993, but it has flared up again since the publication of the results of the PISA surveys (2000 and 2003).

The *secondary school sector* is divided into the lower secondary level, stretching from years 5 to 10 (or 7 to 10) and the upper secondary level. The lower secondary

level caters to pupils from ten or twelve to sixteen years of age, whereas the upper secondary level caters to pupils from sixteen to nineteen years of age. Both age groups are subject to compulsory education. The first 'classical' secondary school type is the *Hauptschule*. The *Hauptschule*, which developed from the upper level of the *Volksschule* was, until the middle of the 1970s, the largest general-education school by numbers. The number of pupils attending this type of school sank considerably, however, up to the end of the 1980s. In some *Länder*, it has even become a 'left-over school'. But even in places where it was promoted in education policy, such as in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, the number of pupils decreased. For this reason, the *Hauptschule* has, not without justification, been called the 'loser in the educational expansion'. Its educational task is made more difficult by the facts that today's pupils are very heterogeneous, and that it educates so called 'problem children' and less motivated pupils, while at the same time demands with regard to the level of education have increased, for example by English being made a compulsory foreign language. In three *Länder* (Berlin, Bremen, and North-Rhine Westphalia) the *Hauptschule* does not finish after the tenth year, but after the ninth. Most *Hauptschule* pupils, after completing general education, proceed to a vocational course, but 12 to 14% still leave the *Hauptschule* without any kind of leaving certificate. On the other hand, around 14% of pupils obtain the *Realschule* leaving certificate after an obligatory or voluntary tenth year. Here too, however, there are great regional differences. The second 'classical' secondary school type, the *Realschule*, provides a course that is completed in ten school years and leads to the *mittlere Reife*, i.e. the secondary school level I certificate. Once again, there is no Germany-wide structure. For example, in many *Länder* (Bremen, Saarland, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony, and Thuringia) the *Hauptschule* and the *Realschule* are joined together. The instruction contains a second, facultative foreign language, and a stronger vocational orientation is imparted, like at a *Hauptschule*, in the subject 'working skills', in the instruction of other subjects, and through special internships in organizations. The *Realschule* leaving certificate opens up the possibility of vocational educational, progress to the *Fachoberschule* (whose leaving certificate is the admission qualification for universities of applied sciences), and, if the pupil has the aptitude, grammar school. At the moment, around a third of pupils who complete *Realschule* have the possibility to continue attending school. The *Realschule* has been a 'winner' in the educational developments of the last two decades in Germany, and the leaving certificate it confers has become a standard. The *Gymnasium* (grammar school) comprises years 5 or 7 to 12 or 13, and can appear under a great variety of profiles (as well as schools with an emphasis on classics, there are grammar schools with a focus on modern languages, on mathematics and sciences, on music, on business and economics, and on other areas). Some grammar schools or vocational grammar schools in some *Länder* are part of the vocational school system. The traditionally strong position of the grammar school in the German school system results from the fact that it is the one school type that directly confers, after successful completion, the *Abitur*, i.e. the higher-education entrance qualification, and that opens the door to the best chances for admission to the training and job market. The grammar school has profited the most from the 'educational expansion'

since the 1960s. The enrolment numbers for grammar schools have significantly increased (on average by around 35% of the relevant age group). It has thereby to a large extent lost its old 'elite' character.

The concept of an integrated or co-operative comprehensive school was developed at the beginning of the 1960s, based on a critical attitude towards the tracked school system, its – at that time – outdated features, and its social selectivity. The notion of integrated comprehensive schooling envisioned the replacement of the relatively rigid vertical structure of the school types at lower secondary level with a more varied and flexible organization of instruction within one school. This double target – furthering on the one hand the development of the performance of every pupil, and on the other equality of educational opportunities – put high demands on and brought into focus issues concerned with the organization and shaping of instruction. The aim was that class groups, instruction in core subjects and differentiated courses in demanding subjects, and elective classes and free choice subjects should complement each other. These organizational innovations were linked to updates in educational programmes. After a trial phase, the comprehensive school was formally accepted as an integral part of the German educational landscape. As a result of the introduction of the comprehensive school, conventional school types also made changes, albeit to differing extents. The decisive transformation consists in increased mutual permeability, whereby the three-track school system acquired hitherto unknown interconnections and versatility. This meant that the individual school types largely lost their rigid character; transfers between school types were gradually facilitated. Furthermore, many organizational features of the comprehensive school have made their entry into the three-track school system, or have influenced parallel developments.

In Germany, special needs schools and schools governed by private bodies, i.e. the Waldorf schools (years 5 to 10), the evening *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*, the vocational further education schools, and the one-year work-life preparation school (*Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*), are also part of lower secondary education.

Upper secondary education

In Germany, years 11 to 13 of the integrated comprehensive schools, the Waldorf schools, and the special-needs schools are regarded as belonging to upper secondary education. The same applies to the two-year technical grammar school, the vocational-skills schools (where a qualification to study can be obtained), the vocational fundamental formation year, the vocational schools of the dual system (day-release system), and the one-year schools of the health system.

A radical change occurred at the upper secondary level of the grammar school through a reform agreed upon in 1972 that aimed at creating both greater individual options with regard to subjects and differentiated performance assessment. In the following period, the principle of a binding fundamental education was expressed in compulsory subjects and fundamental courses were strengthened again. One ruling of the KMK from the beginning of the 1990s enables the *Länder*, under certain circumstances (at least 265 student-week periods at lower secondary level and the upper level of grammar school) to decide if grammar school instruction can be com-

pleted after twelve or, as has hitherto been the case, after thirteen years of schooling. Meanwhile, in nearly all *Länder* there are grammar schools that can be completed within eight years (years 5 to 12).

Vocational Schools

Vocational education, as the means to a first professional qualification, represents, alongside the general-education schools and the institutions of higher education, a relatively independent sector of the education system. Formally, vocational education was attributed to the upper secondary level (Anweiler 1996, pp. 42ff.). Since 1964, it has been organized according to the so-called 'dual system', which is characterized by vocational-practice training in an apprenticeship with accompanying instruction in vocational full-time schools, while the core education is traditionally provided in the working environment. Dual system means co-operation between two 'learning locations' (vocational school and on-the-job instruction). The training lasts three years. The apprentices receive a monthly apprentice wage from the employer. The instruction at the vocational school occupies one or two days in the week, and is sometimes carried out in intensive courses. The syllabuses contain a general education part (German, social sciences, sport, and religion) which make up around 40% of the number of taught hours, and a subject-specific part, which consists mostly of theory related to the chosen vocation. Vocational school ends with a leaving certificate that, together with the results of the examination at the end of the apprenticeship, is equivalent in value to a *Realschule* leaving certificate, provided the average grade is good. Full-time courses for specific vocations represent the largest group among vocational-education courses at the vocational schools. Behind the common description of vocational school lies a very wide range of institutions with a variety of governing bodies, fields, durations, and entitlements. Basically, the entrance requirement for any vocational school is the *Hauptschule* leaving certificate. The instruction lasts one, two, or three years, and the certificates and qualifications obtained at the end of the courses can serve either as an entrance qualification for further education or as a qualification in a recognized trade. More than a quarter of vocational schools are maintained by private bodies. For pupils leaving school with low academic achievements or problems choosing a vocation and for young people without an apprenticeship, there are special institutions (for example the vocational preparation year, amongst others). In 1969, the technical upper secondaries were established as an underlying foundation for the new universities of applied sciences. They cover years 11 and 12, and their admission requirement is the *Realschule* leaving certificate, i.e. a middle school certificate. The technical upper secondaries lead to an entrance qualification for a university of applied sciences. There are technical upper secondaries for technology; for business, economics and administration; for social sciences; and for other areas. In the first year of instruction, subject-oriented teaching is dominant; in the second year, instruction covers general education and subject-based theory.

Special schools

Special schools were created to cater to the needs of handicapped children. Special schools can be classified into ten types according to the type of handicap that they cater to, and include schools for learning-impaired children, which are the most strongly represented, followed by schools for mentally handicapped children and for language-impaired children. The special schools span the primary and the lower secondary level and, in the case of physically and mentally handicapped young people, it also stretches to the upper secondary level. 4% of the age group from six to fifteen years are instructed at special schools. Since the middle of the 1970s, the broadest possible integration of handicapped pupils into general-education schools has been promoted, in order to counteract the social exclusion of handicapped people. Their special-needs instruction is therefore increasingly given in common classes of both the three-track and the integrated school system.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Evening grammar schools, colleges, the one-year technical upper secondary school, and the vocational and technical upper secondary schools all belong to post-secondary education in Germany.⁸

Tertiary education covers universities, teacher-training colleges, theological colleges, comprehensive institutions of higher education, arts colleges, and universities of applied sciences. Furthermore, tertiary education institutions include technical schools, technical and vocational academies, administration colleges, and the two- or three-year training schools of the health system. The technical-college entrance qualification, the entrance qualification for institutions of higher education, or a qualification of equal value is generally acquired at the age of 18 or 19. The age structure of the students is not homogeneous. All higher-education degree courses leading to equivalent degrees (*Diplom*, *Magister*, state examination, and the recently introduced Bachelor's and Master's) are regulated by framework regulations. The framework regulations contain quantitative reference data for degree courses, amongst others the standard duration of studies, the number of instruction hours, compulsory and optional subjects, the number of continuous-assessment assignments that have to be passed, and details of the examination of and the accepted time frame for the completion of the end-of-studies thesis. Since the creation of universities of applied sciences in 1968, a 'double structure' has characterized the German higher-education system. The genuine universities and the universities of applied sciences, having different entrance requirements and offering different types of degrees, are relatively delimited areas. The distinguishing characteristics of the universities of applied sciences are above all practice-oriented study programmes, shorter study times, and application-based research. In 1999, the university sector comprised a total of ninety-three universities (of which eleven were private), sixteen theological colleges (all of them independent institutions), six teacher-training colleges and forty-seven arts colleges (of which two are non-state institutions). The

⁸ In addition, post-secondary education includes specific combinations of ISCED 3A and 3B.

comprehensive higher-education institutions, which were set up in the 1970s and whose aim was to integrate different types and durations of higher education and degree are called today *Universität-Gesamthochschule* (University - Comprehensive School of Higher Education). Anyone who fulfils the entrance requirements can enrol at a university or a university of applied sciences. In Germany it is commonly accepted that only places on degree courses attracting too many applicants have admission restrictions (a *numerus clausus*) and a selection procedure (for example courses of study for medicine or psychology). The admission modalities are handled by the Central Office for the Allocation of College Places (*Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen - ZVS*) in Dortmund (according to grades obtained in *Abitur*, time on the waiting list, social aspects, and other criteria). At present, only private universities and institutions of higher education charge fees and are free to select their students themselves. But one must assume that fees will be introduced in 2006 at all institutions of higher education. The relatively high drop-out rate (30% of the students starting a course) shows the necessity for reform, of which we have been constantly reminded.

Teacher training and the qualification of principals

Teacher training consists of initial teacher training and continuing teacher training. The characteristic feature of teacher training in Germany is that it is structured in two phases. The first phase involves the higher-education course, which ends with the first state examination. The second phase consists of preparation for service (*Referendariat*) following the university degree in special seminars and at the schools themselves. Only after passing the second state examination do teachers acquire the full qualification to practise the profession they have trained for. In spite of the formal equivalence of the various teaching qualifications, different emphases are placed during the study programme on specific school types or on the level that the teacher will be teaching. For those studying towards a teaching position at grammar school, subject-related contents serve as the basis for the two subjects that the teacher will teach; conversely, for students who will be teaching at primary schools or at a *Hauptschule*, pedagogical subjects are given more weight. A regulation of the KMK of 1990 lays down the minimum study requirements (number of taught hours in a semester) for the various teacher positions. There is no special training for future principals, but there is continuous training parallel to the job. Generally speaking, teachers apply for positions as school heads or as *primus inter pares* (first among equals), and grow into the task through 'learning by doing'. The working hours of principals and teachers are comprised of management time and teaching time. The increasing pedagogical and administrative responsibilities of schools have led to increased demands on principals. It is already the case that the functions carried out by a principal demand high pedagogic and management qualifications. It has therefore been argued that school principals need specific training before entering their position, so as to be competent school leaders able to organize and further develop an all-embracing communication between all school stakeholders.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Since the publication of the results of the IEA Study on Reading Literacy (1992/1994), the International Adult Literacy Survey (1995/1997), the TIMS-Studies (2000), and the PISA tests, (2001/2004) it has become clear that action needs to be taken to fundamentally enhance the German education system. During the past three years there have been discussions on education in all parts of Germany. At the centre of the current discussion is a range of pedagogical and policy-related issues; for example the question of how to deal with standards, performance assessment, and system monitoring and feedback; the question of the independence of educational institutions (especially the 'autonomy of the school'); the role of support systems, teacher-training and continuing teacher education (including preparation in dealing with heterogeneous classes); and finally the question of how to devise class instruction that allows every pupil to make progress. There are critical questions concerning the structure of the school system (especially scheduled courses and factual education paths v. real education careers, including at elementary and primary level), concerning the treatment of empirical findings from previous studies or assessments, and concerning issues of cultural background (the relationship between education and family, and the role of learning in the family and society). The discussion also involves issues concerning the new educational targets and their corresponding curricula (under the keywords core curriculum and competencies), the relationship between internal school development and external differentiation, the means of elaborating performance comparisons and standardization, the implementation of governance information, and measures to certify instruction, to establish new governance models, and to increase the professionalism of teaching staff.

Comparisons at the international level reveal that the general-education school system in Germany is characterized by a range of specific features. Seen from the inside, these features are self-evident, and therefore hardly attract attention, but seen from the outside they can appear extraordinary: the half-day school, from which only a few schools in exceptional cases have deviated to provide all-day schooling; the disconnection between the governing body of the school on the one hand (responsibility for premises and equipment, mostly at the local level) and the responsibility for curricula, appointment of teachers, staff control and quality assurance on the other; the civil-servant status of the teaching staff and their strong integration within an administrative hierarchy (which, at present, however, is being eroded by tendencies towards limited autonomy of schools in many *Länder*); the strong differentiation not only in educational careers (which can run parallel within one school), but also in school types, between which binding transfer decisions have to be taken (tiered education system at lower secondary level), and in which allocation (assignment or free choice) is implemented relatively early; the differentiated extension of special-education and therapeutic education in the shape of independent schools; and the variety of school forms, transfer and certification rules, teacher training, etc. in the federal structure of the *Länder*. It is above all the different school types, each with their specific educational and professional tradition, social environments, and curricular and didactic-methodological emphases, which lend diversity to all aspects

of the general-education school system in Germany, from instruction practice to the structure of the organization of the ministries.

A child's educational career – if one includes the parallelism that exists between primary school and special-education schools from the beginning onwards, and that continues through upper secondary level – involves a variety of decisions (be they by means of official assignment and selection or through the independent decisions of children or their parents) which are of great importance in Germany. If the function as a means of educational allocation that is fulfilled by the school types and the educational programmes linked to them is not taken into consideration, one runs the risk of wrongly interpreting the structures and developments of the German school system. Alongside its structural and organizational peculiarities, the general-education school system in Germany – compared to the school systems of other industrial countries – is characterized by two cultural (one could also say 'ideological') traditions: the aims of the general-education school system are defined neither by its 'consumers', nor in pragmatic terms by the interests, needs, and development perspectives of its 'clients', but mainly in a normative manner by the intellectual tradition of so-called education theory. What is taught and what comes out of it are not functional and motivated by pragmatic aims, but rather result from superordinate ideas and cultural and practical traditions. Connected to this is the continuous discussion on the contrast or equivalence of general education vis-à-vis vocational education. The scepticism with which the professional environment often reacts to the notion of 'competencies' as targets is also the result of this tradition. In this context, 'it belongs to the idiosyncrasies of the post-war German education system that the success of reforms was not measured by their effectiveness – however defined – but according to their political enforcement alone' (Leschinsky/Cortina 2003, p. 45) Evaluation and quality assurance are therefore comparatively new elements of the system, and are often considered an unreasonable restriction on the professional autonomy of the teaching staff.

Not least as a result of a range of studies on school performance, ordered by the *Länder* or the KMK, a number of topics have emerged that are now at the forefront of discussions, analyses, and development perspectives:

- The acquisition of competencies (above all reading literacy, but also skills related to mathematics and natural sciences), key competencies (self regulation, dealing with new technologies), and attitudes towards learning. Not only the level of the acquisition of competencies, but also their particularly broad distribution, represents a challenge for the general-education school system.
- Disparities in the participation in and the success of education: the strong link between educational chances, learning results, and social background; the problems faced by the integration of children and young people with an immigration background; and the considerable regional differences within Germany require efforts in the way of reform.
- Dealing with education and work careers: there is a widespread call for the reduction of deferments and repeats, to intensify the use of learning time and to enable earlier transfers into vocational life.

- Individual and early advancement: a central reply to the challenges mentioned above under points one to three is that children and young people should be encouraged as early as possible to develop their individual capabilities and needs – not only in the case of disadvantaged starting conditions and adverse effects during the learning process, but also in the case of special talents.

This requires differentiated diagnostics as well as the elaboration and implementation of broad support programmes.

- Teaching processes: reform approaches of past years and more recently the results of the PISA 2003 survey have made clear that the quality of instruction has to remain at the centre of education reforms. The dominance of an instructional pattern based on the ‘question/development-principle’, teaching methods that do not sufficiently activate cognitive skills, and what pupils perceive as low levels of support from teachers still characterize day-to-day instruction in Germany.
- Upgrading schools to give them rich development conditions: above all, a school can do more for the integration of immigrants and pupils with difficult access to education if it provides a living and learning environment that goes beyond the work needed for instruction in given subjects. These efforts centre on all-day schools.
- Professional development: the measures named here (individual assistance, further development of instruction and school) only have a chance of success if they are accompanied by systematic efforts to further qualify teaching staff. The training and continuing education of teachers, the strengthening of team work, and ways of making performance tasks more professional have been a subject of discussion for a long time.
- Quality assurance: internal and external evaluation at schools, parallel work and comparative orientation along with other forms of quality assurance are being introduced everywhere – not only in order to control progress and impediments in the process of school and instruction development, but also in order to make targets and procedures more transparent.

References

- Anweiler, O.: Deutschland. In: Anweiler e.a.: *Bildungssysteme in Europa*. Weinheim; Basel 1996, pp. 31-56.
- Arbeitsgruppe Bildungsbericht am Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung (ed. Leuschinsky, Cortina u.a.): *Das Bildungssystem der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Strukturen und Entwicklungen im Überblick*. Hamburg 2003.
- Arnold, R./Lipsmeier, A. (Eds): *Handbuch der Berufsbildung*. Opladen 1995.
- Avenarius, H.: Schulische Selbstverwaltung – Grenzen und Möglichkeiten. In: *Recht der Jugend und des Bildungswesens* 42 (1994) 2, pp. 256-269.
- Avenarius, H. e.a.: *Bildungsbericht für Deutschland. Erste Befunde*. Opladen 2003.
- BLK-“Bildungsfinanzbericht 2001/2002“. Reihe: *Materialien zur Bildungsplanung und zur Forschungsförderung*. Bonn 2003.
- Deutscher Bildungsrat: *Empfehlungen der Bildungskommission. Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen*. Bonn 1970.

- Deutsches PISA-Konsortium (Ed.): PISA 2000. Opladen 2001.
- Deutsches PISA-Konsortium (Ed.): PISA 2003. Münster 2003
- Deutsches PISA-Konsortium (Ed.): PISA 2000 – Die Länder der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Vergleich. Opladen 2002.
- Döbert, H./Ernst, Chr. (Eds): Aktuelle Schulkonzepte. Reihe: Basiswissen Pädagogik. Hohengehren 2001.
- Döbert, H./Geißler, G. (Eds): Schulautonomie in Europa. Baden-Baden 1997.
- Döbert, H./Fuchs, H.-W./Weishaupt, H. (Eds): Transformation in der ostdeutschen Bildungslandschaft. Eine Forschungsbilanz. Opladen 2002.
- Empfehlungen des forum bildung. Bonn 2001.
- Fuchs, H.-W./Reuter, L.R.: Bildungspolitik in Deutschland. Opladen 2000.
- Führ, Ch.: Deutsches Bildungswesen seit 1945. Grundzüge und Probleme. Bonn 1996.
- Geißler, G.: Leistung zwischen Selektion und Integration. In: Die deutsche Schule 94 (2002), pp. 176-191.
- Geißler, G.: Bildungs- und Schulpolitik. Unveröffentlichtes Manuskript, Berlin 2002b.
- Geißler, G.: Geschichte des Schulsystems in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1945-1962. Frankfurt e.a. 2000.
- Heinemann, M. (Ed.): Zwischen Restauration und Innovation. Bildungsreformen in Ost und West nach 1945. Köln u.a. 1999.
- Klemm, K.: Bildungsexpansion und kein Ende? In: Helsper, W./Krüger, H.-H./Wenzel, H. (Eds): Schule und Gesellschaft im Umbruch. Vol. I: Theoretische und internationale Perspektiven. Weinheim 1996, pp. 427-445.
- Lehmann, R./Peek, R./Gänsfuß, R.: Aspekte der Lernausgangslage von Schülern der fünften und siebten Klassen an Hamburger Schulen. Hamburg: Behörde für Schule, Jugend und Berufsbildung, Amt für Schule, 1997; 1999.
- Mitter, W.: Schule zwischen Reform und Krise. Köln e.a. 1987.
- Paulsen, F.: Das deutsche Bildungswesen in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Leipzig 1912.
- Petersen, J./Reinert, G.-B. (Eds): Bildung in Deutschland. Vol. I-III. Donauwörth 1996; 1998.
- Picht, G.: Die deutsche Bildungskatastrophe. Oldenburg und Freiburg 1964.
- Rolff, H.-G.: Autonomie als Gestaltungs-Aufgabe. Organisationspädagogische Perspektiven. In: Daschner, P./Rolff, H.-G./Stryck, T. (Eds): Schulautonomie – Chancen und Grenzen. Weinheim 1995, pp. 31-54.
- Teichler, U. (Ed.): Das Hochschulsystem in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Weinheim 1990.
- Tenorth, H.-E.: Geschichte der Erziehung. Weinheim; München 1992.
- Tippelt, R. (Ed.): Handbuch der Bildungsforschung. Opladen 2002.

Germany

	Preprimary education	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education	Postsecondary & tertiary education	Grade	Age
	Kindergarten (optional)	Grundschule*	Gesamtschule Gymnasium Realschule Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen Hauptschule	Gymnasiale Oberstufe Berufsschule Fachoberschule Berufsfachschule Vocational education in the Berufsschule and On-the-job-training (Dual System)	University and colleges (Universität Technische Universität/ Technische Hochschule Pädagogische Hochschule Kunst-/Musikhochschule Fachhochschule Verwaltungsfachhochschule)	17 16 15 14 13	23 22 21 20 19
						18	18
						11	17
						12	18
						13	19
						14	20
						15	21
						16	22
						17	23
						10	16
						9	15
						8	14
						7	13
						6	12
						5	11
						4	10
						3	9
						2	8
						1	7
							6
							5
							4
							3

*Primary Education in Berlin, Brandenburg and partially in Bremen continues up to grade 6.

Greece

History of the school system

A large amount of literature is available on the modern history of the Greek school system up until the 1950s, to which we refer in this paper (Pirgiotakis 1988; Kelpanides 1980, pp. 448ff.; Kelpanides 1997, pp. 231ff.). After a few isolated reforms in the 1950s, a more important stage in the history of the Greek school system began in the mid-sixties; since that time there have been three major packages of reforms to the system (Xochellis 1995, pp. 51ff.; Kazamias/Kassotakis 1986). The first of these occurred in 1964, but was almost immediately interrupted by the seven-year military dictatorship (1967-74). The process was then resumed in the years 1976-80. The second set of reforms was introduced over the period 1981-85; some of their impact can still be seen in Greek schools of the present day. The third group of reforms began in 1997; these measures are still being implemented and are still subject to debate. Generally speaking, Greek educational policy over the last four decades has been characterized by repeated attempts and measures to adapt the school system to historical, social, and economic circumstances. At the heart of all the reforms has been the principle of equal opportunities in education. The gradual democratization of the school system – a trend which has characterized the Greek school system since the nineteenth century – must be judged in terms of its success in implementing this principle (Tsoukalas 1977).

The consensus on questions of educational policy that had existed between the political parties and in public opinion in the period after 1976 eventually broke down at the end of the decade and fierce criticism began to be directed at the reforms (Hodolidou 1987). After the socialist party (PASOK) came to power in the general election of 1981, this criticism led to a new package of reforms for the school system. The concept underlying these new reforms was officially formulated as follows: 'The fundamental principle of school policy is that the provision of education is exclusively the concern of the state; the state must create all necessary conditions and make all necessary resources available to ensure a healthy educational system. A second key principle is that education is a matter of concern to the whole community; there must be broad involvement – on the part of teachers, students, pupils, and social and academic groups – in educational institutions and in the framing of educational policy' (Education Act 1985; Bouzakis 1992, pp. 240ff.). In brief, one might say that this concept of educational policy has three main leitmotifs: a state school system, equal educational opportunities for all, and democracy in educational institutions and the making of educational policy. The outlines of the Education Act, which established a framework for the whole school system, still provide the basis in many respects for the way lessons are taught in Greek schools.

The third major package of reforms to the school system was introduced in 1997 (Education Acts 1997 and 1998). The basis of the reforms was the desire to unify the second stage of secondary education and to settle the question of access to university. The standard lyceum was introduced to replace the three different types of lyceum which had hitherto existed for pupils in the tenth to twelfth grades (i.e. the general education lyceum, the technical-vocational lyceum, and the polyvalent lyceum). Alongside the new standard lyceum, a number of religious and music schools would be allowed to operate, as well as the technical vocational schools (TEE). Access to tertiary education (technical colleges and universities) was to be through the lyceum school leaving certificate. The legislation contained other important measures concerning such matters as the following: the way in which new teachers would be recruited; the evaluation of teachers and schools; the all-day school; the so-called uniform curricular framework, covering the whole period of compulsory schooling; remedial courses for weaker pupils; second-chance schools; the founding of a national centre, with regional branches, for school and vocational advice; and questions of environmental and health education. A number of these measures are described and discussed in later sections of this paper.

If we wished to offer a concise characterization of the reforms and attempted reforms briefly described above, we would single out the following four points:

- a) In respect of the structure of the school system, there has been a trend towards the introduction of a standard school (mixed ability school for all children in a particular age group) into the second stage of the secondary system. Through this reform, and through additional measures (e.g. greater differentiation of teaching) the hope has been that greater equality of opportunity could be achieved – and indeed in this respect the Greek school system can point to significant advances.
- b) Selection testing for entry into tertiary education – a key issue in all educational reforms of the last fifty years – has undergone many modifications during the period in question. The qualification currently required is, as mentioned above, the lyceum school leaving certificate, which in theory guarantees free access to higher education. In practice, however, this goal has not been achieved, since access to many prestigious courses such as medicine remains tightly regulated.
- c) In all these reforms, structural changes to the system have been complemented by a number of measures designed to bring about ‘internal’ reform (Terzis 1981, pp. 272ff.; Terzis 1982, pp. 100ff.; Terzis 1988), such as an overhaul of the teacher training system or alterations to the curriculum, to textbooks, or to the system of grading; however, it is not possible to speak of any fundamental, comprehensive reform in this area.
- d) In respect of tertiary education, the key issue would be the integration into the university system of teacher-training courses for pre-school and primary school teachers (from 1982).

Organization of the current educational system

The present structure of the education system

The current education system has the following structure: the primary sector (including pre-school and primary schools proper); the first general-education stage of secondary school (gymnasium); the second stage of secondary school, with general and vocational options (standard lyceum and technical-vocational schools); and the tertiary sector (universities and technical colleges). The primary stage (age six to twelve) and the first stage of secondary school (twelve to fifteen) comprise the nine years of mandatory schooling for all children. This period is followed by the second stage of secondary education, lasting two or three years. There is no selection process regulating the child's movement up to the next stage in his or her education until the point of entry to tertiary education (see appendix, diagram illustrating the structure of the school system). The general education phase of the school system is presented in more detail in Section Three.

Vocational education is provided by the technical-vocational schools (TEE) and the institutes for vocational training (IEK).

The technical-vocational schools (*Technika kai Epagelmatika Ekpaideftiria – TEE*) offer a combination of general education and specialized technical-vocational training designed to facilitate their pupils' entry into the labour market. The programme of studies consists of two stages, the first lasting two years and the second one further year. These two stages are independent of each another in the sense that each leads to a separate leaving certificate. All young people who have secured a leaving certificate from a gymnasium are entitled to enrol in a technical-vocational school, but can only register for the second stage of these schools upon successful completion of the first stage. Pupils who have successfully completed the first stage of the technical-vocational school can either acquire a licence to practise a trade, or go on to the second stage, or enrol in the second year of the standard lyceum. Those successfully completing the second stage of these schools can either acquire a licence to practice a trade, or enrol in an institute for vocational training (IEK) – where they have priority over other applicants – or sit examinations to secure a place in a technical college (TEI) (Eurydice National Unit 2000). The technical-vocational schools face a whole range of problems (the most pressing of which are delays in preparing curricula and failure to recruit staff) that require rapid solution if the long sought-after improvement in standards of vocational education is to be achieved.

The institutes for vocational training (*Instituta Epagelmatikis Katartisis – IEK*) are institutions which cannot be assigned neatly to one particular level of the education system. They offer post-secondary vocational education, but not at university level (Education Act 1992). They may be state-run (in the school year 2000-01 there were 138 such institutions) or private (seventy-six institutions). In order to enter these institutes, a student must have a leaving certificate from the second stage of secondary education (lyceum), or for certain subject areas only a certificate from the first stage of secondary education; in the former case the course of studies at the institute will last four semesters, in the latter case only two semesters. Each IEK offers a selection of subject areas; within each there will be a number of different

specialist courses. Studies are oriented directly to the labour market; an attempt is made to match the specialist courses to the continually changing needs of the market. Upon successful completion of their studies, graduates receive the Certificate of Vocational Training, which entitles them to sit the centrally organized national examinations leading to the so-called Diploma of Vocational Training (Education Act 1992; Eurydice-Eurybase 2000). In the tertiary sector of the system we must also mention the technical colleges (*Technologika Ekpaideftika Idrimata – TEI*), which will be discussed in detail below.

Private schools are under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Education (formal title – Ministry for National Education and Religion) and must pursue the same educational objectives and implement the same curriculum as the state schools. Private education is attended by some 5 to 6% of the school-age population, and is available at all levels of the system except the tertiary level; the Greek Constitution does not permit the foundation of private institutions of tertiary education..

Administration and financing of the system

There are four levels of administration of the school system. The first, central level is formed by the various departments of the Ministry of Education, each responsible for a particular level or subject area within the education system. The second level consists of the regional education authorities of the country's thirteen administrative regions. The third level consists of the administrative authorities in the country's prefectures or districts (local education authorities). Finally, at the lowest and most local level, administration is in the hands of the school directors and the faculties of teachers. The heads of the local education authorities and the school directors are appointed on four-year contracts by administrative commissions functioning at the district level, or by the Ministry on the basis of an application procedure.

Because the Greek Constitution stipulates that education is the exclusive responsibility of the State, the education system is financed from the state budget. The communities are responsible only for the upkeep of school buildings. They are obliged, however, to make funds available for the operation of crèches and day nurseries.

Evaluation and quality of schools

The regional and local education authorities described above confine themselves to ensuring compliance with official regulations; they have no jurisdiction over academic or pedagogic aspects of the education and teaching carried out in the schools. These areas are the responsibility of the school advisors, who are also appointed on four-year contracts after an application procedure, and whose duties have not hitherto involved any evaluation of teachers and schools. In fact, for the last two decades Greece has not had any system of teacher assessment or school evaluation. Both the 1997 Education Act, referred to above, and the draft legislation currently being discussed contain concrete measures to allow a comprehensive evaluation of the school system to begin soon. The intention is that evaluation should help to raise standards in education; this is currently one of the main objectives of educational policy, according to repeated statements by the Ministry. We shall discuss it in more detail in the fourth section of this paper.

Teacher qualifications

Since the academic year 1984-85, pre-school and primary school teachers have received their *initial training* in an eight-semester, single-phase course of university-level studies. They take courses in three areas: educational science, specialist knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the subjects they will be called on to teach in school), and practical teaching methods. Initial training for teachers in the technical-vocational sector of the school system is somewhat similar, but structured in two phases; it is provided both at university and at an independent training institute (ASPETE). This institute is responsible for equipping future teachers with the necessary teaching skills. General education teachers in secondary schools receive their initial training in single-phase courses at university; these courses are almost exclusively oriented towards specialist knowledge of the subjects they will be teaching.

Continuing training takes place at universities but also, and mainly, at the so-called *Regional Continuing Training Centres*. The current trend is for continuing training courses of short duration taking a variety of forms: introductory courses for teachers who have just been appointed, periodical courses designed to refresh the knowledge and skills of teachers who have already been working for some years, and other courses intended specifically to orient teachers to new reforms being introduced. Recent years have witnessed the introduction of numerous continuing training courses, most of which are financed from EU funds (Xochellis 2000, pp. 172ff.).

Further training is not available right across the system; at present it is confined to primary and kindergarten teachers. Teachers attend the training courses at university, with official leave from their posts and with no loss of salary, for a period of two years. This opportunity has not yet been extended to secondary school teachers. However, in principle all teachers have the opportunity to do a course of further study at university, for the duration of which they should receive leave on full pay. Until 1998 teachers were appointed to a school post from a waiting list; they applied to put their name on the list upon completing their degree. In 1998 this system was replaced (although provision was made for a five-year transition period) by a competition to be held every second year in three or four subjects (depending on the subject area). The new procedure provoked vehement criticism from the professional teachers' associations and remains controversial despite a number of amendments and improvements which have been made.

General education in the school system

Pre-school education

The Education Act of 1985 (Law 1566) defined pre-school education as part of the primary stage, lasting two years and provided to children between the ages of four and six at kindergartens (*Nipiagogeia*). Most of these are run by the State, but some are private. Attendance at the former is free, while private kindergartens charge fees. Children are admitted to kindergartens if their fourth birthday falls before the end of the year of their registration. The law states that the kindergarten to be attended shall be determined by the address of the child's family, which means that children attend

a kindergarten in the same district as the school where they will subsequently be enrolled.

The school year 1997-98 saw the introduction – as a consequence of the 1997 Education Act – of the all-day kindergarten, operating an extended timetable and allowing children to engage in creative activities for at least eight hours each day. In the first year these all-day kindergartens were introduced only as a pilot programme, their number not exceeding 160, but two years later, by the school year 1999-2000, there were no fewer than 700. In the school year 2002-03 there were 1573 such kindergartens. The objective is that all kindergartens should eventually operate on an all-day basis. Their introduction should be seen as a boost to the system of pre-school education, making a valuable contribution to the integrated preparation of the child for primary school, eliminating educational and social inequalities, and providing much-appreciated relief for working parents (Ministry for National Education and Religion 1998, 15.12.).

Lesson planning and organization

The Greek school system is highly centralized. Within this framework even the practical, day-to-day work of places of pre-school education is laid down by the State in the form of a Presidential Decree. The daily programme consists of: a) free activity in ‘play corners’, with no direct teacher involvement; and b) activities directed towards goals selected by the teacher (and based on the curriculum) or goals arising from other activities, either planned or unplanned. The Greek school system’s emphasis on grades can already be seen in pre-school education. It is remarkable, for example, that the rudiments of a first evaluation of the child’s performance are present in the second year of kindergarten (age five to six).

Problems

The main problem of Greek pre-school education lies in the lack of kindergarten places. According to the OECD (1997, p. 147), in the 1990s the insufficient number of places meant that only half the children in the relevant age group were enrolled in a kindergarten; Ministry of Education figures currently show about 60% of children aged four to six attending. Another problem is lack of space at the existing kindergartens, especially those which share premises with a primary school. Often there is so little space that there is no room for creative activities, and play areas are confined. Moreover, insufficient account is taken of the advantage of the co-existence of kindergartens and schools, which allows a more flexible transition from the pre-school to the primary level.

Primary school

The six years of primary school (*Dimotiko Scholeio* – ages six to twelve) form the first part of the nine years of compulsory schooling. Children are enrolled in the year of registration in which their sixth birthday falls. At this stage, too, the school to be attended is determined by the home address of the child’s family. As a rule, primary schools operate on a half-day timetable, from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., but since 1999 all-day schools have been introduced, in parallel to the development described above in

the pre-school sector. There are at the time of writing twenty-eight pilot all-day schools, and 300 new schools of this kind are scheduled to open by 2006. There are also over 2000 schools operating an extended timetable, and these are also usually described as all-day schools.

Lesson planning and organization

The lessons taught in primary school are: religion, modern Greek, maths, history, environmental studies, geography, physics, social and community studies, aesthetics, sport, a foreign language (English), and 'school life'. All lessons are mandatory and, in most schools, are taught by the same teacher; the only exceptions are English, sport, and music, which are taught by specialist teachers. Although the content of the curriculum must be taught by the teachers, they are free to design their lessons as they see fit. However, the Pedagogical Institute, does offer detailed advice on the organization of lessons, both through the curriculum and, mainly, through the teachers' manuals (for each subject or textbook in all six classes of primary school there is a corresponding teachers' book). These books have come in for some criticism, primarily on the ground that they impose too strict a uniformity on lessons in all schools and thereby curb the independence and creativity of teachers.

In the first and second grades, pupil evaluation takes the form of report cards; in grades three and four each pupil is graded A, B, C, or D, and in the final two years is graded on a scale of 1 to 10. The best grade, 'excellent' is 10, and the pass grade is 5 'good'. Children automatically advance to the next grade in the following school year, provided their attendance has been satisfactory and their teacher confirms that they have mastered the fundamentals of the year's curriculum. At the end of each school year children receive a certificate stating their entitlement to advance to the next grade, while at the end of the sixth grade they are given a primary school leaving certificate (*Apolitirio Dimotikou*), which states their grades in each individual subject and assures their entry (without any selection procedure) into the first year of the gymnasium.

Problems

A number of problems have been identified in the Greek primary school system: the problem of ensuring the quality of education in overcrowded schools in the larger cities; the problems of small rural schools, with one to four classes, which are unable to afford sophisticated teaching aids; and the problem of children in small villages who have to travel large distances every day to the nearest primary school. Other areas of controversy are the use of just one textbook for each subject in every school in the country, a system which many regard as inhibiting creativity and reducing the motivation of both teacher and pupil; the inadequate support for pupils with learning difficulties; and the absence of a system to complement the automatic advancement of children into the next grade, whereby the teacher would prepare a detailed report on the pupil's learning potential and weaknesses for the guidance of his or her successor.

Secondary education – first stage (gymnasium)

As we explained earlier, secondary general education takes place in the gymnasium (*Gymnasio*) and lyceum (*Lykeio*). The three grades of the gymnasium form the first stage of secondary education and, at the same time, the final stage of the nine years of compulsory schooling. The gymnasium is open to all children who have successfully completed primary school and is designed to meet the needs of children aged twelve to fifteen, offering all children a standard, undifferentiated programme of studies. The single exception is English, where many schools separate their pupils into two classes – beginners and advanced – according to their level of knowledge. In addition to the schools offering a half-day timetable (8 a.m. to 2 p.m.), there are also a number of evening gymnasiums which also offer a three-year curriculum. There are also a small number of religious and music schools.

Lesson planning and organization

As in the primary school, here too there is a basic curriculum to be followed in each class¹. It consists of the following: religion, ancient Greek language and literature, modern Greek language and literature, history, civics and social science, a foreign language (English, French, or German), maths, physics, chemistry, information science and technology, geography, biology I and II, school and vocational guidance, sport, aesthetics, and domestic science. As in primary school, the teaching is based on just one textbook for each subject. The school year is divided into trimesters. Grades are awarded on a scale of 1 to 20 (20 = 'excellent', 10 = 'pass'). There are oral and written tests during the course of the trimesters, with full examinations at the end of the year. Three fifths of the material taught during the year is selected as the material on which the pupils will be examined. The final grade awarded in each subject is calculated on the basis of the final exam mark and the individual term grades. To advance to the next class, pupils must achieve 50% of the possible maximum score in certain subjects; performance in other subjects does not affect a pupil's chances of advancement. Pupils who have performed poorly may also resit exams in up to four subjects. If they still fail to achieve enough points, they must repeat the class the following year. The same procedure is applied in the granting of the gymnasium leaving certificate (*Apolitirio Gymnasiou*), which grants the pupil free access – i.e. with no selection process – to the second stage of the secondary system.

Problems

Some of the most frequently mentioned problems associated with the gymnasium level are as follows: the transition from primary school to gymnasium does not appear to be as smooth as it should be; too many pupils are not properly prepared for the demands of the next level. Despite this, in the gymnasium too the majority of pupils advance to the next grade, which means that a large number of pupils proceed through the gymnasium despite significant learning difficulties and poor grades. Other causes for concern are the poor motivation of teachers, teacher shortages lead-

¹ Concerning the curriculum see A. Kesidou, 1999.

ing to unfilled posts in many schools and districts, and the need for a curriculum allowing for at least a degree of differentiation (especially since a uniform curriculum permitting absolutely no choice until the age of fifteen is inconsistent with much international practice) (OECD 1997, p. 150).

Secondary education – second stage (standard lyceum)

As we mentioned above, the standard lyceum (*Eniaio Lykeio*) offers stage-two secondary pupils the opportunity to continue general education, while the technical-vocational schools (*Technika kai Epagelmatika Ekpaideftiria – TEE*) offer pupils of the same age a curriculum with a more technical and vocational orientation.

The standard lyceum is the product of the 1997 reforms, which did away with the previous types of secondary school (general lyceum, technical-vocational lyceum, polyvalent lyceum, classical lyceum, etc.). However, a small number of religious and music lyceums did survive the reforms. Pupils, aged fifteen to eighteen, spend three years at the lyceum, which is run on a half-day basis. Young people (aged eighteen to twenty-five) who are already in employment and who wish to attend the evening lyceums spend four years completing the curriculum.

Lesson planning and organization

Although the lyceum continues the general education of its pupils, unlike the gymnasium it also provides for a degree of specialization. The first year functions as a basic orientation level, with a general curriculum and just one or two elective subjects. But in the second and third years, pupils divide their time between core subjects (providing general knowledge) and specialist subjects. For the purposes of their specialist lessons, the pupils register in one of three streams: a) theoretical knowledge (i.e. the humanities), b) natural science, and c) technology. A limited number of hours are also dedicated to elective subjects (Eurydice-Eurybase 2000). Upon successful completion of the lyceum, pupils are awarded the standard lyceum leaving certificate (*Apolitirio Eniaiou Lykeiou*), which entitles them, in principle, to enter university. This entitlement is based on the pupil's performance over the course of the year and his or her marks in the end-of-year exams of both the second and third years of the lyceum. These are nationally administered examinations, testing the pupils in nine subjects each year.

Problems

The main problems which have arisen from the new dispensation in the lyceum are the pressure of grades and time, and the excessive demands made on both pupils and teachers. Schoolwork is almost entirely oriented to the final examinations, limiting the scope for further activities and creative work.

Tertiary sector

Higher education is available at universities (*Anotata Ekpaideftika Idrimata – AEI*) and technical colleges (*Technologika Ekpaideftika Idrimata – TEI*). A degree course at university may last eight, ten, or twelve semesters, depending on the course, and at technical college seven to eight semesters. Technical colleges are open to school leavers who have secured the lyceum school leaving certificate, and to pupils who

have successfully completed the second stage of the technical-vocational school and passed the relevant examination.

The purpose of the universities is to teach and to carry out pure or applied research. The technical colleges are oriented towards more practical courses and applied rather than pure research. Discussion is currently taking place on evaluation of the technical college faculties; in a number of cases pilot evaluations have already been carried out.

In 1997 the Greek Open University was founded, making it possible for the first time for Greeks to study for a degree without actually enrolling in a conventional university course. The Open University offers education and further education of a university standard while allowing the student to study from home. The Open University develops and implements appropriate teaching materials and methods for its courses, and also pursues the goal of furthering research in the area of distance learning (Ministry for National Education and Religion 1998, p. 24).

Drop-outs

A survey of the drop-out problem in stage I of the secondary education system, carried out in 2000 by the Pedagogical Institute², established a drop-out rate of 6.98% over the school year 1997-98. Although this rate is perceptibly lower than the corresponding figures for the 1980s, it should not be regarded as insignificant. Young people who have not even acquired a certificate confirming their completion of the nine years of compulsory schooling – the minimum qualification for an ‘ordinary’ job or place on a training scheme – are, at a time of growing unemployment, especially at risk. It is anticipated that the drop-out rate will fall even further over the next few years, but given the growing number of children of foreign families and families of returning ethnic Greeks in Greek schools, who face problems of language and adjustment, this fall will not be particularly swift. The survey yielded a number of other important findings: a) Almost half of school drop-outs are children who did not even bother to enrol for the gymnasium. The drop-out rate declines as the pupils advance through the gymnasium, so that the proportion of children who reach the third year of gymnasium but do not go on to secure a leaving certificate is just 0.31% (school year 1997-98). b) A higher percentage of boys drop out of the gymnasium than girls. c) The drop-out rate in the cities is lower than in rural areas.

Minorities

Greek state schools at present contain a large number of children whose families come from other countries or have returned to Greece after many years of living abroad. The first group includes economic immigrants from eastern Europe, Albania, Bulgaria, Africa, and the near and far East, who live and work in Greece legally or illegally. The second group consists on the one hand of Greeks returning from

² See Pedagogical Institute, 2001. The design of curricula for all levels and kinds of school is the responsibility of the Pedagogical Institute, a relatively independent department of the Education Ministry which acts as an expert body in shaping the form which the teaching process will take (design of curricula, textbooks, and evaluation of performance).

Western Europe (Germany, Belgium, Sweden, etc.) or from further afield – from Australia, for example – and on the other of Greeks belonging to those minorities who, owing to historical circumstances, found themselves living under foreign regimes and who have only recently (mainly in the last decade) had the chance to return to their mother country. The largest of these groups are the returning ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union – commonly referred to as *Pontioi* (Hopf 1992). The measures taken by the Greek education authorities to meet the needs of these children in primary and secondary schools take the form of three different kinds of provision: a) language courses, which offer extra coaching in Greek and take place after the end of the normal school day (up to six hours teaching per week, in groups no larger than nine); b) reception classes, which are operated in parallel to the ordinary classes using special teaching materials and accommodating between nine and twenty pupils; c) the so-called ‘intercultural schools’, which are attended by native Greek and foreign children, and children of Greek descent (including the children of returning ethnic Greeks). With regard to the first two, it is striking that in fact only a small percentage of the minority children attend the special lessons and take advantage of what they have to offer. As for the intercultural schools, of which there are at present twenty-six in the whole of Greece, there are some which are not attended by any local Greek children, which does tend to weaken their intercultural character. There is currently much discussion of the need for better integration at school to avoid the danger of the social exclusion of these children. It is a debate which should cover not only the ever-growing number of foreign children in Greek schools, but also the problems of cultural minorities like gypsy children. In this respect, the measures to promote intercultural education announced by the Education Ministry back in 1998 should be seen as a positive development (Ministry for National Education and Religion 1998, p. 28).

Current discussions and prospects for development

Debate on current issues and on the future development of the school system tends to focus on the following points.

- a) A first key matter for debate is the problem of access to university. The growing number of young people wishing to attend university over recent decades is in many ways a positive development (greater educational opportunities and social justice, and recognition of the principle that education is every citizen’s right), but it also presents a problem. Because of limited university and labour market capacity, attempts have been made in many countries to stem the flow of young people entering university. Various selection mechanisms have been employed to this end: selection during the pupil’s time at school, entrance examinations, and restricted entry or restrictive educational planning on entry into university. In Greece, demand for university places has always been very strong, owing to high family aspirations in the field of education, the existing economic structure, and the shortcomings in the provision of vocational education. The selection procedure that was until recently in use had many disadvantages. Leaving aside well-justified methodological questions, such as reservations about its va-

lidity, this type of selection imposed many social, economic, and psychological burdens on young people and their families, not to mention social and regional barriers to equality of educational opportunity. Yet the greatest disadvantage was the fact that because of this selection procedure the second stage of secondary education had to sacrifice much of what we understand by true education. Most of the efforts of teachers and pupils had to be directed towards the goal of the selective examinations which would be sat at the end of secondary school. The priority was the most effective possible cramming and regurgitation of a precisely defined amount of material; at stake were the future studies and careers of the pupils. Thus, the second stage of secondary education was transformed into no more than an antechamber, or a kind of crammer, for university, and with highly undesirable consequences: excessive pressure to secure good grades and an unpleasant school atmosphere (Greek Committee of Rectors 1995). Teachers, pupils, and parents fiercely criticized the new system for university admission in the first years following the last reform (1998-2000), and in response the Ministry has made alterations and amendments to the law in question. Tensions appear to have subsided for the time being, but the promised 'free access to university' is still a subject of debate among both experts and the public at large, and no doubt will remain controversial.

- b) Another current topic of debate is associated with the question of *school quality*, an issue to which the Education Ministry itself has been devoting considerable attention. Yet school quality is closely linked with the question of the evaluation of schools and teachers – something which has long been resisted by the teachers' unions. It is clear, however, in the light of the debate in other European countries and of the practice already to some extent introduced there that this attitude on the part of the teachers cannot be allowed to cause more delay.
- c) A third issue is the matter of the physical fabric and equipment of schools. It is a fact, for example, that in large population centres a continuing lack of adequate school buildings forces the schools to operate a shift system – with all the adverse consequences for the quality of teaching. It is up to the State and communities to make the resources available and carry out the necessary work to provide the schools with adequate buildings and equipment. A major project to remedy the problem has now been launched by the Education Ministry. At present, staffing levels are adequate in terms of statistical calculations of teacher-pupil ratio. But this is not to say that teacher resources are evenly distributed across the country to meet the needs of every single school. In this context, the question of staffing is a continuing subject of discussion between the Education Ministry and the teachers' unions, particularly at the beginning of each school year.
- d) Another issue is the fact that the Greek school system has always been centrally administered, with very little scope allowed for concrete decision-making by the education authorities at regional or prefectural level, and almost none at the level of the individual school. For some years now there has been talk, even by senior officials, of the need for measures to decentralize educational administration, but little sign of this has yet been seen in practice. The autonomy of the

- individual school, which is now such a central issue in all European countries; a standard item on the agenda of conferences, seminars, and discussions; and is gradually being made a reality through the implementation of concrete measures, must now be taken seriously in Greece as an important issue.
- e) Information technology in the school, the introduction of the new media into school life so that computers can provide concrete support for the learning process, is another key issue in current debate on educational policy. Many secondary schools have already been supplied with the necessary equipment, and the Education Ministry intends that by 2003 all secondary schools, and by 2006 all primary schools, will be similarly equipped. The appropriate in-service training for teachers has already begun under the EU co-funded 'Information Society' programme.
- f) A matter of particular significance in assessing the performance of Greek secondary pupils – and one which has not been sufficiently discussed – is the international comparative studies in which Greece has participated, especially the 'Third International Mathematics and Science Study' (TIMSS) and the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA). In neither study do Greek pupils make a good showing, and in some areas they performed very poorly. A feature of the tests used in the PISA study is that great emphasis is laid on tasks which require a familiarity with and ability to think about, for example, problems in physics or maths. The tasks are designed to test fundamental knowledge, key abilities, understanding and orientation – not narrow details of a curriculum. That Greek pupils should fail in this kind of task must be a cause for concern. It is imperative that we seek the reasons for their failure and attempt to correct the shortcomings in the school system (Hopf/Xochellis 2003, pp. 252ff.).

References

- Bouzakis, S.: School Reform in the '80s. In: Pirgiotakis, J./Kanakakis, I. (Eds): *World Crisis in Education*. Athens 1992, pp. 240-265. (In Greek)
- Centre for Educational Research / Stamelos, G. (Eds): *The Greek Education System. Primary and Secondary School. Structures and Quantitative Facts*. Athens 2002. (In Greek)
- Education Act of 1985 [Law 1566]. (In Greek)
- Education Act of 1992 [Law 2009]. (In Greek)
- Education Act of 1997 [Law 2525]. (In Greek)
- Education Act of 1998 [Law 2640]. (In Greek)
- Eurydice National Unit: *Greece- Technical Vocational Schools*. In: European Commission (DG Education and Culture) *Magazine on Education, Training and Youth* 13 (2000).
- Eurydice: *Summary Sheets on Education Systems in Europe- Greece*. July 2000.
- Eurydice-Eurybase: *The Education System in Greece*. 2000. (<http://www.eurydice.org/Eurybase>)
- Greek Committee of Rectors: *Report on the Symposium 'Transition from the Secondary to the Tertiary Sector of the School System'*. Athens 1995. (Unpublished manuscript in Greek)
- Hodolidou, E.: *The Discussion on School Reform (1976-1981)*. Thessaloniki 1987. (In Greek)

- Hopf, D.: Schulische Wiedereingliederung von Remigrantenkindern in Griechenland. Integrationshilfen durch Förderkurse. Münster; New York 1992.
- Hopf, D./Xochellis, P.: Gymnasium and Lyceum in Greece. Athens 2003. (In Greek)
- Kazamias, A./Kassotakis, M. (Eds): School Reform in Greece. Rethymno 1986. (In Greek).
- Kazamias, A./Kassotakis, M. (Eds): Greek Education. Perspectives of Reconstruction and Change. Athens 1995. (In Greek).
- Kelpanides, M.: Schulsystem und Volksbildung in Griechenland. In: Südosteuropa- Handbuch, Vol. III. Göttingen 1980, pp. 448-471.
- Kelpanides, M.: Griechisches Bildungssystem: Rezeption von Einflüssen aus anderen europäischen Ländern. In: Lechner, E. (Ed.): Pädagogische Grenzgänger in Europa. Frankfurt a. M. u.a. 1997, pp. 231-249.
- Kesidou, A.: Die europäische Dimension der griechischen und baden-württembergischen Lehrpläne und Schulbücher der Sekundarschule. An den Beispielen Geographie, politische Bildung, Geschichte und Literatur. Frankfurt a. M. u.a. 1999.
- Ministry for National Education and Religion: The Education Reform 1996-1998. Athens 1998. (In Greek)
- Ministry for National Education and Religion/Centre for Educational Research: The Greek Education System. A Concise Picture in Figures. Athens 2003. (In Greek)
- National Statistical Service of Greece: Education Statistics 2002/2003. Preprint. Athens 2003. (In Greek)
- OECD: Reviews of National Policies for Education – Greece. Paris 1997.
- Pedagogical Institute: The School Drop-out- Problem in the Gymnasium. School Year 1997/98. Athens 2001. (In Greek)
- Pirgiotakis, J.: Schulreformen in Griechenland. Köln; Wien 1988.
- Pirgiotakis, J./Kanakis, I. (Eds): World Crisis in Education, Athens 1992. (In Greek)
- Terzis, N.: Views on School Reform. External and Internal School Reform. In: *Philologos* 23 (1981), pp. 272-281 and 28 (1982), pp. 100-110. (In Greek)
- Terzis, N.: The Gymnasium as Stage of the Compulsory School. Critical Approach and Comparative Research. Thessaloniki 1988 (in Greek).
- Tsoukalas, K.: Dependence and Reproduction. The Social Role of School Mechanisms in Greece. Athens 1977. (In Greek)
- UNESCO International Bureau of Education: World Data on Education – Greece. (<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/Databanks/Dossiers/pgreece.htm>)
- Xochellis, P.: Thirty Years of School Reform in Greece. A Critical Approach from the Perspective of Educational Science. In: Enosi Filon tou Pneumatikou Idrymatos "Georgios Papandreou" (Ed.): The School Reform of 1964: Thirty Years After. Patras 1995, pp. 51-60. (In Greek)
- Xochellis, P.: Die Lehreraus-, fort- und -weiterbildung in Griechenland. In: *Tertium Comparationis* 6 (2000) 2, pp.172-178.

Greece

	Preprimary education	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education	Postsecondary & tertiary education	Grade	Age
	Kindergarten (Nipiagogeio)	Primary school (Dimotiko Scholeio)	Gymnasium (Gymnasio)	Standard Lyceum (Eniaio Lykeio)	University (A.E.I.)	13	13
	1					1	1
		Special schools		Technical Vocational schools(1)	Other higher professional schools	14	14
						2	2
		Compulsory education		O.A.E.D.- School (Apprenticeship)	Institutes for Vocational Training (ITEK)	15	15
						3	3
						16	16
						17	17
						18	18
						19	19
						20	20
						21	21
						22	22
						23	23

- (1) Technica Epaggelmatika Ekpaideftiria
 (2) Technologika Ekpaideftika Idrimata

Tamás Hives, Tamás Kozma, Imre Radacsi and Magdolna Rébay

Hungary

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

State-organized school education in Hungary goes back to the mid-eighteenth century. After the end of the Ottoman occupation of the historical territories of the Hungarian crown (1689), the country assumed a special status within the Hapsburg Empire. Under the influences of the Enlightenment (and partly in opposition to it) Maria Theresa set out to ‘civilize’ and ‘Europeanize’ the country. In 1777 a decree was issued with the title *Ratio Educationis* (The Educational Plan).

Further modernization of the educational system occurred in 1868. After the 1848–49 revolutionary period and the compromise with Austria (Austro-Hungarian Empire) a new public education law came into force. It became the legal basis of the organized network of elementary schools all over the country (six-year elementary schools in the mother tongue of the various communities, maintained by the local authorities and/or the respective churches). Under the regulations laid down by the 1868 law and its descendants (1883: Secondary School Law, 1891: Kindergarten Education Law, etc.) a state education system came into being with strong similarities to the German system (four to six years of elementary education; an eight-year gymnasium, which has diversified in the course of history; vocational education and training outside of the school system; and the classical German type of university studies).

Education and the school system became a political priority after World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The government of the new Hungary (which had lost its multi-ethnic territories as a result of the peace treaties) developed a centralized educational and cultural policy to reconstruct the educational system and the ‘cultural morale’ of the nation. The education system (as shown by the educational laws, e.g. the Secondary School Law in 1928) was reconstructed according to a conservative notion of cultural values. Vocational education and training, however, went through a phase of modernization, especially during World War II.

After 1945, in the few years of modernization (1945–48) until the communist takeover (1948–49), the traditional forms of education and schooling (school choice at the age of ten, the dual system of secondary schooling, and the strict selectivity of an elitist higher education system) started to develop in line with modern European trends (the unification of the school system). The communist takeover stopped this process, however, and reoriented the education system to the Soviet model (1950–53). A new phase in education and educational policy began after the revolution of 1956.

Reforms and innovations

Comprehensive education and the 'general school' (általános iskola).

Compulsory basic and lower secondary schooling was organized under Soviet influence after the Second World War. The new system was, however, only superficially unified. Empirical research, conducted after the political system had started to lose its stability, shows that the so-called unified system contributed to social stratification. The first findings were heavily debated by the State and by party authorities (1968-72). Later, during the 1980s, they became the corner-stones of systemic reforms in Hungarian education (1978: new curriculum, 1985: new Law on Education with a heavy stress on school autonomy).

Secondary school expansion and 'polytechnic education'.

The international tendency towards the expansion of secondary education reached the country in the mid-1970s (1973-76: a demographic wave). The 'upper polytechnical school', which would have taken ten years and was regarded as a Soviet model, was not allowed to come into existence. What happened instead was the organization of a new type of secondary school (secondary technical, 1961-65). This education policy satisfied the growing demand for secondary schools by developing the system of vocational training instead of opening secondary schools (there was a great debate on this subject in 1961). 'Polytechnic' education was the universal trend in the socialist countries of the time, under which a combination of secondary education and vocational training was created (1965). This widened the basis for continuing studies in colleges and led to the expansion of the need for higher education (the upgrading of secondary vocational schools into the higher education system occurred during the 1960s).

The reconstruction of the selective system after 1989-90.

The expansion of secondary education took place during the 1980s. Secondary education started to be diversified according to the needs of families and local communities. It became an additional inner factor in political transition, and was reinforced by the struggle for school autonomy and the fight against the state educational monopoly. The spectacular rise in demand for secondary education at the beginning of the 1990s can be described partly as an outcome of political change and partly as a result of the sudden release of political pressure.

Higher education expansion (the 1990s).

All this contributed to the boom in demand for higher education (ISCED 5, 6) after the political transition (1989-90). This sudden increase (early 1990s) caused inextricable difficulties in the existing system. The recognition of this situation is reflected in the political slogans concerning the privatization of higher education in the 1990s. The higher education of the country was ahead of overall reform processes within society. Its reform had to be carried out under the conditions of an economy that was falling apart and awaiting restructuring, a situation that is not desirable when higher education is to be reformed and enlarged.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general functions

As a result of a fifteen-year debate (started in 1988 by a teacher demonstration and led by a group of educational and party experts during the early 1990s) the mission statement of a national core curriculum has been accepted by Parliament. It prescribes unified requirements for all types of school up to the tenth grade. The regulations leave a considerable amount of room for schools to adjust their local curricula to the knowledge and capacity of their pupils. The National Institution of Public Education developed a data bank of curricula from the end of 1996. Schools had to start preparing local curricula at the beginning of 1997. An information network of institutions of public education was built while the supply of curricula was being developed. Schools were given financial support in the preparation of local curricula and in-service training for teachers.

There is a huge social interest in the development of two areas: languages and computer science. The demand for these subjects is growing as a consequence of globalization, so there is a special emphasis on them in the curricula.

Socio-economic context

Demography

The population of Hungary is steadily decreasing in size. At the crest of the demographic wave of 1973-76, the size of an age cohort (born in the same year) was between 190,000 and 200,000. This proved to be the last demographic wave to date. The present yearly age cohorts are around 100,000 or less. The demographic wave of the mid-1970s affected the school (and supporting social) systems from the beginning of the 1980s until the mid-1990s. It is one of the explanations for the schooling boom in Hungary after the changes of 1989-90. If this demographic decline continues in the future, the population may decrease to under ten million. At present Hungary loses 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants per year. The population decrease influences heavily the demand for schooling (in absolute numbers). It therefore also influences the schooling network (the capacity of the system), as well as the cultures within institutions (their pedagogies).

Immigration

In the pre-transitional decades, Hungary, like her neighbours, was not affected by massive immigration. After the political transformation, however, Hungary was subject to waves of immigration of smaller and greater magnitude. These waves were closely connected to political processes in nearby countries (the Bosnian war, the decline of the former Yugoslavia, etc.).

National minorities

Another continuing source of immigration are the ethnic Hungarians (national minorities) in neighbouring countries, who have been living in a minority status since World War I. This movement is especially large from Romania, where the largest

Hungarian community is still present (Transylvania). A further migratory group is the Gypsy/Roma population of the Balkans, which is constantly moving from south-east Europe to the north-west. These immigrants represent a challenge for the present conditions and cultures of education in Hungary, and increase the demands on the socially integrative function of the school system.

Growing demand for schooling

While the immigrant groups pose a challenge to traditional Hungarian pedagogy and educational policy, the growing internal demand for schooling also affects the present system and educational culture. This increase is caused by the fact that the present generation of parents are more educated and trained than their parents and grandparents were. This rise in the educational and cultural level of the population (which is decreasing in numbers) is also a statistical fact (17% of the population held a university degree in 2000, compared to 11% in 1990; 32% of the population held a secondary school leaving diploma in 2000, compared to 27% in 1990, etc.)

Social position of the teaching profession

The number of 'intellectuals' has increased rapidly in the past fifty years, and the number of teachers has grown even more rapidly. In 1930, 87,000 people in Hungary possessed a higher education degree. This number increased to 176,000 in 1960, and the census returns showed 489,000 in 1980. 18% of these degree holders were teachers fifty years ago, and 29% twenty years ago; today this figure is 37%. The facts show that the most numerous group among the 'intellectuals' in Hungary is that of teachers. The proportion of other large professions is small compared with the teachers: technical intellectuals make up less than 30%, agricultural intellectuals less than 20%, and the other groups of intellectuals are under 10%.

The educational level of teachers has grown rapidly in the past fifty years. Secondary education was typical among teachers around 1930 (secondary teacher training institutions); today the majority of teachers are graduates ('diploma holders'). The transformation of the Hungarian teaching profession is the result of an historical process, but fundamental changes have occurred in the past fifteen years. The proportion of future teachers is decreasing (1990: 35%, 2001: 19%). This loss of interest has mostly affected the teacher training colleges; 50% of future teachers study at universities (2002-03).

The economic conditions of teachers (salaries and incomes) is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Average income of teachers in public education (in HUF and as a percentage of the national average) 1992 to 2000

	1992		1997		1999		2000	
	Gross average income (HUF)	percentage of national average	Gross average income (HUF)	percentage of national average	Gross average income (HUF)	percentage of national average	Gross average income (HUF)	percentage of national average
Vocational secondary school	–	–	40,656	70.4	48,518	64.8	52,912	75.0
General secondary school	17,756*	73.2*	41,398	72.6	46,150	61.3	51,135	70.7
College	–	–	57,856	73.0	78,623	74.8	83,603	87.6
University	24,951**	68.4**	71,505	56.5	100,449	58.9	109,291	71.6
Total in public education	21,033	95.4	48,876	84.2	67,218	87.0	72,768	86.1

Source: Education in Hungary 2003. Budapest: National Institute of Public Education
 Note: 1 euro = 250 HUF (2004)

School and the role of the family

The traditional family structure is also changing in Hungary. This process accelerated after the political transition of 1989-90. The statistical data available show the leading trends (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number and composition of families, on 1 January 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2001 (%)

	1970	1980	1990	2001*
Couples without children	33.7	35.2	34.3	33.9
Couples with children	56.1	53.5	50.2	49.7
of which couples unmarried	N/A	N/A	4.3	9.5
Single father with children	1.3	1.9	3.1	2.0
Single mother with children	8.9	9.4	12.5	14.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	2,890,912	3,027,668	2,896,203	2,868,694

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 2001, KSH, 2002* February

Great income differences are found between families with or without children. In 2000, the real income of individuals with children was equivalent to the 1995 income level. The income of those raising no child was equivalent to the 1993 level of income (the more recent being the higher). Households with three or more children and the households of inactives are the most disadvantaged.

There are nationwide organizations of parents (e.g. the Association of Big Families). Their function is to represent parents' interests in various policy questions, including education and training issues. The National Association of Parents, for example, has a standing committee at the Ministry of Education with different representatives in the various ministerial advisory bodies.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The education system is a system of institutions linked closely to the State and to public administration. The transformation of communities into independent local governments has played a major part in the fragmentation of the education system. The operational standards of the local authorities have a major impact on the quality of public education, since they determine the conditions of the operation of pre-school institutions (*óvoda*), schools (*iskola*), halls of residence (*diákotthon*), and the quality of educational services available to citizens.

In 1997, there were 3168 local governments, 2400 of which maintained public educational institutions; among these were 1818 single structure schools (*általános iskola*) with at least eight grades. In the past two years, the number of local governments that maintain schools has slightly decreased. 74% of all school-maintaining local governments and 55% of local governments maintaining an eight-grade single structure school are based in communities with fewer than 2000 inhabitants.

Financing

The education offered within the framework of a public education agreement is free of charge. If a private institution offers services outside of a public education agreement, it may request payment, the amount of which must be recorded in a written agreement. The owner of the institution may accept donations and contributions from parents or sponsors, which these may deduct from their taxes.

The current school system

General structure

The two types of pre-primary educational institution in Hungary are the day-nursery (*bölcsöde*) and the kindergarten (*óvoda*). The general school (*általános iskola*) is the main type of compulsory schooling. The types of secondary educational institution include the following: vocational training school (*szakiskola*), special vocational training school (*speciális szakiskola*), general vocational secondary school (*szakközépiskola*), and secondary school (*gimnázium*).

Pre-primary education

Nursery. There are two types of pre-primary educational institutions: the day-nursery (*bölcsőde*) and the kindergarten (*óvoda*). The day-nurseries offer care during the day for children from twenty weeks to three years of age. Though they have educational aims, they are not part of the public education system. They are supervised by the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs (*Egészségügyi, Szociális és Családügyi Minisztérium*).

The period of education in kindergarten begins when the child turns three years of age and continues until the attainment of the stage of development required for school attendance or the age of seven years at the latest. If, however, the development of a child requires more time, children may be retained in kindergarten after the age of seven years, according to the expert opinion of pre-primary teachers, the counselling service, and the expertise and rehabilitation committee, which monitor the child's progress until he or she reaches school maturity. Kindergarten attendance is not mandatory, but children are required by law to take part in sessions preparing for school life from the age of five years for a maximum of four hours per day.

Pursuant to the Act on Public Education, kindergartens must draw up a local educational programme in line with the stipulations of the law and the national core programme of pre-primary education (*Óvodai Nevelés Országos Alapprogramja*). As of 1 September 1999, pre-primary education is delivered on the basis of local pre-primary educational programmes drafted in advance and approved on the basis of expert opinion by the authority maintaining the school.

The three general tasks identified in the national core programme of pre-primary education are implemented with recognition of the methodological freedom of teachers. The Act on Public Education stipulates the application of pedagogical procedures and organizational solutions for specific development, corrective, enablement, rehabilitation, and therapeutic purposes in pre-primary education in order to meet the special needs of children with disabilities. The special needs provision for children is assisted by special services provision, integrated and partially integrated day-nursery groups, integrated and segregated kindergarten groups, and institutions for the handicapped operating independently.

The network of special needs education institutions is small and only 1268 children were educated in small segregated kindergarten groups in 1999, partly in boarding school arrangements. The special needs education institution system caters to about 0.5% of the pre-primary age group. The methodology developed at the Hungarian Pető Institute (Pető András Nevelőképző és Nevelő Intézet) is famous in conductive education. It is an institute for children with physical disabilities. There is no special kindergarten for small children with minor mental disabilities.

The Minister of Education issues the guidelines for national ethnic minority pre-primary education with the consent of the National Committee of Minorities (*Országos Kisebbségi Bizottság*). The pre-primary education of children belonging to national ethnic minorities aims to ensure the preservation, fostering, strengthening, and transmission of minority identity. In kindergartens offering such education, the language of pre-primary education may also be the mother tongue of the national ethnic minority. In 2000, about 20,000 children attended kindergartens offering

education in minority languages; they made up 5.4% of children attending these institutions.

Primary education

Primary education is regulated by the following acts: Act 89 of 1993 on public education and the amendments thereof; Act 62 of 1996 and Act 68 of 1999 regulate single structure education and similar schools.

The general school (*általános iskola*) is the main type of compulsory schooling in Hungary. It traditionally lasts eight years. Pupils typically attend these schools between the ages of six and fourteen. According to the uniform (ISCED) system of school stages, this school type incorporates the primary and the lower secondary levels: grades 1 to 4, the lower cycle, are the primary classes; grades 5 to 8, the upper cycle, are the lower secondary classes. School may operate with fewer or more than eight grades; the maximum is ten. In the late 1990s, in order to fulfil the mandatory schooling requirement until the age of sixteen years for young people who did not wish to study further at the secondary level, some single structure schools launched grades 9 and 10 as well.

Junior and senior stages (alsó tagozat, felső tagozat).

In grades 1 to 4, there is typically one class teacher for the majority of lessons through all four years. He or she is also the class master. Special subjects, such as physical education, singing and music, foreign languages, and ICT, are mostly taught by subject teachers even in the lower grades. In grades 5 to 12, however, education takes place exclusively in a specialized system, with separate subject-matter teachers instructing pupils in each school subject. One class teacher supervises each class of pupils and monitors the progress of individual school children.

Curriculum

In 1995, the national core curriculum (NCC) (*Nemzeti Alaptanterv - NAT*) was issued by the government, a central tier which provided a framework for content regulation. Following the guidelines laid down by the NCC, schools had elaborated their pedagogical programmes and, as a part thereof, their local curricula by 1998; these were then approved by the respective maintaining authorities. The NCC sets forth mandatory and shared requirements in a manner that requires 50 to 70% of teaching time for their fulfilment, varying according to schools and grades. The NCC identifies curriculum contents in a system of cultural domains including several related subjects, rather than in individual subjects. The cultural domains of the NCC are the following: mother tongue and literature, modern foreign language, mathematics, humankind and society, humankind and nature, earth and the environment, arts, IT skills, lifestyle and practical knowledge, and physical education and sport.

Teaching takes place in educational institutions according to the pedagogical programme (*helyi tanterv*). The pedagogical programme is discussed and accepted by the teaching staff and enters into force upon approval by the maintaining authority. The pedagogical programme must be disclosed to the public. The school's pedagogical programme defines the educational programme and the local curriculum of

the individual school. Teachers regularly assess pupil performance and progress during the school year by marking their oral and written assignments, and by giving a grade at the end of the first term and at the end of the school year.

Secondary education

Secondary education begins in grade 9 and lasts until grade 10 or 11 in short vocational training schools, and until grade 12 or 13 in secondary level education. Training for vocational qualifications – both in vocational training schools and secondary vocational schools – may only begin after completion of the general educational phase; the national training register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék*) identifies the grade at which this is to be completed.

Lower secondary education lasts from grade 5 to grade 8. This educational phase is incorporated into primary level education in single structure schools, but can also be completed in secondary level educational institutions - for example in general secondary schools with 6 or 8 grades, which allows pupils to commence education in such schools from grade 5 (age ten) or grade 7 (age twelve) respectively. Upper secondary education begins in grade 9 at the age of fourteen and lasts until the completion of the secondary school leaving examination or, alternatively, until exiting the secondary system.

Education in grades 9 to 12 is determined by the requirements of the NCC. General secondary schools may also offer (from grade 11) theoretical and practical lessons assisting entry into working life, with the primary aim of facilitating the employment of pupils in the labour market who do not intend to continue their studies in higher education institutions.

Secondary vocational schools operate with a four- (or five-) year programme from grade 9 to grade 12 (or 13), targeting the acquisition of general knowledge. They offer general secondary education in the secondary school grades and then from grade 11 vocational training in vocational training grades. General secondary education grades prepare pupils on the one hand for the general school leaving examination, which leads to entry into tertiary education or working life, and on the other for the vocational education grades of the school. The general school leaving examination is followed by a vocational examination to obtain a vocational qualification; alternatively pupils can decide to take only the vocational examination.

Training institutions offer vocational training with no secondary level qualification: short-term vocational training schools (*szakiskola*) and specialized short-term vocational training schools (*speciális szakiskola*). These institutions offer vocational qualifications, prepare for vocational examinations, or offer a basic qualification for a trade or profession. Grades 9 and 10 offer only education in general knowledge, and may also offer career orientation counselling, vocational preparatory education, and vocational basic education. The vocational training grades offer a preparation for a vocational examination.

The content of general secondary school education is determined by the NCC and by the pedagogical programme and the local curriculum. Pupils may study different subjects in greater or lesser depth. In advanced-level education, it is possible to study the selected subjects in greater depth in a greater number of lessons, while

an increased number of lessons in grades 11 and 12 offer an opportunity for selection among the subjects. The content of secondary vocational education also determines the vocational programme. Teachers are free to choose their methods and textbooks in every type of school after consulting the head of the school and the teaching staff or subject-based working groups.

The assessment and marking of pupils' knowledge, behaviour, and diligence at secondary school are similar to what has been described above for primary schools. General and vocational secondary education ends with the secondary school leaving examination (*érettségi vizsga*). The secondary school leaving examination attests the completion of secondary schooling, and provides eligibility for admission to certain higher education institutions. This is an internal examination taken in front of a board comprising subject teachers working in the particular school along with a chairperson delegated by the educational authorities, but not working in the school in question. The secondary school leaving examinations are in 2005 undergoing change: examinees may choose more freely than before from a range of subjects, and examinations may be taken in each subject at two different levels - intermediate and advanced. The vocational examination is a central state examination, and it is made up of written, practical, theoretical, and oral components.

Special education schools

Pre-primary education

Handicapped children may join pre-primary education from the age of three years. The Public Education Act does not regulate whether children with special needs are to be taught and educated separately in a special needs educational institution set up for this special purpose, or together with other children. Both alternatives are possible. However, the Act does define the institutional conditions required for special education. In addition to adequate environmental factors and the required medical and technical devices, it is a pre-requisite that children be educated and assisted by a special needs specialist (therapist) with a qualification matching the particular type of disability. All of the above brought substantial changes and established the legal framework for the organization of integrated education.

Primary education

Separate single structure schools set up in line with the type of disability are operated for pupils with disabilities: the blind, the sight-impaired, the physically handicapped, the deaf, the hearing-impaired, those with slight mental disabilities, those with medium mental disabilities, the autistic, and those with speech difficulties. Some pupils with slight mental or speech deficiencies fulfil their mandatory schooling in special needs classes and specialized classes set up within standard single structure schools.

Secondary education.

The majority of pupils with physical disabilities pursue their upper secondary school education in integrated forms. In the case of integrated education of pupils with disabilities, ordinary educational institutions, in addition to providing adequate envi-

ronmental factors and the required medical and technical devices, must also ensure that children be educated and assisted by a special needs specialist (therapist) with a qualification matching the particular type of disability. This personnel criterion may also be fulfilled in co-operation with special needs pedagogical service centres or mobile special needs pedagogical networks.

Vocational education

Pupils unable to progress with their peers because of their disabilities pursue their secondary studies in a specialized (short-term) vocational training school which was established for pupils with special needs who cannot be educated together with others. Certain schools and other special needs teacher training institutions are free to decide upon the most suitable methodologies in special needs education and care. Accordingly, the methods applied are diverse and vary from institution to institution.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Institutional levels of tertiary and higher education

Higher education

Pursuant to the Act of 1993 on higher education, the Hungarian higher education system has four tiers: accredited higher level vocational training (since 1997); college level education, including college level graduate and college level post-graduate education; university level graduate education; and post-graduate training, including university-level post-graduate training and doctoral (or Master's) programmes.

Colleges and Universities

According to the statutory classification of colleges, this type of institution may be set up when it is capable and suitable in different disciplines and in different courses. Specifically, it must offer a college level study programme of at least three years' duration, and general and post-graduate education; it must engage in research and development activities; and it must ensure the employment of lecturers with doctoral qualifications. A university may be set up when it is capable and suitable in different fields of sciences and in different disciplines in each area of science and in different programmes. In order to fulfil the above criteria, universities must employ a sufficient composition and number of full-time lecturing staff and must possess an infrastructure that allows a suitable amount of research.

Tertiary vocational education

Semi-tertiary training and accredited higher level vocational training are known for having no typical, distinctive type of institution. Education may be offered within different organizational frameworks, mostly in connection with secondary educational institutions or tertiary educational institutions. The planning of higher level vocational training, integrated into the higher education system with a view to labour market demands for specialists, aims to increase student enrolment in higher education and to diversify training.

The legal environment for the functioning of higher education is provided by the two-tier sectoral law and the accompanying legal regulations. The functioning of higher education institutions is regulated centrally by Act 80 of 1993 on higher education and its amendment by Act 61 of 1996. The Act on Higher Education is a framework law providing for two-fold legal regulation. On the one hand, the areas of control outside the Act are regulated by ministerial decrees, and on the other hand, the adoption of certain regulations is delegated to the Council for Higher Education and Science (*Felsőoktatási Tudományos Tanács*) and the National Accreditation Committee (*Magyar Akkreditációs Bizottság*).

Based on Act 52 of 1999, aimed at institutional integration, the number of state institutions dropped by about 50% after 1 January 2000. A key objective was the establishment of an integrated higher education network. Within the framework of the Bologna process (the European space of higher education) governments have agreed to introduce a three-level higher education structure (undergraduate, graduate or Master's, and postgraduate or doctoral levels). The proposed new governance of the institutions shifts the decision-making power of the academic bodies into the hands of the institutional governing boards composed of members nominated by the minister from both inside and outside the institutions.

The examination system

Applications for graduate programmes at higher education institutions may be submitted by prospective students with a secondary school leaving certificate or an equivalent certificate attesting secondary school qualifications. Universities may, at their own discretion, prescribe further admission requirements; thus, the admission system is not uniform on a national scale. The admission process is now under revision, and a central examination system is being introduced (two-level secondary school leaving examination which would substitute the former local entrance examinations).

The acquisition of knowledge is usually assessed on a scale of five: excellent (5), good (4), average (3), satisfactory (2), unsatisfactory (1); or on a scale of three: pass with excellence, pass, fail. Higher education institutions may choose, in their regulations, another system for controlling and assessing the fulfilment of academic requirements (e.g. units or a credit system), in which case comparability with the above assessment system must be ensured. Upon completion of their studies, students take a final examination (*záróvizsga*).

Adult and continuing education

The adult training sector is under the direction of the Minister of Education. The Minister of Education is assisted in the performance of this duty by the National Adult Training Council (*Országos Felnőttképzési Tanács*), a national body that prepares technical decisions and issues opinions and proposals.

Pursuant to the Act on Adult Education of 2001, the National Adult Training Institute (*Nemzeti Felnőttképzési Intézet*) is responsible for developing the professional and methodological aspects of adult training; research in adult training, documentation and support services; strengthening the relationship between adult education

and other areas of the education system and organizing international collaboration. This body also functions as the secretariat of the National Adult Training Accreditation Committee.

The sources of public expenditure on adult training are the central budget; a certain amount of the compulsory vocational training contribution paid by employers; the employment, development, and training sections of the Labour Market Fund and tax allowances for training participants.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

A key objective of the European Union is to ensure the quality and increase the effectiveness of education. In Hungary, this field has received particular political and professional attention since the mid-nineties.

The definition of quality is also a hot issue. We may observe three definitions that coexist simultaneously and are complementary in Hungarian education: (1) compliance with national standards, (2) adherence to local standards defined by the individual institutions and their maintaining authorities, and (3) satisfaction of stakeholders. All these refer to the quality of educational outcomes or 'products'.

Hungary has taken part in several international assessment programmes and has also conducted a series of national evaluations. The evaluations, based on standardized tests, reveal the actual knowledge behind school marks, and show that identical marks cover great differences in knowledge levels. National analyses of the PISA survey found that the performance of urban learners is on the average 8 to 9% higher than that of pupils in rural schools with the same marks.

In the PISA 2000 survey, the performance of fifteen-year-old Hungarian pupils on the combined reading literacy scale was ranked twenty-second. The average performance of Hungarian pupils was 480 points, which is significantly lower than the 500-point international average. 48% of Hungarian pupils performed below the third proficiency level, which means that nearly half of them failed to reach the level of reading comprehension necessary for successfully entering the labour market. While 10% of pupils in OECD countries achieved the highest (fifth) level, this rate in Hungary was 5%. Experts believe the main reasons for the poor performance levels may lie in the differences between the content and practice of Hungarian education and the approach of the PISA assessment.

The scientific literacy of Hungarian pupils has received feedback from two international surveys, providing a varied picture similar to the performance feedback on mathematics. According to the results from the IEA's studies (TIMSS 1995, TIMSS-R 1999), Hungary made significant progress in the course of the two evaluations, finishing second behind Canada. At the same time, the gap between the best and worst performance levels increased.

New developments in tertiary and higher education

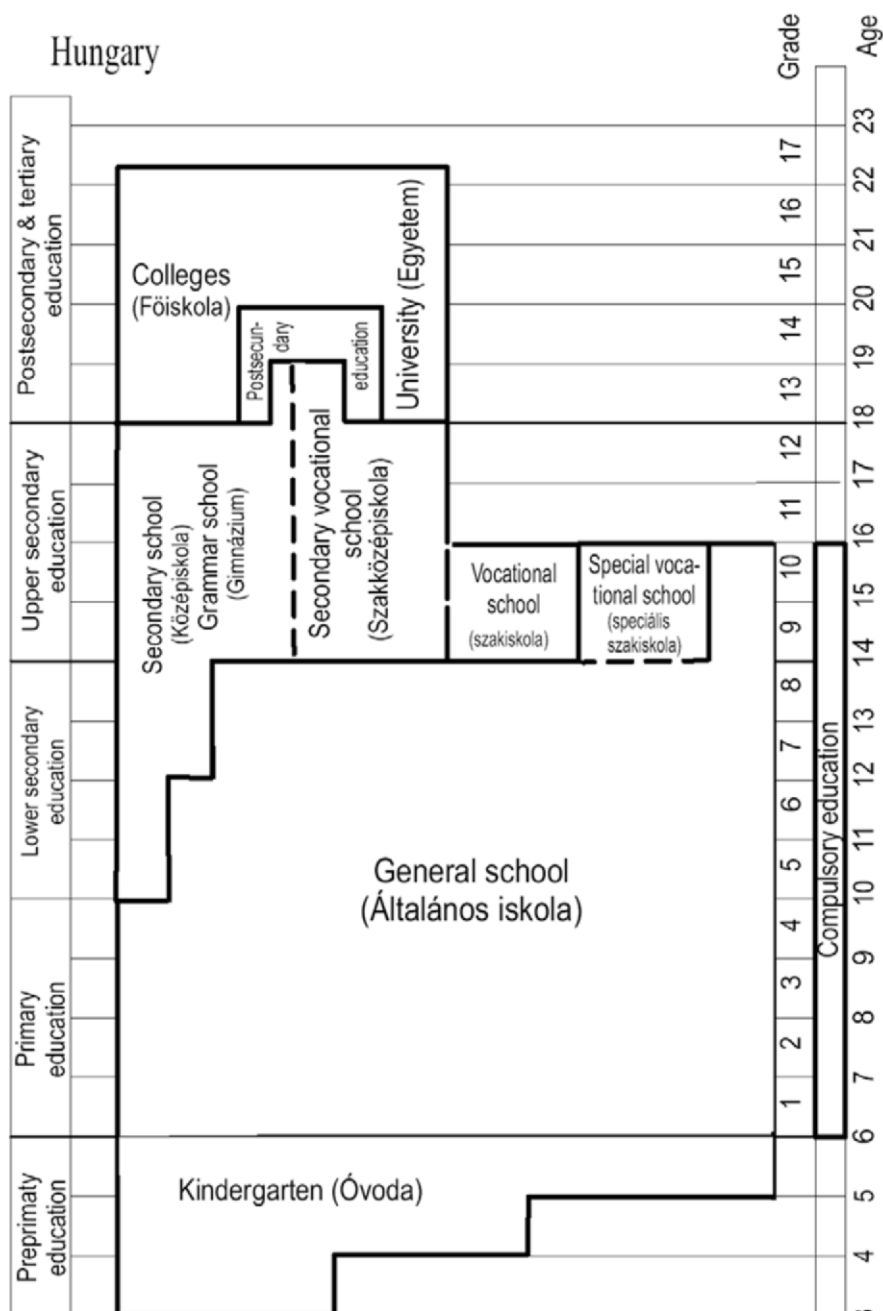
The latest and the planned developments in higher education are the introduction of student loans (2001), per capita financing (teaching, research, and maintenance), the credit system (2003) – the qualification requirements prescribe the fulfilment of a

minimum of 180 credits for college qualifications and 270 credits for university qualifications leading to a diploma, the higher-level secondary school leaving examinations (2005), the diploma supplement, and Bachelor's and Master's qualifications (2006, from 2003 in a pilot project).

References

- Eurydice: Key Data on Education in Europe. Brussels 2000.
- Eurydice: Basic indicators on the incorporation of ICT into European Education Systems – Facts and Figures – 2000/2001 Annual Report. Brussels 2001.
- Eurydice: Key Competencies. Brussels 2002.
- Eurydice: Key Data on Education in Europe. Brussels 2002. [http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/cc/2002/en/CC2002_EN_home_page.pdf] 01.06.04.
- Halasz, G. et al (Eds): Education in Hungary 2003. Budapest 2004. [<http://www.oki.hu/publication.php?kod=edu2k>] 01.06.04.
- International Study Center – Lynch School of Education, Boston College: PIRLS 2001 International Report. IEA's Study of Reading Literacy Achievement in Primary School in 35 Countries. 2003. [http://timss.bc.edu/pirls2001i/PIRLS2001_Pubs_IR.html] 01.06.04.
- Kozma, T. e.a.: Accreditation in the Higher Education System in Hungary. Paris 2003. IIEP.
- Kozma, T.: Minority education in Central Europe. In: European Education 35 (2003) 1, pp. 35-53.
- Kozma, T.: Transformation of Education Systems: the case of Hungary. In: European Education 34 (2003) 4, pp. 10-33.
- Vári, P. (Ed.): PISA 2000 Survey (PISA-vizsgálat 2000). Budapest 2003. (In Hungarian)
- Vári, P. et al.: On the PISA 2000 Survey (A PISA 2000 vizsgálatról). In: Új Pedagógiai Szemle 51 (2001) 12, pp. 31-45 (In Hungarian).

Hungary



Iceland

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

Iceland is an island in the North Atlantic Ocean with a total area of about 103,000 km² of which about 24% is arable. Iceland was settled from Norway and the Norwegian settlements in Ireland late in the ninth century. About 930, the settlers had established a society with decentralized executive power vested in thirty-nine chiefdoms and centralized legislative and judicial power vested in a general assembly, the *Althing*. In the year 1000, Christianity was adopted as the official religion through an act of the *Althing* and the country was subsequently divided into two dioceses. In 1262 the Icelanders elected King Hakon of Norway as their king and in 1380 Iceland passed to the Danish crown, where it remained until the Republic was founded in 1944. The Republic of Iceland is a constitutional democracy with legislative authority vested in the *Althing*, executive power in the Cabinet and judicial authority in the courts. The President and the sixty-three members of the *Althing* are elected by popular vote for a four-year term. Local government is in the hands of about 100 municipalities. The national language is Icelandic and the official religion Evangelical Lutheran Christianity, to which about 86% of the population adhere. Iceland is a member of the UN and of NATO, and is associated with the EU as a member of the EEA. In 2002 the number of inhabitants was about 288,000, corresponding to 2.8 inhabitants per km². The annual population increase was 0.7% and the average life expectancy at birth 78 years for males and 83 years for females. About 4% of the population are foreign citizens. Of these, 3% are granted Icelandic citizenship annually. The largest population density is found in the southwest, where about 62% of the population lives in the capital city of Reykjavik and its surroundings. In 2002 about 54% of the population was economically active: 8% in education, 62% in other services, 23% in industry, and 7% in agriculture and fisheries. The average rate of unemployment was about 2%. About 63% of exports came from marine products, 33% from manufacturing products, and 4% from other products. The rate of inflation was 5% (Statistics Iceland, 2003).

Schooling is closely connected to the use of sign systems. In Iceland this can be traced back to two different traditions: the European, Latin-based, Christian school tradition and the national, Icelandic-based literary tradition fostered by the Icelandic people. The practice of Christianity without a command of the written language is unthinkable. Thus, the first school was established in 1056 at the seat of the southern diocese. Under the Roman Church at least thirteen schools were established. The pioneers in schooling were all educated in Europe, and the schools were modelled on contemporary European institutions. With the Reformation in the middle of the sixteenth century, the management of the Church came into the hands of the Danish

King, who brought about a stricter control of evangelization and the education of the clergy. This resulted in a reduction in the number of schools to one at each of the two diocesan seats and further education at the university in Copenhagen.

Written language was not unknown in Iceland when written Latin was introduced to the country. Runic letters had long been used for short inscriptions on stone and wood. However, the introduction of Latin led to new developments, starting with the elaboration of an Icelandic Latin alphabet and an Icelandic written language, and culminating during the thirteenth century in a body of vernacular literature unparalleled in medieval Europe. According to sixteenth-century sources, teaching children to read was a general custom at that time, although writing was probably less often mastered. It is reasonable to assume that this was stimulated by the literary tradition. By a royal decree in 1635, clergymen were required to enter the homes and control the learning of children. All children were supposed to be able to read before their Confirmation. The result was that by the end of the eighteenth century most adults in Iceland could read and write.

The development of the school system in the modern sense proceeded gradually throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first primary school (*barnaskóli*) was established in 1745. In 1880 parents were required to provide instruction for their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In 1907 primary education was made compulsory for children aged ten to thirteen, and the State for the first time both took responsibility for some of the costs of schooling and extended the range of obligatory subjects with the introduction of geography, history, and natural science. The first secondary school was established in 1880 and offered a two-year course. In 1801 the two Icelandic dioceses were united and a new diocesan seat established in Reykjavik. Subsequently, the two diocesan schools were united into one school in Reykjavik. In 1904 this school was turned into a grammar school (*menntaskóli*) providing a six-year course. In 1930 a similar school was established in the town of Akureyri. These schools were the forerunners of the academic branch of the present upper secondary school system. As part of the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a range of specialized, vocationally oriented schools were established. Among these was the Teacher Training College (*Kennaraskóli Íslands*), established in 1908. Some of these schools were the forerunners of the vocational branch of the present tertiary system. The forerunners of the academic branch were the Theological Seminary, established in Reykjavik in 1847; the School of Medicine, established in 1877; and the Law School, established in 1908. In 1911 these three institutions were merged into the University of Iceland (*Háskóli Íslands*) with the four faculties of Theology, Medicine, Law, and Philosophy.

In the twentieth century four distinct periods of accelerated school reforms can be identified, the first during the 1920s and 1930s. The primary school system was amended in 1926, 1928, and 1936. The first pre-school (*leikskóli*) was established in Reykjavik in 1936 as a private institution. During the 1930s, secondary schools (*gagnfræðaskóli*) were established in most towns together with several regional secondary boarding schools (*héraðsskólar*). The courses lasted two to three years

and emphasized practical subjects rather than preparation for entrance to the more strictly academic grammar schools.

The second reform period occurred during the 1940s. In 1946 compulsory education was extended to include all children aged seven to fifteen, thereby making the first two years of secondary school compulsory. The range of obligatory subjects was extended to include physical education, swimming, handicrafts, and music. The curricula of the secondary schools were co-ordinated by dividing them into three kinds according to the length of the courses: compulsory, lower secondary schools with two-year courses (*unglingaskólar*); intermediate schools with three-year courses (*miðskólar*); and general secondary schools with four-year courses (*gagnfræðaskólar*). Provisions were made for further division of each type of school into academic and vocational branches. The subjects taught included Icelandic language and literature, two or three foreign languages, mathematics, history and social studies, the natural sciences, physics, geography, physical education, and swimming. In addition to this, the general secondary schools and the vocational branches taught vocationally oriented subjects. Education in the general secondary schools led to an examination providing entry to the labour market or to the vocationally oriented specialized schools. Together with some of these schools, the general secondary schools were the forerunners of the vocational branch of the present upper secondary school system. Instruction in the intermediate schools led to an intermediate school examination including centrally composed and organized, nationally co-ordinated tests in core subjects that together constituted a minimum competency examination providing entry to the grammar schools and the Teacher Training College. Accordingly, the grammar schools were reorganized to provide four-year courses. At the University of Iceland, faculties of Engineering and Business Administration were added. This school system remained essentially intact until the 1970s.

Reforms and innovations

The third reform period occurred during the 1970s. The pre-school level was for the first time regulated in 1976, and a draft of a national curriculum guide was issued in 1985. The responsibility for the construction and running of pre-schools was assigned to the municipal level under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The rest of the school system was classified into three stages that together formed a coherent system in the sense that at every stage provisions were made for continuations to a higher stage or entry to the labour market. In terms of the ISCED-97 classification, the first stage, compulsory school (*grunnskóli*), corresponds to the combined primary and lower secondary stages; the second stage, upper secondary school (*framhaldsskóli*), to the upper secondary stage; and the third stage, university (*háskóli*), to the tertiary stage. Compulsory schooling was extended to include all children aged six to sixteen. Nationally co-ordinated and centrally composed, organized, and marked tests in core subjects were introduced at the end of grades 4, 7, and 10, the final grade. The purpose of these tests was formative, in the sense that they were intended only for the use of the pupil, his or her guardians, and teachers. The aim was to establish a fair, reliable, and valid reference on the basis of which the pupil could be counselled. All vocationally oriented education was integrated

into the upper secondary school system, and the general minimum competency requirements for admission to schools at this level were removed. In order to secure equal opportunities, anyone who had completed compulsory education was in principle granted the right to enter a course of studies in an upper secondary school. To adapt the rights to free entrance to the upper secondary level to the realities involved in running upper secondary schools, some of the grammar schools responded by introducing their own minimum competency requirements, while most of the other schools at this level introduced remedial programmes for those pupils lacking core competences, to be completed before admission to the regular courses. The result of the reforms was that about 90% of the pupils who completed compulsory school entered upper secondary courses. However, the drop-out rate was about 30%. At the tertiary level the second institution was established in 1971, when the Teacher Training College became the Iceland University of Education (*Kennaraháskóli Íslands*).

The fourth reform period started during the 1980s, when several important changes in the social and technological environment of the school system prepared the way for both qualitative and quantitative changes. Throughout the twentieth century, progressive educational attitudes had an ever increasing influence on the school system through the development of the educational acts and ministerial regulations. During the 1980s, however, it was argued that the autonomy of the school implied in the progressive pedagogy did not sufficiently meet the needs of society for specific knowledge and skills. At the same time, the integration of information technology into the school system opened up new possibilities for organizing education. During the 1990s, a completely new and coherent set of parliamentary acts regulating the educational system from pre- primary to tertiary education was passed. These acts and the corresponding ministerial regulations reflect a major change in the attitude towards education. The notion of education as a general cultivation of the child was weakened, and education in the sense of goal-directed schooling in preparation for work and life was strengthened. The child-centred attitude, which fostered the child's motivation to learn on the basis of his or her intrinsic interests, needs, skills, and desires, moved to the background, and competition was introduced as a motivational tool for both pupils and teachers. The obligation of schools to foster professionalism and quality was stressed, and evaluation against standards of expected performance was introduced to ensure that the needs of society were met. Consequently, the nationally co-ordinated tests took on a summative role, and minimum competency requirements for entrance into upper secondary schools were reintroduced. The policy was to define aims, clarify demands, and specify expected results. New models of management, in which centralization was balanced against decentralization, were introduced. In the place of the joint responsibility of the State and the municipalities for the compulsory schools full responsibility was given to the municipalities. However, many of the components of the progressive pedagogy were retained and extended in the new organization of the education system. These included a concern for the well-being of the individual, an holistic attitude to subject matter, the need to anchor school work in the immediate

surroundings of the individual, and extended freedom of choice. The school system presented in this chapter is the outcome of the fourth reform period.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

The overall goal of the school system is to contribute to the continuous development of pupils in order to prepare them for life and work in a continuously evolving democratic society. To obtain this, a suitable balance between personality development and knowledge acquisition must be struck. The school system aims at influencing personality development through the practices and methods of the school. The educational acts stress the obligation of schools to show respect for individuals and their equality, and to develop collective and individual responsibility, consideration of others, the will and ability to solve disagreements peacefully, tolerance, and an acceptance of the right of every individual to form opinions, express them, and win their acceptance while respecting the opinions of others. The school is further required to encourage broad-mindedness in its pupils, and to strive to develop their self-confidence through creative assignments. These practices and methods are integrated into an environment where knowledge is developed. According to the educational acts and the corresponding ministerial regulations, the basic philosophy on which this environment is based is inclusiveness, equality of opportunity, and comprehensiveness. Pupils are to be included and given equal opportunities without regard to sex, economic status, residential location, religion, handicaps, and cultural or social background. The educational environment is coherent in the sense that at all stages of the school system provisions are made for continued study or entry to the labour market. The sustained pursuit of knowledge is a prerequisite for living in a continuously changing society. The school system therefore contains various provisions for adult education and lifelong learning, especially at the upper secondary and tertiary levels. These provisions are also part of a policy to maintain equality of opportunities without regard to age, previous education, occupation, location, or gender. The relatively high fraction of the formal age group reported active at the tertiary level in Table 1 indicates that many of the students may fall outside the formal age groups; the numbers in the Table thus indicate that the adult education policy is working.

Socio-economic context

Icelandic society has one of the highest levels of social equity among the societies within the OECD. It is free from regionalization and there are no traditional ethnic minorities. Some increase in the net migration of foreign citizens into the country was observed during the second half of the 1990s. This resulted in a relatively high ratio of immigrants in a couple of rural municipalities (up to 20%). However, net migration into the country is now declining (Statistics Iceland, 2003). The society is thus on average still comparatively homogeneous and free of minorities (Table 2). The policy is to maintain equal availability of resources independent of regional or local situation and to sustain integration and homogeneity. The main problem en-

countered in integrating immigrants is the language barrier, which leads to isolation until it is broken. Provisions for this are included in the school system.

Social position of the teaching profession

The salaries of Icelandic teachers are among the lowest in the OECD area. However, while the general trend in the OECD area is towards declining salaries among teachers, the salaries in Iceland are rising. Teachers have been working systematically towards enhancing their professional prestige, and both the self-esteem of teachers and the respect of the users of their services are growing. At the municipal level, there is an understanding of the importance of good pre-schools and of custody services for the youngest children in compulsory school as a prerequisite for the effective day to day running of society. Judging also from the attitude of the press, the social prestige of teachers seems to be growing. This may be partly a result of the changes to the school system during the 1990s, which focused on the performance of the individual child and thus met the concerns of guardians, and partly a result of improved 'care' services arising from an increase in the daily teaching time.

School and the role of the family

At the pre-school and compulsory levels guardians are expected to participate in school matters through three channels. In teacher-guardian conferences, guardians are informed about the progress of the child and the teacher about the child from the point of view of the guardians. Every compulsory school must have a parents' council, made up of three representatives of guardians, which promotes communication between the school and the guardians, and expresses opinions on school administration. Guardians, both at the pre-primary and compulsory levels, may establish associations with the aim of supporting school activities, may strengthen contact between the guardians and the school, and may organize social activities. In Reykjavik such associations are active in most pre-schools and all compulsory schools.

The impression is that the attitude of guardians towards school varies somewhat between schools, and that the level of participation in school matters is higher among pre-school guardians than among compulsory school guardians. At the upper secondary and tertiary levels, guardians usually do not participate. An investigation of the attitude of guardians in Reykjavik to the compulsory school attended by their child (*Fræðslumiðstöð Reykjavíkur*, 2002) concluded that 84% of guardians are very or fairly content with the school, 58% are willing to participate in the parents' council, 30.5% want to increase their participation in school matters, 63.7% are content with the influence they have, 78% think that the school is well or fairly well administered, and 88% think that their child is always or nearly always at ease in school.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The overall responsibility for the upbringing of children rests with their guardians. The role of the school system is to give formal education and contribute to the so-

cialization of the pupils. The State has overall responsibility for the school system. The *Althing* has determined the aims and administrative framework for each level of the school system in a mutually consistent way through the Pre-schools Act (1994), the Compulsory Schools Act (1995), the Upper Secondary Schools Act (1996), and the Universities Act (1997). For institutions at the tertiary level, separate legislation defines in more detail their internal organization and activities such as their engagement in research. The Ministry of Education is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the educational acts and corresponding ministerial regulations, and all schools are formally organized under its supervision (except a few vocationally oriented schools falling under other ministries). Among the most important ministerial regulations are the National Curriculum Guides for Pre-schools (Ministry of Education 1999a), Compulsory Schools (Ministry of Education 1999b), and Upper Secondary Schools (Ministry of Education 1999c).

At the pre-primary and compulsory level, the municipalities are responsible for establishing and running public schools, including the provisions for special education. A pre-school committee elected by the municipal authority is in charge of pre-school affairs and the functions of individual pre-schools are directed by a pre-school director. Municipalities are divided into school districts that take care of compulsory school affairs. In each district a school board is elected for this purpose according to provisions in the Local Government Act and in the statutes of the municipality concerned. The functions of individual compulsory schools are directed by a school principal. Representatives of pre- and compulsory school guardians usually have the right to attend meetings of the respective councils and school boards as non-voting observers.

At the upper secondary level, the State is responsible for establishing and running public schools. The Ministry of Education appoints a school board for each upper secondary school that is responsible for its affairs. Representatives of teachers and pupils are non-voting observers on the school board. The Principal directs school activities assisted by a school council with representatives from teachers and pupils. The Principal attends meetings of the school board as a non-voting member, serving the board in an executive function. To co-ordinate and supervise vocational education at the upper secondary level, the Minister of Education appoints a co-operation committee and occupational councils for individual occupations or occupational groups. The task of the co-operating committee is to strengthen the connections between school and industry, and to advise the Minister of Education concerning the classification of occupations into occupational groups. The occupational councils define on the one hand the needs of the occupational groups (vocations) with respect to the skills and knowledge required by employees, and on the other the aims of individual courses of study. Occupational councils also make suggestions concerning the structure of vocational education and curriculum guidelines for special subjects that pertain to the occupational group in question.

Tertiary establishments are self-governing institutions operating in accordance with a ratified charter. The administration of each university is entrusted to the Senate, the Vice-Chancellor (Rector), faculty boards, faculty councils, and deans, if the university is divided into faculties. The Senate issues final rulings in the affairs of

the university and its institutions, formulates their overall policy, and furthers their development. The Senate is the supreme decision-making body in each institution unless explicitly stated otherwise in a relevant act. In public tertiary institutions, the Minister of Education appoints the Vice-Chancellor for a five-year term following the nomination of the Senate. The Minister also appoints two representatives to the Senate. Other members of the Senate come from the institution, and include representatives of both teachers and students.

Financing

At the pre-primary and compulsory levels, the municipalities are primarily responsible for the financing of the construction and operation of public schools, although other parties may also operate such schools after receiving the approval of the relevant municipal authority. The financing of individual pre-schools is linked to a predefined capacity, which often leads to a certain shortage. The financing of individual compulsory schools is linked to the number of pupils attending, according to predefined pro-pupil rates.

At the upper secondary level, the financing of construction and initial investment for equipment in public schools is divided between the State and the corresponding municipality at a ratio of 60/40, but the State alone is responsible for the financing of the operation of the schools. Both public and private schools receive individual funding from the state budget. The amount of funding given to each school is regulated by an annual agreement between the school and the Ministry of Education, and is linked to the number of pupils examined according to predefined pro-pupil rates.

At the tertiary level, the State is primarily responsible for the financing of the construction and operation of public institutions. Both public and private institutions receive individual funding from the state budget. The amount of funding given to each institution is regulated in a performance-related contract between the institution and the Ministry of Education that also defines how the institution intends to achieve its objectives. The contract is renegotiated every third year and covers both teaching and research activities. The funding for teaching activities is calculated according to financing models for teaching costs based on predefined pro-student and pro-subject rates. The funding for research activities is determined on a somewhat more *ad hoc* basis.

In principle, all education in public educational institutions is free of charge, although some schools and universities charge registration fees and about 30% of the operational costs at the pre-primary level are covered by parent fees. Private schools charge tuition fees. At the compulsory level, the State is responsible for supplying all educational materials free of charge. To administer this, the State Publishing House for Educational Material (*Námshúsið*) was established in 1937. At the upper secondary and tertiary levels, pupils and students must pay for their text books and those in vocational programmes must pay for materials. Pupils in compulsory school have the right to attend a school in their local area. In rural areas, daily transport to school is provided free of cost. In exceptional cases, boarding facilities or home schooling combined with distance learning facilities are provided.

In 2002 education amounted to about 6% of the gross domestic product and about 15% of total government spending (Statistics Iceland 2003, table 17.4).

Public and private schooling

Public and private schools are on an equal footing with respect to the provisions of the educational acts. In 2002 about 6% of the children at the pre-primary level attended private schools. This is comparable to the fraction for previous years. At the compulsory level, about 1% attended private schools. This number has been declining during the last decade. At the upper secondary level, about 6% of pupils attended private schools. At the tertiary level, 13% of students attended private university colleges. Home schooling is found only in exceptional cases.

General standards of the educational system

The educational system promotes the individual development, health, and education of all pupils through suitable instruction, taking into account their nature and needs. Corporal punishment is forbidden. All schools are co-educational and the school system is required to integrate handicapped pupils into mainstream education. For the most part they attend regular classes and follow the same subjects as other pupils, but with special academic assistance and support, and with training according to their needs. Tertiary institutions accept handicapped students, but handle the task in a variety of ways, since no legislation exists dealing with the special needs of students at the tertiary level. Counsellors may arrange diagnoses and help individual students asking for assistance, and some tertiary institutions have an official policy on how to cater to students with special needs.

The national curriculum guides represent a further development of the educational acts, interpret them, and further specify what is to be co-ordinated within and between the educational levels. Together the guides provide a consistent and co-ordinated national educational policy. The policy to be implemented and the role of each level in raising and educating the pupils is defined. The guides define the objectives of individual programmes of study and the objectives of instruction in individual subjects in accordance with the role of the corresponding level. They provide details of how the educational acts are to be implemented and prescribe the structure of individual programmes of study, the coherence of study programmes, and the normal length of study for each programme. Finally, the guides determine the general content of each subject and the proportion of total annual teaching time to be devoted to it, and set the parameters for each school and its staff with respect to the organization, execution, and evaluation of education. Apart from this, the educational system is to a large extent decentralized with regard to both responsibilities and decision-making.

The decentralized administration of each individual school is based on an internally elaborated administrative plan in the form of a school working guide, whereby the corresponding national curriculum guide is reinterpreted at the individual school level, school activities are set out, and the interaction between the school and the external social and physical environment in which the school is situated is described. The school working guide specifies the areas the school has chosen to emphasize,

defines the education it offers, and describes the teaching methods and administrative routines that it has adopted. The school working guide accounts for the school year, includes an annual calendar and the organization of instruction, and both specifies the rationale behind and provides details of the timetable, the division of pupils into classes and groups, the aims and contents of the education offered, pupil assessment procedures, the assessment of the work that goes on in the school, extra-curricular activities, and other aspects of the operation of the school. The school working guide specifies the rationale behind the school's goals and evaluation methods; the organization of special education and care for the disabled; the nature of disciplinary actions, co-operation with guardians and external organizations, and extra-curricular activities; and the use of nature through environmental facilities. In this way, the school working guides express a certain degree of specialization elaborated by each individual school. The factors emphasized in the school working guides differ between school levels. At the pre-school level, the main objective is to adapt the framework given in the national curriculum guide to the interests and experiences of the children and their social and geographic environment. At the compulsory level, the main objective is to adapt the framework to the groups of pupils and the teaching methods adopted by the school. At the upper secondary level, the main objective is to adapt the framework to the internal diversity of the school produced by different programmes of study with the aim of fulfilling the obligation of the upper secondary level to stimulate the development of all pupils according to their ability, and to prepare them as well as possible to take an active role in a democratic society.

The present national curriculum guides were prepared by work groups of teachers drawn from different levels of the school system and appointed by the Ministry of Education. In the process, drafts from the work groups were made freely available on the internet for the public to comment upon. Formal opinions were sought from parent-teacher associations and teacher trade unions. School working guides are prepared annually by the school staff as directed by the School Director or Principal, and are submitted to the parents' council for an opinion and to the school board for approval.

Quality management

The State has overall responsibility for the quality of the school system. The Ministry of Education is responsible for assessing individual schools and the educational work that is carried out there to ensure that all such activities are in compliance with the educational acts, the national curriculum guides, and other ministerial regulations. Each school is responsible for introducing suitable methods to evaluate its own educational work. This evaluation must include, among other things, teaching and administration, communication within the school, and associations with external parties. The Ministry of Education is required to investigate the self-evaluation methods used by the schools at five-year intervals. At the tertiary level, institutions are required to set up a formal internal quality evaluation system. The Ministry conducts an external evaluation of educational programmes at tertiary institutions and is responsible for approving new degrees.

The general aims and contents of schooling are defined in the national curriculum guides. This is balanced by a decentralizing element whereby aims and contents can be reformulated and specified at the level of individual schools through school working guides. The final responsibility for the outcome of education is also the responsibility of each individual school. This autonomy is, however, controlled by specific demands on average performance at the compulsory and upper secondary levels. To monitor this, the Educational Testing Institute (*Námsmatsstofnun*) has been set up to compose, organize, and mark nationally co-ordinated tests in core subjects. In compulsory school, co-ordinated tests are given in grades 4 and 7 (Icelandic and mathematics) and in the final grade (Icelandic, mathematics, English, Danish, social sciences, and natural sciences). The introduction of nationally co-ordinated final grade tests in the academic branch of the upper secondary school (matriculation examination in Icelandic) is in process. Participation in the final grade nationally co-ordinated examinations is voluntary, but the documented competency obtained through participation is a prerequisite for entry to many schools at the subsequent school levels. Thus, the nationally co-ordinated final grade tests function as minimum competency tests for admission to the upper secondary and tertiary levels. In 2002 over 95% of pupils completed the voluntary final grade tests for compulsory school in Icelandic, mathematics, and English; 85% in Danish; and 70% in natural sciences. The Educational Testing Institute is responsible for undertaking comparative analyses of the educational system by analysing results from nationally co-ordinated examinations and participation in international surveys. Among the international surveys in which Iceland has participated are the IEA, TIMSS, and PISA tests. Iceland ranked above the OECD average in reading, writing, and mathematics, but ranked at or below the average in natural sciences.

Supporting systems

An important aspect in implementing the policy of equal opportunities and inclusion in the school system are the efforts made to compensate for different economic situations and different physical and mental abilities. At each compulsory school a nurse makes general health checks (hearing, vision, height, weight, and vaccinations). Up to the age of eighteen, free dental check-ups are provided and 60% of treatment costs are refunded. Municipalities are responsible for providing pre- and compulsory schools with various specialist services, such as general pedagogical counselling, counselling with respect to particular subjects, school psychological services, educational services connected to special education, and adequate support for the handicapped. Several agencies exist to facilitate these services. In order to cover the costs of special education, municipalities are required to set aside resources according to a certain pro-pupil rate. These resources are then distributed according to a predetermined ratio to ordinary schools and to special units and special schools. Several institutions specializing in handicap diagnosis offer their services to the school system. Both schools and guardians can request such a diagnosis. Pupils with a diagnosed handicap are granted an individually adjusted allowance that they receive through the school system. Pupils who are deaf or hard of hearing, or whose mother tongue is not Icelandic, and who are permanently resident in Ice-

land, have the right to special education in Icelandic. The Upper Secondary Schools Act contains provisions with respect to special teaching in Icelandic for those pupils whose first language is not Icelandic. It also provides for special instruction in Icelandic for deaf pupils and for Icelandic pupils who have lived abroad for long periods of time. Immigrants in the age group six to eight years entering the country receive special support in their ordinary class. Immigrants in the age group nine to fifteen years attend special immigrant classes and are streamed into ordinary schools within one or two years. School counsellors offer pupils advice on their studies and study-related problems. In upper secondary school this includes choosing from the available programmes of study and making study plans, and sometimes advice regarding personal problems. Student counselling centres are operated at tertiary institutions. Counselling centres provide counselling for students regarding their choice of programmes and organization of their studies, as well as individual problems.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The sub-tertiary part of the school system is divided into three levels. Pre-school (*leikskóli*) for children below the age of six years integrates the kindergarten and the ISCED 97 pre-school level into a single structure. Compulsory school (*grunnskóli*) for children aged six to sixteen integrates the ISCED 97 primary and lower secondary levels into a single structure, usually implemented within the same institution. Upper secondary school (*framhaldsskóli*) for adolescents aged sixteen to twenty corresponds to the ISCED 97 upper secondary level. There are four types of programmes of study at the upper secondary level: academic, vocational, artistic, and general. The first three are regular programmes offering four-year courses (with some exceptions). The general programme is a one-year course intended for remedial purposes. All programmes can lead to further education.

Pre-primary education

Attendance is voluntary, but the policy is to offer all children the option of attending pre-school if their guardians so wish. Very few pre-schools accept children under the age of one year, and the youngest children are usually two years of age. In municipalities where there may be insufficient room to accommodate all applicants, handicapped children and the children of single parents and of students are given priority.

The Pre-schools Act defines the aim of pre-schools as follows. (1) To provide children with care, a good environment for development, and safe facilities for playing. (2) To give children the opportunity to participate in games and activities and to benefit from the varied developmental stimuli of a group of children under the guidance of pre-school teachers. (3) To strive, in collaboration with guardians, to stimulate children's all-round development in accordance with the nature and needs of each child, and to give them mental and physical attention so that they can enjoy their childhood. (4) To encourage tolerance and broad-mindedness on the part of

children and to give them equal opportunities for development in all areas. (5) To instil Christian moral values in children and to lay the foundations necessary for children to become independent, thinking, active, and responsible participants in a democratic society undergoing rapid and continuous changes. (6) To foster children's expressive and creative powers, with the aim of strengthening their self-esteem, security, and ability to solve disagreements peacefully.

The national curriculum guide is based on a child-centred ideology in which emphasis is placed on childhood as a separate stage of development with special qualities which must be borne in mind; the individual development and the needs of each child are focused upon. The core element of education in pre-schools is play, which is considered the best way for the child to learn and mature. Pre-school education is intended to bridge the gap between caring for the child and its education. Thus, the education provided in pre-schools is intended to lay the groundwork for a smooth transition to the first year of compulsory school by supporting the child's all-round development. This includes physical, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, social, aesthetic, creative, and moral development. In Icelandic society, where most guardians are vocationally active, the pre-schools not only provide education, but also fulfil a socially and economically important custody function. Children attend pre-schools from four to nine hours a day and are usually divided into groups which in smaller municipalities can span more than one age group.

Pre-schools are not required to assess the performance or the progress of each child. However, such an assessment is made by pre-school staff or specialists if any suspicion of deviation from normal development arises. The policy is to implement remedial measures as early as possible. Special attention is given to immigrant children, slow learners, and handicapped children. All children, regardless of social, mental, or physical handicaps are granted the same right as other children to attend pre-schools. The programme for handicapped children is the same as for other children, but adapted to their abilities. Pre-school children who need special assistance or training because of a handicap are provided with such training within the pre-school they attend, according to certain rules and under the supervision of a pre-school teacher, a social pedagogue, or other specialists. All children who receive special assistance or training are given regular check-ups to monitor their health and development.

Compulsory education

Attendance is mandatory and there are no entrance requirements. Guardians are required to register their children for entrance to the local compulsory school in the year in which they reach the age of six years.

According to the Compulsory Schools Act, school activities are required to emphasize the following. (1) Strengthening the self-consciousness and social consciousness of pupils. (2) Promoting their physical and mental well-being, healthy lifestyles, and responsible behaviour toward living beings and the environment. (3) Training pupils in using the Icelandic language in all subjects, as well as in dramatic and artistic expression. (4) The ability of pupils to understand causal relationships and to draw logical conclusions. (5) Comprehension and creative activities, and

achieving a balance between academic and practical studies. (6) Utilizing play as a means of learning and development. (7) Studies which will be of advantage to pupils in their daily lives, further studies, and employment. (8) Preparing both sexes equally well for active participation in society, family life, and employment. (9) A variety of ways to acquire knowledge through the use of technological media, information technology, school resource centres, and written sources. (10) Providing study counselling and information on occupational options, on business and industry, and on courses of study in preparation for choosing further study or employment.

According to the national curriculum guide, the core task of education in compulsory school is the setting of clear, step-by-step objectives in all subjects within a pedagogical framework that aims at guiding the pupils towards the objectives set, and that provides an evaluation system that quantifies the progress made. Usually the same teacher teaches all academic subjects, while sports, fine arts, and music are taught by special teachers. Teachers choose teaching methods suited to their pupils, their instructional aims, and the conditions under which they teach. In general, an attempt is made to provide as much variety as possible. About 75% of teachers are women. Meals are commonly provided. Extra-curricular activities and custody services are not in the hands of the schools, but are taken care of by other municipal institutions. Parents pay separately for these services.

Pupils are generally expected to cover the same subject material at roughly the same speed. Pupils experiencing difficulties with this for academic or social reasons are offered a considerable amount of remedial instruction once the pupil's difficulties have been diagnosed. This instruction can take two different forms. Either a remedial teacher assists the pupil in the classroom, or the pupil is taken out of the classroom and tutored by a remedial teacher on an individual basis or in a small group.

The school year lasts nine months, commencing in late August and ending in early June. Classes are organized in a single shift commencing between 8 and 9 a.m. and finishing between 2 and 3 p.m. five days a week.

Marks for nationally co-ordinated tests and final tests are given on a 1 to 10 point scale, where 10 is the highest mark. The nature of other assessments carried out by individual teachers and schools can vary from a numerical or alphabetical grade to an oral or written commentary. Reports are given at regular intervals throughout the school year and at the end of each year. At the end of compulsory school, all pupils receive a certificate stating their marks in both the nationally co-ordinated examinations and all other courses completed in their final year at school.

Upper secondary education

Attendance is voluntary and anyone who has completed compulsory education can enter a course of study at an upper secondary school. However, this right is conditioned by ministerial regulations defining minimum ability requirements. In the academic branch of upper secondary school, these requirements are defined entirely in terms of results from nationally co-ordinated tests, but in the vocational branch additional requirements concerning non-academic abilities and experience may also

apply. To be guaranteed general admission to upper secondary schools, a pupil must pass all the nationally co-ordinated tests with marks corresponding at least to the minimum ability requirements. Those who have not participated in the required nationally co-ordinated tests or have not met the minimum requirements in the tests may enter a one-year general programme at an upper secondary school with the aim of qualifying for entry to a regular study programme.

The Upper Secondary Schools Act defines the aims of upper secondary schools as follows. (1) To encourage the overall development of pupils in order to prepare them as well as possible for active participation in a democratic society. (2) To prepare the pupils for employment and further study. (3) To strive to develop the responsibility, broad-mindedness, initiative, self-confidence and tolerance of pupils; introduce them to disciplined and independent work practices and critical thinking; instruct them in the appreciation of cultural values; and encourage them to seek knowledge continuously.

The national curriculum guide and other ministerial regulations define the objectives and structure of the contents of secondary education. The guide is also an important tool for maintaining the coherence and quality of upper secondary education. The goal-directed pedagogy of the compulsory school is developed further at the upper secondary level. Here the goals must be defined in relation to the premises underlying compulsory schooling and either the knowledge required for admission to tertiary education or the professional standards of skilled trades. The teaching effort must also be adjusted for the purpose of reaching these goals. However, at this level the schools are less dependent on external motivational efforts, as attendance is voluntary. Each subject is taught by a separate teacher. The teachers are approximately equally distributed between men and women.

The upper secondary schools fall into four main types: (1) Grammar schools organized around forms or grades and providing academic programmes of study concluding with the matriculation (university entrance) examination. (2) Industrial-vocational schools providing theoretical and practical programmes of study in skilled and some non-skilled trades. Some of these are three-year courses. (3) Comprehensive schools organized around a unit-credit system providing on the one hand academic programmes of study comparable to those of the grammar schools, and on the other vocational programmes similar to those offered by the industrial-vocational schools, as well as other specialized vocational training programmes. In a unit-credit system, the educational content of each subject is divided into a number of defined course units which last one semester. Pupils in a given course form a group for that course unit and they are given a certain number of credits for each course unit they complete. Given the possibilities that the unit credit system offers to pupils in regulating the progression of their studies, the total duration of the programmes varies between three and five years. (4) Specialized vocational schools offering programmes of study in preparation for specialized employment.

In the academic programmes, the subjects are divided into general subjects that all pupils are required to take, specialized subjects that correspond to the aims of a particular programme of study, and electives. Pupils can choose between three types of programme for foreign languages, natural sciences, and social sciences, with

some further possibilities for specialization within each programme. The vocational programmes can be divided into programmes offering pupils training for a skilled trade and programmes offering pupils vocational training in other areas such as health, domestic sciences, fisheries, information technology, social subjects, or commerce. Training for a skilled trade is comprised of a vocational programme of study at an upper secondary school and an apprenticeship with a master craftsman or an industrial firm. Upon completion of these programmes, the apprentice takes a journeyman's examination that provides the qualifications and legal certifications required to pursue the trade concerned. An apprentice who has completed the journeyman's examination can become a master craftsman after a certain period of work experience and advanced studies at a vocational school. Vocational training in other areas and training in artistic programmes consist of a vocational or artistic programme of study. Pupils in vocational or artistic programmes have the possibility of taking additional courses in preparation for study at the higher educational level, and in this case complete the matriculation examination. The general programmes are shorter remedial programmes of study for pupils who need further preparation for academic or vocational studies or for those who are undecided as to what to do after compulsory education. The school year lasts nine months and is divided into autumn and spring terms. Pupils generally attend thirty-two to forty lessons per week.

Marks from nationally co-ordinated tests and final tests are given on a 0 to 10 point scale, where 10 is the highest mark. Examinations are generally held at the end of every semester, regardless of the type of school. However, certain courses have no end-of-semester tests and the grade given is based on continuous assessment and on the assignments set. For the skilled trades, there are journeyman's examinations, which are the responsibility of the trade in question. At the end of upper secondary school, all pupils receive a certificate stating their marks in the subjects studied.

Special education schools

The school system is comprehensive and continuous with the aim of giving all pupils education in accordance with their individual abilities and interests, and with a co-ordinated increase in the demands placed on pupils in the transition from one school stage to the next. All children have the right to attend their home school regardless of any handicaps. Thus, special education is based on the notion of inclusion and the needs for special education are primarily attended to on an individual basis in ordinary schools at all levels. However, some specialization is found, either in the form of special units within ordinary schools that serve specified communities, or in the form of special schools providing countrywide service. The special units, together with the special schools, function as centres of competence. The number of pupils in special schools is about 1% of the total. Consent from guardians is required before a child can be assigned to a special unit or a special school.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Post-secondary and tertiary education is the fourth level of the education system and is aimed at providing education for young people from twenty years of age. The post-secondary non-tertiary level of the ISCED 97 classification is only present in the form of remedial courses and a few short vocationally oriented special courses of study at some of the university colleges. Measured by the number of students, these courses amount to only 2% of post-secondary education. Thus, vertical differentiation in the post-secondary stage is negligible and the stage can to all intents and purposes be considered as equivalent to the tertiary level of the ISCED 97 classification. Attendance is voluntary, but subject to documented minimum abilities set by each institution. In general, the matriculation examination with documented ability above a certain minimum or similar is required for admission. For vocational and technical courses, practical experience in an appropriate field is also often required. In some cases, applicants with substantial working experience who have not completed the matriculation examination may be admitted. Admission is also granted to students who have completed studies abroad which are equivalent to the Icelandic matriculation, and in some cases to students who have completed other studies in Iceland.

The Universities Act defines the aims of universities as follows. (1) A university is an educational institution which also carries out research, if so provided for in the rules applying to the activities of each individual institution. (2) A university shall provide its students with education for the pursuit of scholarly projects, innovation and fine arts, and for the performance of various types of work in society for which higher education is required. (3) Universities shall disseminate knowledge to the general public and provide society with services by means of their knowledge.

The institutions at the tertiary level are run by the State, with the exception of three institutions run by private bodies. Tertiary institutions differ in the extent to which they engage in research and the number of programmes of study offered. The main institution at the tertiary level is the state-run University of Iceland, with eleven faculties including (in 2002) theology, medicine, law, economics and business administration, history and philosophy, pharmacology, dentistry, engineering, natural sciences, social sciences, and nursing. This institution is the only tertiary institution with sufficient diversity both in degree structure and range of subjects to qualify as a proper university. The other institutions at the tertiary level are specialized, autonomous university colleges that give vocationally oriented education within education, arts, technical subjects, agriculture, commerce, and business. In most tertiary institutions, the academic year is divided into two semesters, autumn and spring. The autumn semester generally starts at the beginning of September and lasts until late December. The spring semester lasts from early January until the end of May.

Student assessment is usually based on written or oral examinations and individual assignments. University degrees are only awarded after students have satisfactorily completed a required final thesis or a research project. For short courses of study at the post-secondary non-tertiary level, a diploma or certificate is awarded. The first university degree is a Bachelor's degree. Graduate studies can lead to a diploma or a

Master's degree. Candidatus degrees, at the Master's level, are offered at the University of Iceland and qualify the holder for a special office or profession in the fields of theology, medicine, obstetrics, pharmacy, psychology, law, economics and business administration, engineering, and dentistry. After completing advanced researched projects documented in a thesis, students receive the degree of Doctor from the University of Iceland or the Iceland University of Education.

Education for teachers at the pre-primary and compulsory levels is offered in an appropriate study programme at two university colleges, the Iceland University of Education and the University of Akureyri. Prospective teachers qualify after three years of study leading up to a Bachelor's degree. Teachers at the lower secondary level (Grades 8 to 10) can also qualify at the University of Iceland through three years of study leading up to a Bachelor's degree supplemented by a one-year programme in didactics. Teachers of academic subjects at the upper secondary level qualify at a university through at least three years of study, where at least two of these should be in a major subject, supplemented by a one-year programme in didactics. Teachers of vocational subjects or other technical subjects at the upper secondary level must be qualified in the field in which they teach or be master craftsmen in the trade in question. In addition, they must have a minimum of two years' experience working in the trade and have completed a one-year programme in didactics. University teachers must have completed at least a Master's degree or have equivalent knowledge or experience together with a qualification in didactics. Each year, teacher training institutions offer a variety of courses for in-service teacher training. Participation in in-service training or continuing education is voluntary.

Current problems, discussions and perspectives for development

Society and the school system are constantly developing under the influence of democratic forces, ideological currents, and technological innovations. The increased vocational activity of guardians in recent decades has reduced the capacity for home-based upbringing, and has challenged the compulsory schools to take over some of the elements of upbringing that have traditionally been attended to at home. However, the methods used in bringing up children in school and at home are different, and it is not immediately clear how elements of the upbringing that have traditionally been attended to at home should be attended to in school. The slow response of schools in meeting these challenges has had a negative impact on the development of many children in recent decades, and has resulted in a series of disciplinary problems. Several of the current issues in the educational debate are related to this. A major effort on the part of schools to take over a part of upbringing within the methodology of the school system can be seen in the introduction of life skills as a new subject at both the compulsory and upper secondary level. The subject is aimed at stimulating pupils' all-round development, at preparing them for life, and at enhancing their self-knowledge and self-respect. Several schools have also introduced programmes for dealing with disciplinary problems directly. Finally, the rapidly increasing custody function of the compulsory schools has been taken over by other municipal institutions.

The development of the inclusive school has caused concern. It has made school administration more complex, due to the increase in the number of external agents interacting with the school, and has caused a considerable diversification of the duties of teachers, leading to increased demands on their knowledge, skills, and professional versatility. Among the current issues in the educational debate is the attainment of the right balance between integration and segregation of handicapped pupils. Many politicians and parents are satisfied with the present situation, while many school administrators and teachers are concerned about the extent to which teachers are able to acquire and maintain the special competences required for teaching handicapped pupils within the present inclusive school. In addition, the financial situation of the inclusive schools is a source of some apprehension. Although Iceland, on average, has fewer pupils per class than the average over the OECD countries, the number of pupils is above this average in the larger communities. Thus, the resources given to the school system may on average seem adequate, but this may not be the case for large sectors of the system.

The establishment of an instruction-related information-technological infrastructure within the school system has been completed, but the enhancement of the information-technological competence of teachers is still an issue. So far, no overall strategies for this purpose have been identified, although at the grass roots level several interesting developmental projects can be identified, for example within the teaching of technology.

Icelandic society lives with a set of existential problems that put a constant strain on the education system and that, due to continuous changes in internal and external boundary conditions, must be constantly resolved. Among these are the low population density, the high pro-capita cost in a small nation of maintaining an independent democratic society and national culture, and the limited range of natural resources. The low population density and the high per-capita costs make the educational system relatively expensive, and the limits on natural resources weaken the foundation for maintaining a strong educational system. At the same time, however, these limits make the nation more dependent on maintaining a high educational level and hence a strong educational system. Traditionally, the main strategy used to overcome the problems caused by the low population density has been to distribute small educational institutions geographically. Currently the preferred government strategy is to use information and communication technology for solving this problem. The Ministry of Education has developed a visionary policy for this purpose. At the compulsory level, experiments with an electronically supported distance learning approach to home schooling in remote areas have been carried out. At the upper secondary level, all schools are now connected through an electronic communication network, making it possible to rationalize and diversify local teaching activities through a distance education approach. An experimental upper secondary school specializing in distance education has been established. At the tertiary level, the government has resisted local pressure to improve opportunities for tertiary education in rural areas by increasing the number of local university colleges. Instead, the government has supported the integration of all tertiary and research institutions into an electronic communication network for research and higher education. Among the institutions

connected to this network are five rural branches of the University of Iceland that function as centres for local research activities in culture and sciences, and as field stations for Master's and doctoral students. The government has also supported a range of local initiatives that has resulted in the establishment of nine lifelong learning centres connected to hubs in the countrywide electronic communication network, whose task is to distribute education at all levels of the school system. The issue connected with this development is how the local branches of the University and the learning centres can be co-ordinated to further enhance the possibilities for education in rural areas in addition to the distance education courses offered by most of the tertiary institutions.

Long-term strategies for improving the educational level and professional versatility of teachers are linked to improvements in teacher education. Important steps have been taken towards this goal through the development of the Iceland University of Education as a resource centre for teacher education. The development of extensive distance educational programmes at teacher training colleges has contributed to a considerable reduction in the number of non-qualified instructors employed within the school system. An acute shortage of qualified teachers in mathematics and natural sciences is, however, developing. The teacher training colleges seem unable to counteract this development in an efficient way. One of the reasons for this may be that they are grounded in the social science tradition and lack the competence necessary to establish a self-sustaining science tradition that can recruit students within mathematics and the natural sciences. This lack is reflected in the results from international comparative investigations, which show that Iceland ranked at or below the OECD average in natural sciences. Thus, the improvement of teaching in natural sciences is a burning issue.

The infrastructure of the education system in Iceland can be described as strong. Most buildings are relatively new and well maintained, modern information and communication systems are available, teachers are relatively well-educated, and the organizational framework has been strengthened through recent reviews of educational acts and ministerial regulations. The issues currently under discussion concerning the future development of the school system include the possibility of shortening courses of study at the upper secondary level from four to three years and strengthening research activities at the universities in order to increase the quality of research-based teaching (Master's and doctoral levels). Several initiatives have also been taken to improve the management of the education system. In compulsory school, the presence of teachers on the school premises outside teaching hours has been increased in recent years and has led to increased co-operation, professionalism, and developmental work within schools. The variable total income of the country, its political framework, and the legal obligations of the education system have traditionally caused some financial insecurity among school leaders, a feeling of a constant shortage of resources among teachers, and problems with keeping spending within limits at government level. In order to reduce the direct influence of these forces on the day to day running of the school system, financial models with pro-pupil rates at the compulsory and upper secondary levels, and production agreements at the university level have been introduced into school and university man-

agement. At the universities the use of financial models has, however, caused serious resource problems due to insufficient regulation of per-student rates in relation to salary increases. Thus, a current issue at the University of Iceland is the introduction of tuition fees to ease financial difficulties.

References

- Compulsory Schools Act (1995). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Ministry of Education Web Site: <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>
- Fræðslumiðstöð Reykjavíkur: Könnun á viðhorfum foreldra til starfsemi grunnskóla í Reykjavík (2002). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Fræðslumiðstöð Reykjavíkur Web Site: <http://www.grunnskolar.is/fraedslumidstodin.nsf/pages/utgafur/kannanir.html>
- Jónasson, J. T.: Does the state expand schooling? A study based on five Nordic countries. In: *Educational revive* 47 (2003), pp. 160-183.
- Jónasson, J. T.: Is it possible to have more than one type of university? Paper given at the 32nd Congress, Nordic Educational Research association, Reykjavik March 11-13, 2004.
- Ministry of Education: Aðalnámsskrá leikskóla, 1999. (1999a). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Ministry of Education Web Site: <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>
- Ministry of Education: Aðalnámsskrá grunnskóla, 1999. (1999b). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Ministry of Education Web Site: <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>
- Ministry of Education: Aðalnámsskrá framhaldsskóla, 1999. (1999c). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Ministry of Education Web Site: <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>
- OECD: Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators. (2003). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from OECD Web Site: http://www.oecd.org/document/52/0,234,en_2649_34515_13634484_1_1_1_1,00.html
- Pre Schools Act (1994). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Ministry of Education Web Site: <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>
- Statistics Iceland: Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 2003. (2003). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Web Site: <http://www.hagstofan.is/template40.asp?PageID=261>
- Upper Secondary Schools Act (1996). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Ministry of Education Web Site: <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>
- Universities Act (1997). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from Ministry of Education Web Site: <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>

Iceland

	Postsecondary & tertiary education	Upper secondary school	Lower secondary school	Primary school	Preprimary school	Grade	Age
	University (háskóli)	Upper secondary school (framhaldsskóli)	Lower secondary school	Compulsory school (grunnskóli)	Kindergarten (leikskóli)	16	21
15						20	
						14	19
						13	18
						12	17
						11	16
						10	15
						9	14
						8	13
						7	12
						6	11
						5	10
						4	9
						3	8
						2	7
						1	6
							5
							4
							3

Maureen Killeavy

Ireland

History of the school system

The Republic of Ireland is a small country of just over three and a half million people on the western fringe of Europe. It has been a self-governing state since 1922 and it is a member of the European Union. According to the OECD Report of 1991, Ireland is overwhelmingly a Roman Catholic country, with 90% of the population belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Because of this, and despite a rapid growth in the rate of economic development since the 1960s, Ireland has preserved many of the elements of its distinctive national culture and identity, such as the Irish language, and a distinctive Celtic identity in literature and the arts. These factors are all reflected in the school system, which has roots not only in ancient Ireland but also in the developments of recent centuries.

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

During the so-called Dark Ages in Europe, Irish monks from the monastic schools in Ireland went as missionaries and teachers to the European mainland, where Ireland became known as the island of saints and scholars. During the penal times, when Roman Catholics were prohibited from receiving education, 'hedge-schools' flourished in which children were taught in secret and in defiance of the law. The folk memory of this activity became embedded in the national consciousness and is in part responsible for the high regard in which education and, to a lesser but important extent, teachers are held. With Catholic Emancipation, the laws authorizing exclusion from education on the grounds of religious adherence were repealed. At this time, a national system of education closely aligned to the religious denominations was established and provision for the training of teachers similar to that of England was set up.

Reforms and innovations

The 1960s were a watershed in Irish education and many of the developments which have occurred since then had their roots in the OECD report *Investment in Education* (1966). At primary level, the increased investment in education which was called for had the direct effect of a reduction in class size; classes are now approximately half as large as they were thirty years ago. A new curriculum was introduced in 1971 and this was revised more recently by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA 1999). During the 1970s, the professional qualification for primary teachers was extended from a two-year diploma to a three-year BEd Degree, and the former teacher training institutions became colleges of education associated with the major universities.

Major funding and structural changes in provision at the second and third level gave rise to the provision of free post-primary education in 1968, the gradual extension of university education, and the establishment of a new type of third level institution, the Regional Technical Colleges, which were to become the Institutes of Higher Education. These developments in the higher education sector necessitated the establishment of regulatory bodies and infrastructural support services. In this period, the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Higher Education Teaching Awards Council (HETAC), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the National Qualifications Authority, and other bodies were set up to provide for the monitoring and any necessary accreditation of the sector. Not surprisingly, many more students than in the past completed second level education and took part in courses at the third level, where the participation ratio increased from 1:25 at the end of the 1960s to a current participation ratio of approximately 1:2. This means that in Ireland approximately 50% of a respective age group takes part in third level education.

Far-reaching proposals for developments related to the curriculum and content of Irish education, many of which were heralded in *Charting Our Education Future* (Department of Education 1995) and outlined in O'Brien's (1996) study, are currently being translated into practical measures through governmental policy initiatives and legislation. Most of these emerging policy initiatives are evolving from investigations of existing educational practices and provisions. For the most part, such investigations are undertaken by bodies of relevant stakeholders set up by Ministerial decree, and the ensuing legislation derives to a considerable extent from their recommendations. While these developments are for the most part not directly concerned with teacher education, they all carry implications related to education and schooling in a general sense.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

To arrive at an understanding of teacher education in Ireland, it is necessary to describe the society that the education system serves, and to examine the context within which education, and more particularly teacher education, takes place. The Republic of Ireland has a younger population than most other European states, with half the population less than twenty-five years of age (OECD 1991). Because of poor employment prospects in Ireland during the 1980s, emigration to the USA, Britain, Australia, and more recently to mainland Europe was a necessity for many Irish people (Killeavy 1998). Economic growth in more recent years (a phenomenon which has caused the Irish economy to be described as the Celtic tiger) has meant, however, that the rate of emigration has decreased noticeably. Indeed, in certain respects this trend has reversed, and many people who previously emigrated are now returning to Ireland to take up employment.

Educational targets and general functioning of school

The Department of Education and Science seeks through education to secure economic prosperity, social well-being, and a good quality of life for all citizens in a

democratically structured society (DES 2002). Its role is underpinned by principles of pluralism and respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, languages, and traditions of Irish society. Furthermore, it claims that its provision spans early childhood education through adulthood, and it supports the concept of lifelong learning.

Socio-economic context

According to the OECD Report of 1991, the Republic of Ireland is overwhelmingly a Roman Catholic country with 90% of the population belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. While Ireland is undergoing many cultural and social changes with the accompanying problems faced by most Western societies, the country has preserved many of the attributes of its distinctive national culture and identity, such as the Irish language, and a distinctive Celtic identity in literature and the arts. These aspects of Irish life are reflected in the Irish education system, and particularly in the culture of teaching. Nearly all state primary schools are denominational in their intake and management, and their location and organization is parish-based (OECD 1991). At post-primary level, a similar if less pronounced trend is evident, with the majority of secondary schools under the management of a denominational authority.

A major change in the socio-cultural make-up of the school population in Ireland has taken place in recent years, with the immigration to Ireland of considerable numbers of Eastern European and African people. This has brought a growth in the ethnic diversity and first language of pupils in all areas of the country. Alongside this development, the national policy of inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream classrooms has resulted in greater challenges for class teachers. Government policy with regard to inclusive education has been backed up by a series of initiatives involving increased support for teachers.

Social position of teachers

The social position of teachers in Ireland has traditionally been high in comparison to other countries. This is in part due to the importance of education in the first half of the last century as a means of providing opportunities for children from large farming families. In an era lacking economic growth, the scarcity of employment prospects and the limited capacity of the farm to support more than one member of a family meant that education was respected as a means of upward economic mobility. The salaries of primary and post-primary teachers in Ireland, which are based on a similar structure and differences, include allowances for special qualifications and special positions or duties within the school. The salary scale for teachers is presented in abridged form in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers' salaries and allowances (based on data supplied by the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (2004))

Starting salary €26,631 per annum	Salary after 25 years €51,761 per annum
Higher Diploma in Education (Honours) €1,063 per annum	Primary Degree (Honours) €4,230 per annum
Principal's allowance 1-3 teacher school €8,006 per annum	Principal's allowance 61+ teacher school €35,719 per annum

Teachers in their first year of employment typically earn a little in excess of € 30,000 per annum, depending on allowances, while the principal of a small school could expect to earn approximately € 70,000 per annum. The incremental scale extends over a twenty-five year period and apart from increased payments for principals, allowances are available for higher qualifications and in respect of posts of responsibility in the school. The hourly rate for teachers working in a part-time capacity is € 41.64 per hour. These salaries compare favourably with salaries in many European countries; however, they must be viewed in the context of the high cost of living and the taxation system in Ireland.

Schools and the position of the family

The role of the family as the primary educator of children is enshrined in the Constitution of Ireland (1939), and parents' representatives are included in the Boards of Management for schools. Parents' organizations in Ireland are influential interest groups, and these groups are regularly included in bodies of stakeholders in education established by the Department of Education and Science to deliberate on policy matters. Parents have the right to educate their children at home if they do not wish them to take part in school-based education. This arrangement is comparatively rare, however, and in cases where it occurs the State has the authority to ensure that the provision is satisfactory and appropriate.

In former years, school attendance officers, who were usually members of the *Garda Síochána* (police force), were responsible for investigating cases of pupils who were absent from school for insufficient reason. Transgressions were often followed by parents' being charged with an offence and taken to court. In recent years, the new position of home school liaison community co-ordinator has been created to ensure positive and co-operative relations between parents and the school, and today this area is dealt with in a more positive and less punitive manner than previously. Further family support for problematic situations forms an important element of a number of the programmes funded by the Department of Education and Science to combat disadvantage.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

The Irish school system is for the most part organized centrally, either directly or indirectly through the Department of Education and Science. It is governed by the provisions of *Bunreacht na hEireann* (1932) or the Constitution of Ireland, by the legislation enacted by the *Oireachtas* or Irish Parliament, and by the regulations of the Department of Education and Science.

Basic legal principals, levels of governance, and philosophy of government

Bunreacht na hEireann states that parents are the primary educators of their children, and children's entitlements to education are outlined in Article 42 of the Constitution. The most recent legislation dealing with the system generally, the Education Act, 1998, specifies that education at primary and post-primary levels, together with adult and continuing education, should be provided for every person in the country, including those with special educational needs. Under this legislation, most matters concerning education in general were precisely codified. The Act stipulates that the education system must respect the diversity of values, beliefs, languages, and traditions, and operate within a spirit of partnership between school, patrons, students, parents, teachers, the community, and the State. The duty of the State under this Act is to provide for the recognition and funding of schools and their local management bodies. The State must also provide for the Inspectorate of Schools and the establishment of a National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and define the roles and responsibilities of principals and teachers.

Much of the other current legislation concerning education followed from the Education Act, 1998. Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the National Education Welfare Board was set up to ensure that every child receives a certain minimum education. This Act provided for the registration of children receiving education in schools that were not recognized under the state system, and the compulsory attendance of certain children at recognized schools. The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004, made further provision in this area and aimed to ensure that people with special educational needs are as far as possible educated in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.

Financing

Nearly all primary schools in Ireland are state-funded, and while the majority of these schools are denominational in their intake and management, the salaries of teachers are paid from central government. The costs of school buildings are also covered by the State, although it is customary for the local community and parish to provide the land on which schools are built. The small number of private schools at the first level charge fees and are privately funded.

At the second level, the financing of schools varies somewhat, although the majority of schools are state-funded. The majority of secondary schools, which comprise about two thirds of all schools at second level, are privately owned and managed under the patronage of religious orders (OECD 1991). These schools provide free education, are in receipt of state funding, and belong to the classical grammar

school tradition. In private or fee-paying secondary schools, the State also provides funds for teachers' salaries, but the financial support is considerably less than for the schools providing free secondary education. In comprehensive and community schools, which are secular but managed in a similar manner to secondary schools, teachers' salaries are also paid by the State. The vocational schools that provide second level education do not charge fees.

Public and private schooling

The vast majority of primary schools in Ireland are publicly funded, and these schools form the state system of education at the first level. The small number of private schools at the first level are for the most part junior schools attached to fee-paying or private secondary schools. Some of these private first level institutions also provide boarding establishments for pupils; these are usually availed of by parents of children who are living outside Ireland. A small number of fee-paying Montessori schools operate, usually in the cities, and one or two Steiner and alternative private schools also operate at the first level. While parents have the right under the Constitution to educate their children at home, this is a very rare practice.

General standards of the school education system

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) was established in November 1987 and is designated as a statutory body under the terms of the Education Act, 1998. It includes teachers and their representatives, professionals in the field of education, and stakeholders such as parents. Its brief is to advise the Minister for Education and Science on matters related to curriculum and assessment procedures for primary and second level education. It recently issued a revised primary school curriculum; however, there is no formal written examination for primary school pupils in Ireland. At post-primary level, the NCCA was responsible for putting in place the curriculum for the Leaving Certificate in its three forms and for particular subject areas within the primary and post-primary education system.

Quality management

Quality management at the primary level falls within the remit of the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science. Examinations of schools are carried out regularly by members of the Inspectorate, who are also responsible for the certification of primary teachers in their first year after graduation from a teacher training programme. The Inspectorate is less involved in the quality management of post-primary education; the results of the Junior Certificate midway through the second level and the Leaving Certificate General, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, and the Leaving Certificate Applied Examinations taken by students at the completion of the second level enable evaluation of the system.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Full-time education is compulsory for all children in Ireland between six and sixteen years of age, and almost all children attend state schools. Although school attendance in Ireland is not obligatory until the age of six, the vast majority of children begin school in the September following their fourth birthday. Children of this age in most other European countries attend pre-primary or kindergarten schools. Streaming is not a feature of primary education in Ireland, and children are entitled to attend a state-maintained post-primary school on completion of their primary education at the age of eleven or twelve years.

The schools that make up the post-primary sector include secondary, vocational comprehensive, and community schools and colleges. All post-primary schools receive state support, although fee-paying or private secondary schools do not receive the same level of support as schools in the public sector. Although compulsory education is completed at sixteen years of age, second level education in Ireland is not divided into lower and upper school types, and pupils may continue at the same school if they wish to complete their post-primary schooling. The qualifications available to pupils include the Junior Certificate, which is sat midway through the cycle, and the Leaving Certificate, which is sat at the conclusion of post-primary school.

Pre-primary education

No national system of pre-primary education is provided in Ireland; however, a number of specially targeted programmes for three year-old children have been initiated in recent years. These include programmes for children with special needs, children of Travellers (formerly called itinerants), and children experiencing social and economic disadvantage. The Early Start one-year programme for children aged three was established in October 1994 on a pilot basis. This initiative was designed to provide children at risk of educational disadvantage with an educational programme that would enhance their development and prevent failure at school. A White Paper called Early Childhood Education: Ready to Learn, which was published in 1999, provides a blueprint for the development and implementation of a comprehensive early education policy. Growing economic prosperity in Ireland has been followed by an increase in the number of married women working outside the home and of single parents. This has resulted in increased provision of both childcare and pre-primary education facilities on a fee-paying or private basis.

Primary education

According to the Department of Education and Science, primary education is founded on the belief that 'high-quality education enables children to realize their potential as individuals and to live their lives to the fullest capacity appropriate to their particular stage of development' (<http://irgov.edu> 2005). The aims of primary education are: (i) to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realize his or

her potential as a unique individual; (ii) to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others, and so contribute to the good of society; and (iii) to prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

The curriculum in Irish primary schools seeks to provide an extensive learning experience and to encourage a rich variety of approaches to teaching and learning that cater for the varying needs of individual children. A major revision of the primary school curriculum of 1971 was completed in 1999. This revised curriculum sought to reflect the changing nature of Irish society and to nurture children in all dimensions of their lives (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment 1999). The curriculum is organized into the following key areas: language; mathematics; social environment and scientific education (SESE); arts education, including visual arts; music and drama; physical education; and social, personal, and health education (SPHE). There is currently no formal system of state examination for pupils in Irish primary schools, although the work of schools is examined by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science.

Primary schools in Ireland are funded by the State and the current and capital costs of primary schools, together with teachers' salaries, are funded almost entirely by the State, supplemented by local contributions. Schools may receive additional funding according to their circumstances, for example if they are serving particularly disadvantaged areas or children with special needs. While the teaching of modern languages does not form part of the primary curriculum, the discretionary curriculum time provided for in the revised primary curriculum allows schools to include a modern language where it is available.

The majority of national schools are State-aided parish or denominational schools and their management structure is complex, having been established under the patronage of the local bishop. In recent years, there has been a growth of schools without the traditional form of denominational patronage. Such schools include multi-denominational national schools, each under the patronage of a limited company without share capital, which were established in response to local parental demand, and some of the schools in English-speaking areas in which pupils are educated through the medium of Irish. Most national or primary schools are under the patronage of the local bishop, who usually nominates a suitable person or body of persons to act as manager. The patron also nominates trustees. Subject to the approval of the Minister and the provisions of Section 16 of the Education Act, 1998, the patron may at any time resume direct management of the school or may nominate another manager.

Secondary education

Second level or post-primary school in Ireland extends over a five- or six-year cycle and includes five types of school: secondary school, vocational school, comprehensive school, community school, and community college. Secondary schools, which comprise about two thirds of all schools at the second level, are privately owned and managed, usually by religious orders (OECD 1991). These schools, most of which provide free education, are in receipt of state funding and they belong to the classical grammar school tradition. Vocational schools were originally established to

provide technical education, but their role has been expanded to cover all areas of the second level curriculum. Comprehensive schools were set up to meet the needs of areas without second level education, and they offer a broad curriculum including both academic and technical areas. Community schools, which offer the same type of broad curriculum as comprehensive schools, were designed to serve as cultural and educational centres in their neighbourhoods. Community colleges arose from the vocational tradition and are similar to community schools, except that the curriculum they offer is more extensive and they often cater for older students.

Second level education in Ireland does not comprise a separate lower and higher sector with corresponding separate schools, but the programme offered does involve a junior and a senior cycle. Schools at the second or post-primary level include secondary, vocational, community, and comprehensive schools. Secondary schools are privately owned and managed, and their trustees are religious communities or Boards of Governors. Vocational schools are administered by Vocational Education Committees (VECs), while community and comprehensive schools are managed by Boards of Management. The trustees of the majority of these schools are religious communities or Boards of Governors.

The aim of second level education is to provide a comprehensive, high-quality learning environment which enables all pupils to live full lives appropriate to their stage of development, and to realize their potential as individuals and as citizens (DES 2005). The three-year junior cycle seeks to provide broad, balanced, and coherent courses of study in a variety of curricular areas relevant to pupils' personal development and to prepare them to proceed to the senior education cycle.

The senior cycle, which typically caters for pupils from fifteen to eighteen years of age, begins with a transition year programme which provides students with wide ranging educational experiences and a period of work experience. The Leaving Certificate examination is held at the end of the senior cycle in post-primary schools, and pupils are selected for entry to third level courses on the basis of points awarded for their results in this final examination.

In recent years, the senior cycle programme has been restructured to include alternative forms of the Leaving Certificate programme and assessment. Pupils opting for these alternative forms take a more vocationally oriented course and complete the Leaving Certificate Applied or the Leaving Certificate Vocational programme. The aim of this development was to encourage pupils to continue in full-time education after the end of compulsory schooling at sixteen, and to provide a range of programmes suited to their abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

Special education schools

Special education in Ireland includes the provision of special programmes for pupils with particular learning disabilities which are conducted separately from mainstream schools and in schools in institutions such as clinics and hospitals. In recent years, however, national policy has focused on the inclusion of pupils with special needs in ordinary classrooms in all situations where this is possible. This has necessitated the provision of personnel and physical means to meet the special needs of pupils with learning disabilities. Such provision includes the appointment of resource teachers

and special needs assistants (SNAs) to help class teachers, and the provision of special needs organizers (SNOs) in school districts to support teachers in schools.

Together with the provision of personnel, the NCCA has developed a series of curriculum guidelines for children with a range of learning disabilities including general, mild general, moderate, and severe and profound disabilities. The development of the National Educational Psychological Service (INEPS) was largely based on the need for the assessment of children with special needs.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Post-secondary education includes further education and post-Leaving Certificate courses. Other non-state agencies also provide courses at this level. Tertiary education in Ireland is a binary two-sector system and includes the non-university third level colleges and institutions.

Post-secondary education

This sector forms part of the area developed under the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), and many of the qualifications that it provides are part of the National Qualifications Framework. This allows for the progression of successful candidates to higher-level courses and in some cases to degree courses.

Tertiary education in non-university institutions

The thirteen Institutes of Technology located throughout Ireland provide higher education to large numbers of students. These developed out of the series of Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) that was established nation-wide as part of the major expansion in third level education provision around 1970. As part of this expansion, the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA) was set up in 1971 with academic responsibility for the non-university third level sector. The Dublin Institute of Technology was formally established under the Dublin Institute of Technology Act, 1992. It incorporated the College of Technology, Kevin Street (established in 1887); the College of Technology, Bolton Street (established in 1911); the College of Commerce, Rathmines (established in 1901); the College of Marketing and Design, Mountjoy Square; the College of Catering, Cathal Brugha Street (established in 1941); and the College of Music, Adelaide Road (established in 1890) (Higher Education Authority, 2003). The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), a national body, was established in 2001 under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 (Government of Ireland 1999) to take on the role formerly fulfilled by the NCEA. The HETAC is the validating body for most of the courses run by the Institutes of Technology, and this body confers national certificates, diplomas, and undergraduate and post-graduate degrees up to doctorate level. Holders of a HETAC/DIT diploma or certificate may, in certain circumstances, be entitled to transfer credits to one of the universities in order to complete a relevant course of higher qualification.

Tertiary education university institutions

The university sector in Ireland is part of the public sector in that it is to a large extent financed by the Exchequer. At the same time, the universities have traditionally enjoyed a degree of institutional autonomy, which was strengthened in the Universities Act, 1997. Academic staff in Ireland are public servants with tenured employment. There are eight universities in Ireland. Four of these are now separate but linked institutions, reflecting their federal organization within the National University of Ireland before the reconstitution of the sector by the Universities Act, 1997. These four include: University College Dublin (UCD), the National University of Ireland Dublin; University College Cork (UCC), the National University of Ireland Cork; University College Galway (UCG), the National University of Ireland Dublin; University College Cork (UCC), the National University of Ireland Galway, and the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM). The remaining four institutions are the University of Dublin (Trinity College), Dublin City University (DCU), the University of Limerick (UL), and St. Patrick's College Maynooth (the Pontifical University).

The National University of Ireland also includes five recognized but separate institutions: The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), the Shannon College of Hotel Management, and St. Angela's College of Education for Home Economics in Sligo. Courses and academic staff in these colleges are recognized by the NUI, which awards degrees to students who successfully complete recognized courses.

Trinity College Dublin (TCD), the first and only constituent college of the University of Dublin, was founded in 1592 by Queen Elizabeth I. Three colleges for the education of primary school teachers and one college specializing in the education of teachers of home economics are associated with Trinity College.

Dublin City University was established in 1980 as the National Institute for Higher Education Dublin, and the University of Limerick was established in 1972 as the National Institute for Higher Education Limerick. Both institutions became universities in 1989. There are two colleges of education associated with DCU and one college associated with the UL.

Teacher education

There are seven universities in Ireland which award the qualifications required under state regulations for employment as a teacher in primary and secondary schools. The most usual method of entry to the primary teaching profession is through a three- or four-year BEd degree programme. The five colleges of education that offer degree programmes for entry to primary teaching are each recognized colleges of one of the main universities, which validates their particular qualifications. Teachers at the second level have typically completed a degree programme such as a BA or BSc prior to undertaking a one-year post-graduate university based Higher Diploma in Education to qualify as a secondary teacher. A limited range of BEd programmes in specific subject specializations providing a professional qualification for post-primary teachers are also available. In addition, there are a small number of non-uni-

versity institutions which offer specialist teaching qualifications that are accredited by the National Council for Educational Awards.

There are two main forms of professional training for teachers in Ireland, namely concurrent and consecutive, which are associated with primary and secondary teacher education respectively. In the concurrent model, students follow a three- or four-year programme in education, practical teaching, and one academic subject to degree level. The choice of degree subjects typically includes English, French, geography, history, Irish, mathematics, and music. Upon successful completion of this type of programme, students are awarded a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree, which qualifies them to teach in primary schools. This is the method of entry to the profession for the majority of primary teachers. However, when there is a shortage of teachers, as is the case currently, the consecutive model has been used as a way of dealing with the problem. Diploma courses of approximately eighteen months' duration are being offered in the colleges of education for university graduates who wish to enter the primary teaching profession.

The other model of teacher education is a consecutive one in which graduates who have successfully completed a degree course such as a BSc or a BA take a one-year course towards a Higher Diploma in Education. While this is the most usual method of entry to the teaching profession at secondary school level, there are a number of concurrent teacher education programmes for specialist teachers at the second level in areas such as home economics, instrumental music, and physical education.

Entry to undergraduate teacher education courses is on the basis of merit as assessed in the final examination at the completion of second level education. Selection is made nationally by the Central Applications Office, in which all applications for places in higher education are processed. The selection of graduate applicants for entry to second level teacher training is, for the most part, centrally administered on the basis of academic merit. Assessment is based on candidates' undergraduate degree classification and grade, their postgraduate degrees, and other qualifications and relevant prior teaching experience. One institution, Trinity College Dublin, retains an interview to assess candidates' suitability for teaching as part of its assessment criteria.

Types of field experience

The procedures, extent, and type of field experience during pre-service teacher education programmes vary in accordance with the particular model of professional preparation followed by teacher education students. The concurrent BEd programme typically involves approximately five teaching practice placement sessions totalling twelve weeks in all. These are designed to provide student teachers with a varied range of teaching experience in the primary school system with respect to age group, both multiple and single grade level classes, socio-economic background, urban and rural origin, and gender of pupils. The field experience or teaching practice element of the BEd programme has always been a very important part of teacher preparation and no student is awarded a pass or honours grade in the BEd degree without an equivalent grade in practical teaching.

Field experience within the consecutive model usually comprises five half days each week or the equivalent during the one year post-graduate diploma course. This experience includes attendance at school and observation together with a minimum of approximately five periods of actual class teaching in the student's subject specialization. Course work at the university also typically involves elements of field experience such as micro-teaching, practical teaching methodology sessions, and various supplementary teaching activities.

The eight colleges of education located throughout Ireland are each associated with one of the university institutions. Three of these colleges, the Mater Dei Institute of Education, St. Angela's College of Education, and St. Catherine's College of Education for Home Economics offer programmes leading to a teaching qualification for specialized subject areas at post-primary school level. The five remaining colleges of education provide approved degree courses which lead to a BEd degree qualifying the successful candidate as a primary teacher. The Church of Ireland College of Education, Froebel College of Education, and Coláiste Mhuire, Marino, are associated with Trinity College Dublin. The Mary Immaculate College of Education, and St. Patrick's College of Education are associated with the University of Limerick and Dublin City University respectively.

Current problems

Ireland is undergoing a process of cultural and social change with the accompanying problems faced by most Western societies. These changes, which have been accompanied by recent rapid economic growth, include the effects of declining employment in agriculture and consequent growth in urbanization, the decision of recent referenda concerning divorce and abortion, an increase in foreign travel, a rise in the number of single-parent families, the impact of new technology, and access to world media. All of these factors, despite the very significant economic growth of the last decade, have been accompanied by an increase in social problems associated with inner-city poverty, in particular drug abuse and related crime. Ireland, with half the population under twenty-five years of age, differs from most other European countries (OECD 1991). Historically, emigration has been a necessity for many Irish people, who were forced to seek employment in other countries, notably the USA, Britain, and Australia. However, recent economic growth has seen not only a reverse in this trend, but also the arrival of many immigrants, including asylum seekers, seeking to make a life in Ireland. These changes have resulted in new demands on the education system and on teachers, and a growth in social problems associated with inner-city poverty, in particular drug abuse and related crime.

Perspectives for development

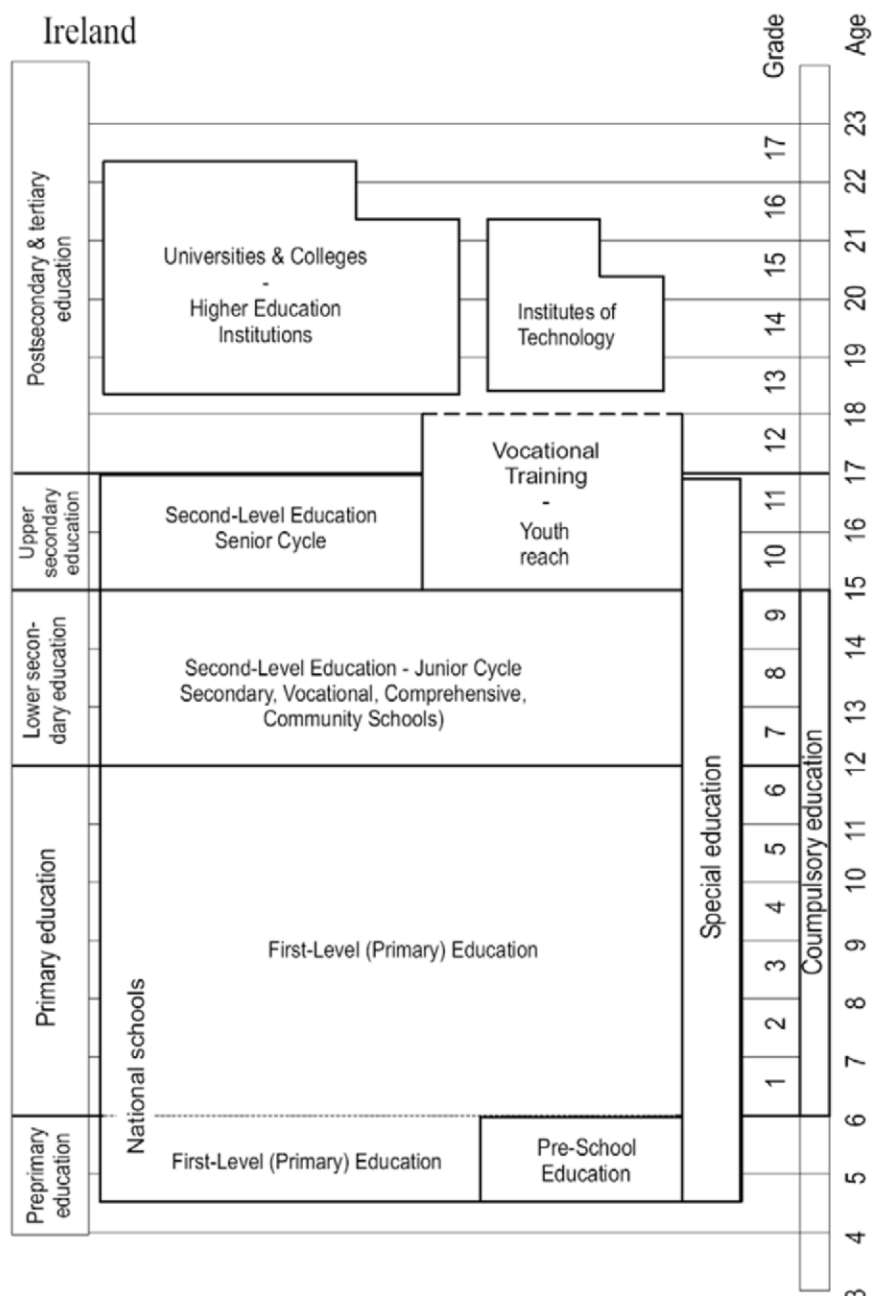
The developments currently taking place in Europe have been, in general terms, embraced by Ireland. One of the most pressing initiatives concerns the areas of assessment, accreditation, and qualifications, and these are most relevant in further and tertiary education. The recently established National Qualifications Authority (National Qualifications Authority Act 1999) has the task of encouraging and main-

taining international liaison in this area. The NQA has set out a regulated set of standards to apply across the board in relation to certification, and it is envisaged that this will result in the establishment of equivalences between qualifications both within Ireland and with other European countries. The Bologna Declaration (1999), the Salamanca Convention (2001), and the meeting of European Education Ministers in Prague (2001) stressed the need for the comparability of teaching qualifications throughout Europe. The universities have supported the development and use of quality benchmarks as a basis for achieving comparability. There have been recent advances in the modularization of courses in third level educational institutions in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System. These developments are preparing the way for Ireland's participation in the greater integration of teacher education in Europe, which will in turn filter down through the Irish school system.

References

- Coolohan, J.: Irish Education History and Structure. Dublin 1981.
- Coolohan, J.: Third Level Education in Ireland: Change and Development. In: O'Muircheartaigh, F. (Ed.): Ireland in the Coming Times: Essays to Celebrate T. K. Whittaker's Eighty Years. Dublin 1998.
- Department of Education: Investment in Education. Dublin 1966.
- Department of Education: Primary School Curriculum. Teacher's Handbook Part 1. Dublin 1971.
- Department of Education (Health Promotion Unit Department of Health and Department of Education): The Stay Safe Programme.. Dublin 1991.
- Department of Education: Ireland. Report of the National Convention on Education. Dublin 1994.
- Department of Education: Charting Our Education Future: White Paper on Education. Dublin 1995.
- Department of Education and Science: Ireland. Report of the Steering Committee on the Establishment of a Teaching Council. Dublin 1998.
- Department of Education and Science: The Revised Primary School Curriculum. Dublin 1999.
- Drudy, S./Lynch, K.: Schools and Society in Ireland. Dublin 1993.
- Government of Ireland: Higher Education Authority Act. Dublin 1971.
- Government of Ireland: The Universities Act. Dublin 1997.
- Government of Ireland: The Education Act. Dublin 1998.
- Government of Ireland: The Education Welfare Act. Dublin 2000.
- Government of Ireland: The Teaching Council Act. Dublin 2001.
- Government of Ireland: Statistical Report of the Department of Education and Science, 1999/2000. Dublin 2001.
- Government of Ireland: The Education for People with Special Needs Act. Dublin 2004.
- Higher Education Authority: Ireland: A Profile of the National Higher education system. Dublin 1998.
- Hill, B. V.: Values Education in Australian Schools. Melbourne 1991.
- Irish National Teachers Organisation: In-service Education and Training of Teachers. Dublin 1993.
- Irish National Teachers Organisation: Educating Teachers: Reform and Renewal. Dublin 1995.

-
- Killeavy, M.: 'The Academic, Socio-economic and Demographic Profile of Entrants to Primary Teaching in Ireland: A Comparative Study. In: *Irish Educational Studies* 11 (1993) 1.
- Killeavy, M.: *Values Education in the Irish Republic*. In: Stephenson, J. (Ed.): *Values in Education*. London 1998.
- Lynch, K.: *The Hidden Curriculum: Reproduction in Education. A Reappraisal*. London.
- Mulcahy, D. S./O'Sullivan, D.: *Irish Education Policy: Process and Substance*. Dublin.
- OECD: *Review of National Policies for Education, Ireland*. Paris 1991.



Italy

History of the school system

The origins of the present Italian school system can be traced back to a law of Count Gabrio Casati of 1859. Initially intended only for the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia and Lombardy, its legal force was extended to all the other regions of Italy when the country was united politically in the year 1861. The fundamental educational significance of this law manifests itself in Casati's concern with the centralization of both the school education of the Italian people and the training of a political class under the control of the State. Thus, for the first time, the traditional predominance of the Church was challenged.

According to Italian historians (Canestri/Ricuperati 1976, pp. 19ff.), a number of features characterize the first Italian school law which had, for a very long time, remained influential. These are: the law explicitly chose the path of centralization. It discriminated between classical and technical education by viewing the latter as an inferior copy of the former and excluded vocational education, which was placed in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture and Trade. Moreover, compulsory education was very limited, its implementation was left to the goodwill of the municipalities, without guaranteeing its funding. Finally it tackled inconsistently teacher problems, in particular as far as primary education is concerned; the control over primary school teachers, who often did not have even minimal qualifications, was vested in the municipalities, which tended to pay salaries below the level of workers' average wages.

Despite these shortcomings, compulsory education gained in significance, for the overall illiteracy rate was as high as 75% at that time; in northern Italy 67% were illiterate, in southern Italy 87%. Therefore, the establishment of a standardized primary school (*scuola elementare*) was an important first step towards the reduction of these figures, although only the first two years of primary school were obligatory.

Scuola elementare preceded secondary school, which was divided into two stages. Described as the core principle of Casati's conception, traditional secondary school comprised a first stage of five years' duration (*ginnasio*) and a second of three years' duration (*liceo classico*), which built on the first stage. The objective of both institutions was to offer an education in literary and philosophical culture which enabled pupils to enter university. In addition to the classical branch of school education, the law provided for technical-scientific secondary schools; the latter also consisted of two three-year stages, the Technical School and the Technical Institute respectively. The objective of technical secondary education was to impart 'adequate general and specialized knowledge to adolescents who intend to pursue a specific career in the public sector, industry, trade, or in agricultural management' (quoted in Canestri/Ricuperati 1976, p. 40). This explicit division of classical and

technical secondary education was by no means undisputed. However, all attempts in the following decades to unite these two branches failed.

The establishment of primary schools fell within the purview of the municipalities. This fact complicated the implementation of primary education, as these bodies were often not able or willing to provide adequate funding, and thus to create the preconditions for appropriate instruction. Casati's law decreed that the first two-year stage of primary school should be established in every municipality with more than fifty children of school age, and the second stage in every town with more than 4000 inhabitants. Both regulations, however, were frequently ignored in the decades following the law's enactment in 1859.

Subsequent to an influential publication (Villari 1872), at the end of the nineteenth century a lively public debate ensued about the priority of public education in relation to other fundamental issues in Italy. The discussion centred on the relationship between the school system and industrialization in view of the high incidence of child labour during the first phase of industrialization in Italy. While tangible effects of this debate on the development of the public school system cannot be identified with any certainty, wide sections of Italian society became aware of the significance of a state school system for the entire Italian people.

A gradual extension of compulsory education accompanied the progress of industrialization. The *lex* Orlando of 1904 was an important milestone. According to Orlando's law, children had to attend school until they reached the age of twelve. As early as 28 November 1900, Minister Gallo had proposed the establishment of a supplementary three-year elementary school (*scuola popolare*) in every municipality, the attendance of which should be obligatory for those pupils who finished grade 3 of primary school. The school would provide a programme for those people determined and willing to remain steadfast throughout the ensuing labour and industry battles (De Vivo 1986, pp. 61ff.). The interdependence of the economy, industry, and the education system is manifest in this objective.

At the turn of the century, 64% of all school-age children actually attended school. The illiteracy rate had been reduced to 50%, 40% in northern and 70% in southern Italy. The noticeable progress that had been made, however, must not obscure the extraordinary deficiencies of the Italian school system at that time, not only in terms of the inadequate material conditions (decrepit buildings and equipment), but also as far as a lack of teachers is concerned. Thus, half a million children did not receive any instruction because of a disregard for the law or the dearth of places and schools (De Vivo 1986, p. 62).

The Daneo-Credaro law of 1911 was another milestone in the development of the Italian school system. According to this law, the (central) State was to take over all primary schools, i.e. the burden of the funding and the administration of the entire compulsory school system in order to balance the existing disparities between unequally affluent municipalities. Provincial School Councils (*Consigli provinciali scolastici*) were called into being as an intermediary instance between the central state and the individual schools. The *Consigli provinciali scolastici* fulfilled most administrative functions, such as the establishment of new schools or the appointment of teachers.

The law of 1911 also regulated the relationship between the State and private schools. Private primary schools existed in three different organizational forms; they were administrated either by lay persons or by religious associations, or they were organized as auxiliary schools in rural regions with a very low number of school-age children. The majority of privately owned schools were under denominational control. Article 70 of the Daneo-Credaro law asserts the supremacy of the State in the field of private education, for those pupils who received instruction in private schools or were educated at home had to take an examination befitting their age in a public school at the end of the final year of compulsory education (Canestri/Ricuperati 1976, p. 128). These examinations enabled the State Board of Examiners to supervise the quality of the private schools. The Minister responsible for public education was able to close down an inefficient private school.

As the law was accompanied by an increase in budgetary means, it enabled not only the founding of new schools and the improvement of teachers' working conditions, but also the establishment of evening and holiday schools for those four million illiterate Italians over twelve years of age mentioned in the statistics (Bertoni-Jovine 1954, p. 412). Thus, the takeover of the primary school system by the Italian state produced positive results. The illiteracy rate decreased by 20% in the course of ten years, falling from 47% in 1911 to 27% in 1921.

Giovanni Gentile was the author of yet another milestone in the history of the Italian school system. Gentile is considered the most significant reformist with respect to the development of the education system. As a renowned professor of philosophy at the University of Rome, he accepted the position of Minister of Education in Mussolini's first cabinet in 1923. Gentile suggested a comprehensive school reform which aimed at tightening the selection of pupils and the education of an elite in accordance with fascist ideology (Brinkmann 1995, pp. 14ff.). In the same period, Lombardo Radice had considerable influence on the curricula of the *scuola elementare*, which were to form the basis of the cultural, ethical, and political education of the citizen. The reform, however, focussed on secondary school; by means of strict selection it was to enable the emergence of elites and prevent unemployment of graduates. The traditional, philologically orientated *ginnasio/liceo* was only open to 'the few and the best, according to intellect and wealth' ('*ai pochi e ai miglior, per intelletto e per censo*'). Secondary school consisted of the five-year *ginnasio*, which followed *scuola elementare*, and the subsequent three-year *liceo*; the attendance of both was contingent on the passing of an entrance examination.

In addition to the *ginnasio/liceo*, which was the only school type enabling pupils to pursue their education in the tertiary sector without restrictions, there were technical institutes and teacher training colleges. The former (*istituto tecnico*), internally structured according to occupations, was formally awarded the same secondary school status as the *ginnasio/liceo*. Qualifications obtained from a technical institute entitled young adults to enter specific technical faculties of universities. The latter (*istituto magistrale*) trained primary school teachers in courses of seven years' duration.

The school reform of 1923 introduced two further school types: the scientific upper secondary school (*liceo scientifico*) and the upper secondary school for girls

(*liceo femminile*). The objective of the *liceo scientifico* was to enable pupils to take up a course of studies at the scientific and medical faculties of the universities. The *liceo femminile*, in contrast, was explicitly not aimed at preparing girls for tertiary education; its goal was rather to provide an extended general education.

Gentile's reform also provided for an extension of compulsory education until the age of fourteen. Therefore, complementary schools (*scuola complementare*) had to be established for those pupils that did not want, or were not allowed to attend secondary school after they had finished primary school. As this aim could be achieved initially in the big cities only, the compulsory education regulations remained a formality. From the complementary schools emerged the three-year post-primary vocational schools. The vocational schools prepared pupils for the labour market; the transition to a general secondary school did not exist.

The structure of the school system devised by Gentile was not significantly altered until the introduction of the lower secondary comprehensive school in 1962; at the level of upper secondary education, the bases of this system are still effective today.

However, the Italian school system of the post-war years was prepared neither for the challenges of the economic development of the country, nor for the short-term renewal of society, which were characterized by severe disparities between industry and agriculture, between the North and the South. Therefore, in the early 1960s, the centre-left coalition had to establish a broad political basis in order to tackle the most pressing problems and, at the same time, to reform the school system thoroughly. Luigi Gui was Minister of Education continuously from February 1962 until December 1968, which is an exceptionally long term of office in Italy. In this period of time, the *scuola media unica*, a three-year comprehensive school following the already existing five-year unified primary school was introduced.

The reform succeeded in purging Italian compulsory education of the relics of a school system that was perceived as discriminatory. In the old system, only a privileged minority was allowed to attend the elitist *scuola media*, and thus the *ginnasio/liceo*, which then enabled entry to university and access to senior positions. The majority of adolescents, in contrast, attended preparatory vocational schools, subsequent to which they could enter vocational institutes that were considered second-rate institutions. At the same time, the chief objective was achieved, namely to prepare a larger number of pupils for university, and thus to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing industrial society.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles and levels of governance

Italian school legislation has its foundations in the constitution of the Italian Republic. The basic principles are as follows: freedom of education, the duty of the State to provide a network of educational institutions open to everyone without any discrimination, the right of the universities to determine their own regulations, the right of private individuals to establish schools and other educational institutions, as well as the right and the obligation of parents to provide education for their children.

The Italian public administration, and this includes the school system, used to have a highly centralized organization. Since the end of the 1950s, responsibilities have gradually been decentralized. However, these provisions have only marginally affected the centralized structure of public administration. It was only a new law passed in 1997 that granted to regions, provinces, and communes, the roles currently performed by the state bodies (with the exception of a number of responsibilities relating to specific areas, amongst them: scientific research, university education, school curriculum, the general organization of the school system, and the legal status of school staff). Thus, in the field of education the State still remains responsible for the tasks and functions which concern the criteria and parameters for the organization of the school system, its evaluation, the functions relating to the determination and allocation of financial resources charged to the State budget, as well as for the allocation of staff to schools (Eurydice 2004).

However, the regions are responsible for the planning of all forms of vocational training and the programming of the school network on the basis of provincial plans. The provinces have the responsibility to found, combine, and close down upper-secondary schools. However, the municipalities are tasked with this responsibility for all schools at lower levels. Finally, important managing functions as well as high-responsibility tasks such as defining curricula or organizing school time and classes have been delegated to individual schools by means of extended school autonomy regulations which are in line with the national framework.

The head teacher has the legal responsibility for the overall management of the school, but he/she has to respect the competencies of the School Council, elected representatives from among the teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as parents and students. The School Council deliberates not only about school equipment and teaching materials, but also about the school's individual profile (*Piano dell'Offerta Formativa*) (ibid.).

Financing

Almost all financing necessary for the administrative and educational management comes from the State. A relevant innovation is that such funds are destined to educational, training, and guidance activities in general, without any constraints. Some contributions can be provided by regions, local communities, and private organizations. These funds are destined for the implementation of specific projects, which, in turn, are supported by specific allocations (ibid.).

Public – private schooling

Since 2000, state schools and schools recognized by the State enjoy the same status. By means of these new legal measures pupils can be supported regardless of whether they are enrolled in a state school or attend an institution that has been recognized by the State. The State's financial support for private schools amounts to 20% of their total income (ibid.).

General Standards of the School system

Recent developments in the state school system have been mainly characterized by two matters. First of all, the autonomy of individual schools has tended to increase. Interestingly, this development was triggered off by a financial law, which formed the basis for the improvement of the teacher-pupil ratio. In this way, the debate on school autonomy in Italy was given a crucial impetus. The comprehensive concept of autonomy that underlies the law implies that schools and institutions are to be granted not only organizational, budgetary, and didactic autonomy, but also autonomy with regard to research and development. There is, however, little concrete evidence of how this recently gained autonomy is implemented in practice.

It is a different state of affairs with respect to the second matter, the principle of continuity. In 1992 a ministerial decree accompanied by a circular letter was published which presented continuity exclusively as an educational and didactic issue. According to the decree, teachers were to take educational and didactic continuity into consideration when planning, implementing, and assessing their teaching. In the following years, however, the institutional dimension of continuity became the focus of attention. Today, continuity is manifest both horizontally and vertically. While vertical continuity refers to the close co-operation between schools of different levels which, to this end, have been integrated into larger structures, horizontal continuity indicates the collaboration of the schools with other institutions and bodies, including families. In recent years, the overall concept of continuity has increasingly been approached theoretically (Guerra 1996), and has become the subject of pilot projects and extended training programmes for teachers.

Quality management

For a long time, the evaluation of the school system in Italy only involved administrative aspects. It was only in 2004 (and after a long debate, which began at the end of the 1990s) that the National Institute for the Evaluation of the School System (*Istituto Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema dell' Istruzione - INVALSI*), founded in 1999, was given the function of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the education system. This had become necessary as a result of the new autonomy given to individual schools (to this contributed the PISA results). *INVALSI* is particularly in charge of the learning assessment at the end of the first and the third year of primary education and the beginning of lower-secondary education (cf. Eurydice 2004).

The current school system

General structure – overview

The present Italian school system is clearly structured. Voluntary pre-school (*scuola dell'infanzia*) is followed by the five-year primary school (*scuola primaria*) and the three-year comprehensive school (the former *scuola media*, now *scuola secondaria di primo grado*). Subsequently, pupils enter the structurally very diversified upper secondary school (*scuola superiore*), the foundations of which go back to Giovanni

Gentile. Thus, the *scuola media* (lower secondary school) is the only school type that has been introduced since the Second World War. The establishment of the nationally standardized *scuola media* for all eleven- to fourteen-year-olds was the result of the advancing democratization of the school system after the Second World War, which differed clearly from the restrictive and elitist school policy of the fascist regime.

Pre-primary education

Children aged 3 to 6 can attend pre-primary education in nursery schools (*scuola dell'infanzia*). As an optional part of the school system (as in France), these are free of charge. In addition, the teachers will in future hold the same degrees as primary-school teachers. School attendance at pre-primary level reaches about 98%.

Pre-primary education is not subject to a curriculum in the narrower sense, but to 'Didactic Guidelines'. According to this broadly formulated, programmatic document, children's quality of life is the key educational objective. In addition to the recognition of both material and non-material necessities, there are the following main issues in pre-primary education: 'Stability and the positive nature of relationships; flexibility and adaptability to altered environments; intensified social interaction' (Rapporto 1989, p. 5).

The Didactic Guidelines emphasize the close connection between pre-school and primary school. The learning process in the latter relies on the fundamental skills (*capacità di base*) acquired in the former. Concrete examples are: 'the ability to live together with other people in a community that has its own rules and habits; the ability to communicate with, and listen to, both peers and adults; the ability to explore and understand one's surrounding reality; the ability (...) to acquire an increasing degree of independence' (I nuovi orientamenti 1990, p. 19). Therefore curricular continuity between pre-school and primary school is considered especially important for five-year-olds. Elements such as the ability to think three-dimensionally, the training of graphic skills, the conceptualization of written language, and the technique of counting orally clearly demonstrate the focus of pre-school education. The aspects of caring for and looking after children are only of secondary importance. This shift of focus is reflected in the terminology; the term *scuola dell'infanzia* has taken the place of the denotation *scuola materna*. Whereas the latter, an amalgam of 'school' and 'motherliness', stresses the aspect of care, the former refers only to age; it translates as 'school of childhood'.

The Guidelines mention three domains of learning in pre-school education: 'a communicative and linguistic domain; a domain of non-verbal powers of expression: graphic, musical, manual, and motor skills; and a scientific and environmental domain (nature and social sciences)' (Rapporto 1989, p. 10). In the eyes of some teachers, however, it is doubtful, whether these very academic schemes can serve as a practical aid to Italian pre-primary teachers, especially since the teachers presently working in pre-schools are not university-educated.

Primary education

The five-year primary schools, together with lower secondary schools are part of the compulsory education. There is a certain paradox in the Italian compulsory school system (like in France): since 2000 school is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15 (9 years) but the two types of compulsory schools together take not more than 8 years until now.

The curricula for the five-year primary school (*scuola elementare*) are based on a concept of the education of the individual and the citizen, as laid down in the Constitution of the Italian Republic of 1 January 1948. They also refer to the international Declaration of Human Rights. The document states the following: 'The *scuola elementare*, [...] ensures the fundamental social education and personal development of the child, contributes significantly to the eradication of economic and societal obstacles which restrict the liberty and equality of citizens and inhibit the development of the human personality (Article 3 of the Constitution), and creates the preconditions [...], within the realm of his or her capabilities, to carry out an occupation or function that contributes to the material or intellectual advancement of society (Article 4 of the Constitution)' (Programmi 1985, p. 7).

The wide range of principles comprises aspects such as the recognition of values and experiences within the family; experiences with various types of teamwork, including the distinction between active solidarity and passive yielding to the group; and the expansion of cultural and social horizons, 'in order to contemplate wider cultural and societal realities, in a spirit of understanding and international co-operation with special consideration of the reality of Europe and the process of its integration' (Programmi 1985, p. 9).

At this point it has to be pointed out that these ambitious objectives are by no means only high-flown phrases from the General Preface, but have substantial didactic consequences. Among these, in particular the introduction of two new subjects in the *scuola elementare* should be mentioned: first, a foreign language, and second, social studies and competence in social life (*studi sociali e conoscenza della vita sociale*). The special objectives of these subjects are in turn based on the universal objectives of the General Preface, which indicates the consistent conception of the theoretically advanced curricula.

These main objectives have not changed in their substance. According to the legislative decree 59/2004, primary school fosters personality development; the acquisition of basic knowledge; the development of skills, from ICT literacy up to the first logical-critical organization; as well as learning expressive means, Italian language, and English language literacy. Furthermore, primary school education establishes the study of the natural world, its phenomena, and laws as the basis for the use of scientific methodologies; it exploits social and orientation skills in the space and time provided; and it teaches the fundamental principles of civil coexistence (Eurydice 2004).

Lower-secondary schools

The three-year *scuola media*, which builds on the *scuola elementare*, is considered the second stage of compulsory education. Its curriculum was established in 1979.

The objectives of this curriculum resemble those of the above-mentioned primary school curriculum, passed in 1985, in that it refers to the Constitution of the Italian Republic, using almost the same wording. The curriculum's general objectives are defined as follows: 'As a school providing compulsory education, the *scuola media* complies with the democratic principle to raise the personal level of education of every individual citizen and of the Italian people in general. It improves the skills to participate in the values of culture, civilization, and social life, and to contribute to their development' (Ministero 1979, p. 15).

The following principles illustrate the universal aims of the *Scuola media*. It must be a school for the education of the individual and the citizen, preparing young people for life, providing guidance for further studies or training within the framework of compulsory education. The objectives associated with the final principle explicitly point out that the *scuola media* emphasizes the cohesive process of personality development as well as the acquisition of a general education and a basic cultural foundation.

The currently valid curriculum of the *scuola media* is characterized by a consistent conception that is illustrated by its binding syllabus. Grades 1 to 3 of the *scuola media*, or years 6 to 8, have to include the same nine subjects; all three grades have a weekly workload of thirty lessons of sixty minutes' duration each. The focus of the curriculum is the pupils' personality development, rather than a rigid system of educational contents. The basic idea of this approach is that the pupils are exposed only to those cultural aspects or contents which the teacher regards as beneficial and necessary for the pupils' development.

In addition to the comprehensive personality development of the pupil, the *scuola media* is also to provide basic education to everybody. Thus, the uniformity of this school type is emphasized in terms of both organization and didactic principles. The private sector accounts for only 4% of the pupils at this level and can thus be ignored in this context (in primary education it is 8%). Differentiation with respect to the organization of instruction only occurs in the framework of all-day schooling offered by the *scuola media*, which is taken up by approximately 20% of the pupils that attend this school type.

The *scuola media* has operated until today within this framework. As already mentioned, according to the Education Reform Act of 2003, the *scuola media* is called *scuola secondaria di primo grado*. This act confirms certain basic aims and envisages new formative and cultural objectives. It will come into force as soon as the implementation decrees have been issued (Eurydice 2004).

Upper secondary education

After completing *scuola media*, the majority of adolescents continue their education at a *scuola secondaria superiore*; the enrolment rate has remained at about 80% since the 1980s. This school type offers not only general but also full-time vocational education. Four subtypes can be distinguished:

1. Upper secondary schools that are very demanding on the pupils: the classical (*liceo classico*), modern language (*liceo linguistico*), and scientific secondary

- schools (*liceo scientifico*). In addition, there are institutes that train primary school (*istituto magistrale*) and nursery school teachers (*scuola magistrale*).
2. Technical colleges (*istituti tecnici*), which provide full-time vocational training in nine job domains.
 3. Vocational colleges (*istituti professionali*), which usually offer three-year vocational courses on a full-time basis in six domains.
 4. Education with special emphasis on the fine arts is provided by art colleges (*istituti d'arte*), secondary schools (*liceo artistico*), and conservatoires (*conservatori di musica*).

All pupils who successfully conclude their education at one of the five-year secondary schools mentioned – including full-time schools with a vocational orientation – obtain university entrance qualifications (*maturità*). This fact is, on the one hand, an indicator of the advanced democratization of the Italian education system, but, on the other hand, it has led to the extremely crowded conditions of Italian universities.

The objectives of upper secondary education are delineated in the curricula, laid down separately for each school type, in some cases decades ago. From the historically significant law of 1859 initiated by Casati to the amendment dating from 1923 by the Minister of Education Gentile, which is still effective today, the key aim of the upper secondary schools has been to prepare pupils for a university course of studies and training at the ‘higher institutes’ (*istituti superiori*).

The curricula of both the *liceo classico* and the *liceo scientifico* can be traced back to the year 1944. Only a few subjects have been removed from or added to the curriculum. The curricula have not been altered to a large extent. Their fundamental structure is based on an outline that briefly delineates central educational contents. In the literary subjects, for example, significant authors and books that are to be read are listed, while in history, the historical eras which will be gone through are mentioned. The corresponding syllabi of 1952 are still in effect today unless schools have participated in experimental schemes (*sperimentazioni*). The implementation of the 2003 Reform Act promises new educational conceptions and new curricula.

Vocational education and training

Besides the full-time vocational training offered by state-run secondary schools, there is a further form of vocational education under the control of the regions. As a matter of fact, regional vocational education centres have become the most important way of entering an occupation. Their objective is to teach theoretical and practical skills which are required in the job world, especially with regard to first-time employment, vocational training and retraining, specialization, and further vocational education of employees. Primary and extended vocational training are considered to be interrelated and part of a single learning process. Typically, the educational programme at vocational training centres takes between two and three years. With the qualifications obtained, graduates can either apply for a job on the labour market or take up a specialization course in the same domain. These courses are offered by the vocational training centres, usually take one year, and improve the chances of pursuing a qualified and better-paid career.

In Italy, apprenticeships are only of secondary importance; they are provided mainly in the fields of the trades and manual crafts. In contrast to the German or French models, these are not organized as programmes comprising both practical and general instruction, but as employment contracts that include short training phases. Large industrial companies offer adolescents training programmes which, however, are not guaranteed legally.

The Italian vocational and extended training system is perceived as extremely complex, regionally fragmented, and inefficient. The full-time vocational schools are the weakest link in the system, as the labour market does not sufficiently recognize the qualifications awarded by this school type. Regional training centres, in contrast, are more suited to the needs of qualified vocational education. They are able to take into consideration regional requirements and employment structures, and their project-based organization enables them to react *ad hoc* to changes in the labour market. Finally, the centres' system of continuing education (*formazione permanente*) appears to be a promising approach to the modernization of the education system, for it does not discriminate between first-time vocational training, further education, and retraining, but focuses on continuing vocational education.

Special education schools

A striking characteristic of the Italian school system is the lack of state-run special schools. Instead, an integrated model is used; disabled children are looked after in the framework of the regular school system. The integration of the disabled was gradually introduced from 1971 onwards, before it became legally binding in 1977. The law, confirmed by the Education Reform Act of 2003, declared that disabled pupils were entitled to support teachers who are specially trained to take care of specific disabilities as well as a socio-psycho-pedagogic service, in addition to all the regular teachers of the school. According to the regulation in force, there must be one support teacher post for 138 students enrolled in schools of every level. Maria Teresa Moscato assesses the significance of this model with respect to educational policy as follows: 'The integration of the disabled has contributed most to the development of a unified Italian school in the last decade. In reality, this innovation [...] cannot succeed within the framework of traditional didactics based on verbal communication and formalized culture. In addition, integration requires responsibility and didactic commitment among colleagues, the positive ability to enter a dialogue and to co-operate with families [...]. Therefore, the integration of the disabled has [...] provided a concrete, and often dramatic, means of control, namely the means to check the possibility of a positive functioning of the school as well as the practicability of the political and didactic principles that had been provided on a theoretical level by the legislator' (Moscato 1989, p. 332f.).

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Post-secondary education

Post-secondary education in Italy includes second-level training courses as well as Higher Technical Education and Training courses (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica*

Superiore – IFTS). Post-secondary training courses last six to twelve months and teach specific professional skills. They are designed for young people over eighteen, who are no longer subject to compulsory training. The regions are responsible for the implementation of these courses.

IFTS courses mainly aim at developing professional specializations at the post-secondary level which meet the requirements of the labour market, both in the public and private sectors, and, in particular, the organization of services, local bodies, and productive sectors that are currently experiencing far-reaching technological innovations (Eurydice 2004).

Higher education

In Italy higher education has a dual structure: there are universities and institutions of higher education that do not have university status. In most cases, these are academies of fine art or music who enjoy autonomy. The Italian universities have a long history; some of them, like the University of Bologna are amongst the oldest universities in Europe (Bologna, who was founded in 1088, is even regarded as the oldest university in the world). Today Italy counts fifty-one state universities, twelve independent (private) universities, and three state polytechnic institutes along with a few other specialized institutes with university status. Access to higher education is provided by the secondary school leaving certificate, but some disciplines in high demand, as medicine or architecture, have introduced a *numerus clausus*. There exist special requirements for admission to the academies of fine art or music.

Italian universities adopted the European structure as outlined by the Bologna process very early on (although exception has been made for medicine, which maintains its old diploma structure). The new hierarchy of academic qualifications consists of the *laurea (breve)*, which is obtained after three years of study – equivalent to the BA – and the *laurea specialistica*, which is awarded after a two-year post-graduate course (this is the European MA). However, there exists an Italian particularity, namely a separate master's degree which can be obtained after a one-year course of study, following either a *laurea breve* or a *laurea specialistica*. The third level of tertiary study leads, as in other European countries that follow the Bologna process, to the doctorate (*dottorato di ricerca*) (Eurydice 2004).

Teacher education

Teacher education is provided by the universities. For several years, efforts have been made to improve the qualifications of teaching staff by means of extended training. The first phase of training programmes for primary and pre-primary teachers takes now place at university. In fact, teachers in nursery and primary schools must attain the *laurea breve* (i.e., the BA). Those intending to work in secondary education need to acquire a specialization after the *laurea*. This specialization consists of a further two years of study in a 'specialization school' (*scuola di specializzazione*) and is required in order to compete for tenure in a secondary school. In future, as envisaged by the Education Reform Act of 2003, teachers of all school types will have to pass a *laurea specialistica*.

Current discussions and perspectives for development

In the year 2005, pedagogic discussions on Italian educational policy are characterized by the problems encountered during the implementation of the reform measures of the government under Silvio Berlusconi. The incumbent Minister of Education, Letizia Moratti, succeeded in initiating an educational reform in 2003. She adopted the idea of extending compulsory education, which had been proposed by her predecessor Luigi Berlinguer. School education is to be obligatory until the age of eighteen. After completing nine years of compulsory school, adolescents thus have to attend three years of either general or vocational secondary school.

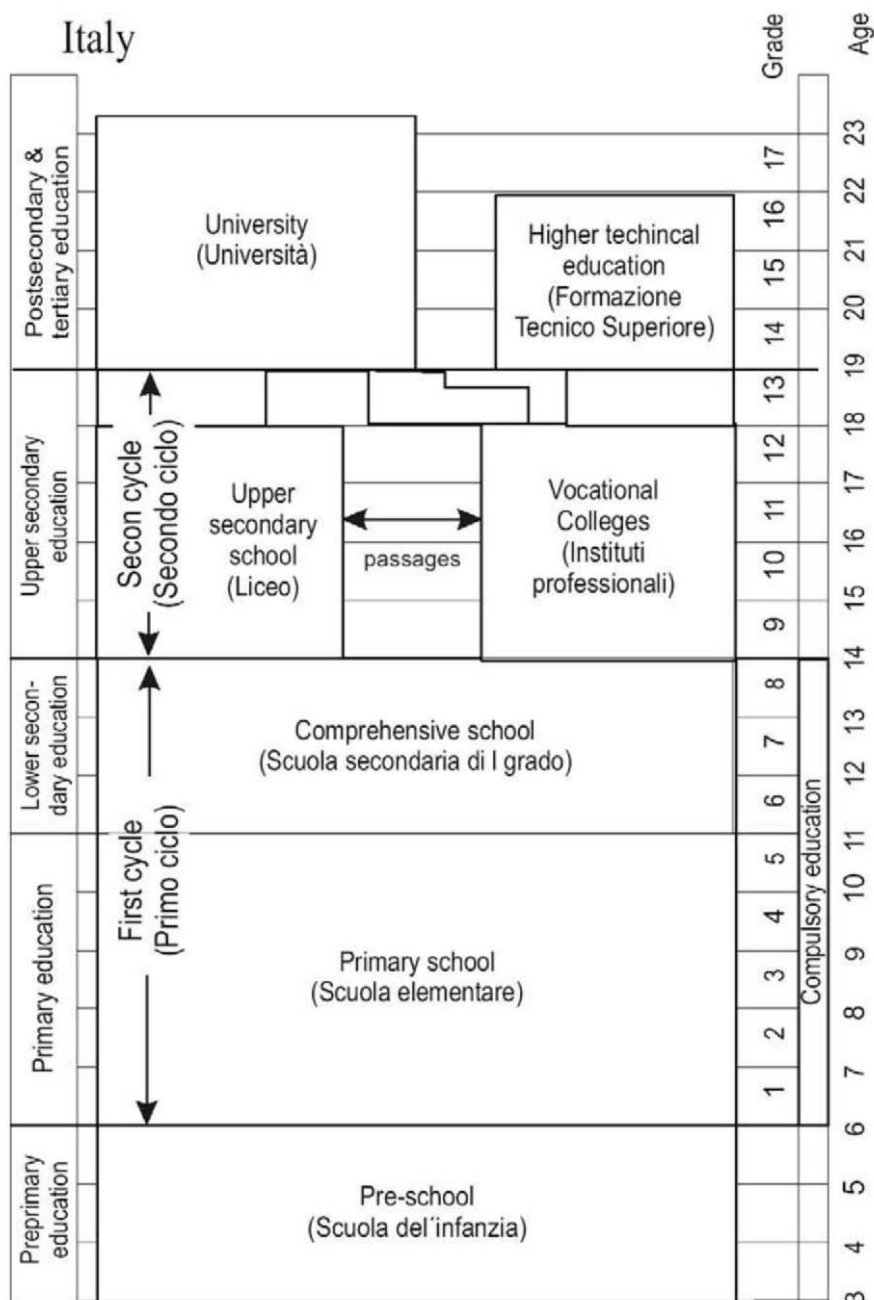
The objectives of Moratti's reform are to make the school system accessible to everyone, to strengthen its European dimension, and to adapt it to the needs of individual pupils. The reform's general aims are the advancement of democracy as well as the development of core values such as liberty, solidarity, and a sense of community. The central changes are listed below:

- The introduction of foreign language and computer classes as early as possible in primary school;
- The introduction of practical training periods in addition to theoretical education at vocational school level (*istituti professionali*);
- Attendance of nursery school (*scuola dell'infanzia*) from the age of two and a half and primary school from the age of five and a half years onwards; and
- The restructuring of the stages of upper secondary school.

As has already been mentioned, the Reform Act of 2003 is still waiting for its implementation. This circumstance is an indicator that the implementation of the reform is much more difficult than the reform itself.

References

- Bertoni-Jovine, D.: Storia della scuola popolare in Italia. Torino 1954.
- Brinkmann, G.: Erziehungsraum Schule: Italien. Köln u.a. 1995.
- Canestri, G./Ricuperati, G.: La scuola in Italia dalla legge Casati a oggi. Torino 1976.
- De Vivo, F.: Linee di storia della scuola italiana. Brescia 1986.
- Eurydice: The Education System in Italy, 2004. In: www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/Application/frameset.asp?country=IT&language=EN, retrieved October 2005.
- Guerra, L.: La Continuità. Milano 1996.
- I nuovi orientamenti per la scuola dell'infanzia. In: Scuola e Insegnanti 19 (1990), p. 19ff.
- Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione: Nuovi programmi orari di insegnamento e prove di esame per la scuola media statale. Roma 1979.
- Moscato, M. T.: Neue Entwicklungen im italienischen Schulwesen. In: Zeitschrift für internationale erziehungs- und sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung 6 (1989) 2, pp. 332-333.
- Programmi didattici per la scuola primaria. In: I diritti della scuola, supplemento al no. 14, Milano 1985.
- Rapporto della commissione per la revisione degli orientamenti per la scuola materna. In: L'educatore 12 (1989) nr 17.
- Villari, P.: La scuola e la questione sociale in Italia: In: Nuova Antologia, XXI novembre 1872.



Kosovo (under UN-Administration)

History of the school system

Prior to the war from 1989 to 1991 and 1998 to 1999, three parallel education systems had been developed in Kosovo, which have had an impact on current developments. The three main influences on the Kosovar education system are the following:

1. Serbicized official Yugoslav education,
2. Albanian underground education (from primary school to university-level),
3. Education in exile, predominantly in European countries.

The first two systems are both authoritarian and nationalistic. The third system is more open, but not restricted to the situation in Kosovo.

Background to the current situation: the parallel system of education

The education system in Kosovo has gone through many difficulties in recent times, particularly over the past decade. In 1990, after years of conflicts with the Yugoslav state system, Kosovo-Albanians came together to form a mass movement which was to operate a self-organized parallel system of governance in Kosovo. In education, the state systems saw most Kosovar Albanians stop attending state-run classes following changes to the Constitution of Kosovo, which reduced its autonomy and led to the dismissal of Kosovo-Albanian teaching staff. In some cases, Kosovar Albanian children began to attend parallel schools, either in existing school buildings, people's houses, or, in many cases, in cellars.

The existence of this parallel system reflects the high value placed upon education in Kosovo. Classes were financed through contributions collected in the form of a tax raised through parallel 'tax authorities'. The Western European diaspora also played an important role. The shadow-state 'Government Fund' raised donations in almost all Western countries. Before the 1999 conflict, there were an estimated number of 267,000 primary-school pupils and 14,000 primary teachers in the parallel system. However, payment of teachers was at best irregular. The fact that teachers worked for little or no remuneration reflects the level of their commitment during these difficult years.

The importance of education has long been accepted in Kosovo. There was thus little need for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and its partners to promote children's return to school after the war. For UNMIK, the priorities after the end of the conflict were placed on different aspects, such as the educational infrastructure. This included the repair of damaged buildings and the reconstruction of schools that had been destroyed as well as the provision of

essential supplies such as furniture, stoves, and firewood. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was designated the lead agency in these activities.

At the same time, UNMIK and its partners began to address the 'soft' side of education, which is related to qualitative issues such as curriculum reform and the design of an education system suited to Kosovo. An assessment of the needs and required actions (immediate, continuous, and future) will be outlined below.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Kosovo covers an area of 11,000 square kilometres, which is approximately one third of the size of Belgium, and has the highest birth rate in the former Yugoslavia. But Kosovo is considered at the same time to be the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's most underdeveloped and poorest region. Of the approximate population of 2.2 million, 90% are Albanian, 7% Serbian, and 3% belong to other nationalities or ethnic groups, such as Turks, Bosnians, or Roma.

Kosovo is divided into thirty municipalities with 1500 towns and villages. It is predominantly a rural country. Two thirds of the population live in villages; there are only nine towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants. International partners operating in Kosovo since June 1999 have made several observations about the recent socio-cultural situation in the country.

The population of Kosovo differs from other European populations in many ways. Households are still particularly large. An average household is estimated to have about six members. Rural households are larger than urban ones and Kosovo-Albanian households are larger than Kosovo-Serbian ones. The number of live births per year is believed to be around 45,000. Kosovo women have, on average, 2.7 children. While the fertility rate has remained relatively high in comparison to the rest of Europe, it is falling swiftly. Levels of infant and maternal mortality are high, perhaps the highest in Europe.

In an ageing Europe, the young population of Kosovo is an exception. About one third are under fifteen years of age and half under twenty-five years. In contrast, only 4.5% of the population are sixty-five years and older. Approximately 62% of the people belong to the 'active' age group between fifteen and sixty-four years. The proportion of dependent people is high, mainly because of the large proportion of people under fifteen years of age.

Infrastructure

One of the most striking features was the extent of structural damage to the schools of Kosovo. An initial UNICEF/NGO assessment of the physical conditions of school buildings in Kosovo, surveying 784 schools, revealed that 37% were either com

pletely destroyed or in an extremely bad state of repair.¹ After the initial estimate, a total of 1034 (out of 1211) schools were assessed through a series of field visits. Of these, 800 had suffered damage and needed to be repaired.

Moreover, it was found that the school buildings were nearly empty; they lacked basic equipment and textbooks. The schools thus had to be not only repaired and reconstructed, but also supplied with materials in order to achieve the immediate aim of enabling the children to return to school at the start of the school year 1999-2000. The lack of material, including technical equipment, has been of great concern to the international community. In addition, the omnipresent threat of landmines and unexploded ammunition near school facilities is an important issue, as they pose real dangers to returning schoolchildren.

Minorities

The bifurcation of the education system over the past ten years reflects ethnic and political schisms, often reinforced by community and personal animosities that are deeply rooted, and have not and will not simply disappear as a result of the establishment of a single political authority or administrative and legal structure.

A major challenge for all those involved in the Kosovar education system has been the reunification of the deeply fragmented environment into a single coherent system that meets the desires of every individual (regardless of ethnic background, age, or gender) and community, whilst ensuring social and economic development within a framework of a coherent human development strategy. Within this context, the issue of minority rights remains precarious, particularly with respect to equal access to education. For some minority children, there is no mother-tongue instruction. Moreover, children have difficulties in speaking with each other as a result of the hatred caused by the war. There is disbelief that they can be equals.

Bosnian children who studied according to the Serbian curriculum with Cyrillic texts are now seeking special status with Latin-alphabet texts; a new minority literacy scheme is emerging in the system. In the case of the Roma community, in particular, there is a need to address the issue of low school attendance and early drop-outs. Romany children attended either Albanian or Serbian schools but they have never been instructed in the Romany language.

The coexistence of different ethnic groups in the system is a well-known fact. Kosovars view many aspects of their pre-1989 experience in a positive light, when different language groups coexisted within the education system and Albanians were treated as a national minority in Yugoslavia.

Teachers and training

The existence of the parallel system represents the need for the survival of an education system rather than its development. As a result, Kosovo has not taken part in the debate on teacher training that has been conducted around the world over the

¹ UNICEF conducted an assessment of the physical condition of school buildings in July 1999. Nine international NGOs assisted UNICEF in gathering data on 784 schools.

past decade. Teachers received practically no in-service training for ten years because of the underground education system.

The presence of the issue of the gender of teaching staff indicates that there is a need to encourage the recruitment of female teachers and head teachers. The ratio of female to male teachers is one to two. The fact that young prospective teachers were not provided with substantive pedagogical training and practical experience had an impact upon educational standards. As there was little input, reports indicate there was very little change, modernization, or innovation.

During the 1990s, many parts of the former education system assumed new roles and sometimes increased their authority within the parallel education system. This was necessary in order to have some form of management structure over the functioning of the parallel system. The local pedagogical institutes were perhaps most affected. These institutions are in need of substantial reform; a redefinition of the roles within the education system is also necessary. Teachers still teach subjects other than those for which they are qualified. In particular, there is a lack of qualified teachers in subjects such as foreign languages, mathematics, and the natural sciences. Furthermore, head teachers and other qualified education managers are lacking.

Textbooks and curricula

In the Serbian and Turkish regions, the curricula are dictated from Belgrade. The curriculum of the Kosovo-Albanian system was fragmented and developed *ad hoc*. In the Albanian schools, the curricula were a combination of those from the pre-1989 system and books newly developed or 'borrowed' from neighbouring countries. In general, curricula were teacher-centred as well as fact-laden, and required rote learning, copying of teachers' notes from blackboards, and regurgitating of factual knowledge in tests. Teachers, parents, and pupils complain that the curriculum is overloaded, outdated, and does not encourage development of the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes required in modern society and by the job market.

It was also argued that teachers were 'controlled' by inspectors from the Institute of Pedagogy in what they taught, which textbooks they used, how they taught, and how they assessed their pupils' performance. In late 1999, the contents of 204 Kosovo-Albanian textbooks were reviewed; out of these, only three were rejected. The main issue with textbooks is that the contents are outdated and do not reflect modern pedagogical practice.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) was established under UNMIK Regulations in 2000-01. The Ministry is responsible for all aspects of education, higher education, and the sciences in Kosovo as a fully 'transferred' institution against the background of self-government. The responsibility for technology has only recently become part of the agenda of the Department of Education and Science.

The transferred Department of Education and Science (DES) in UNMIK is responsible for the management of all issues related to education in Kosovo. Although the notion of decentralization of government and management of Kosovar education exists, a complete sharing of responsibilities between DES and the Area Education Office nominated after the local elections has not yet been finalized.

The Department of Education and Science is the largest department in the civil administration. Its budget share in the Kosovo consolidated budget is 28%, with an investment allocation of about ten million euros. Additional donor funds, mainly for reconstruction and equipment, add an annual volume of some forty million euros. The DES employs more than 28,000 persons, consisting of teachers as well as support and administrative staff, in 800 educational institutions across Kosovo. Kosovo has approximately 420,000 pupils at school level, instructed by 22,000 teachers. In addition, the University of Pristina, as the first institution of higher education, has a total of over 20,000 students with 1800 teachers.

Aiming at reforming specific sectors of the education system, DES has appointed several lead agencies, which are implementing specific projects initiated by international donors with the purpose of intervention in various educational sectors. These lead agencies are to develop local capacities in their field of intervention, in order to enable sustainability and dissemination of the results of the projects that are being implemented:

- Curriculum Development, UNICEF;
- Pre-school Education, UNICEF;
- Teacher Training, the Canadian Government;
- Special Education, the Finnish Government;
- Vocational Education, the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ); and
- Education Management, the World Bank.

The two-layer system of education administration

From 2000 to 2001, a new education administration approach was developed by the Transitional Administrative Department of Education, Science, and Technology (TA-DEST) and jointly implemented with the Department of Local Administration (DLA). This new 'Two-Layer Education System' is regarded as necessary in order to guarantee the right to quality education for all school-aged children in Kosovo. It allows for improved co-ordination and co-operation between the central administration and the existing education structures at the municipal level.

In twenty-six of the thirty municipalities of Kosovo, an Education Development Office (EDO) has been set up, which represents the Department of Education and Science. In some areas with a predominantly Serbian population, this system has not yet been implemented.

The two-layer system establishes a distribution of responsibilities at the municipal level, which assigns all 'soft' aspects of education (the curriculum) to the EDO, whereas the Municipal Education Directorate is in charge of all the 'hard' aspects (infrastructure). The decentralized representation of the DES has assumed responsi-

bilities previously held by the local education administrations representing the publicly elected municipal authorities.

The teaching force of Kosovo

Many teachers who joined the parallel system are still teaching in schools. There is no precise data on the ratio of trained or qualified teachers to those who lack appropriate training. The Transitional Administrative Department of Education, Science, and Technology has estimated that the ratio is about three to two, which means that in any region up to as many as 50% of the working teaching staff may be unqualified.

The characteristics of the Kosovo teaching force differ from those in other countries in several ways. Firstly, the majority of teachers are male. At the tertiary level of education, almost 78% of all teachers are male. However, the share of male teachers declines with the level of education. Secondly, many teachers work in schools that have more than one shift. In urban areas such as Pristina and Mitrovica, there are schools that operate with as many as four shifts and that are thus very crowded. Finally, most teachers have worked for several years on very low salaries or none at all. Teaching during the parallel system was seen as sustaining the Albanian language and culture under the pressure of the ruling government and, therefore, even unqualified teachers enjoyed a recognized and respected social status, which still influences debates and discussions on reforming the education system. Traditional teaching, which is still being practised, is quite rigid in its teaching/learning methods. Dissemination of information from the teacher to the pupils is still the dominant method.

The current school system

Pre-school education

In Kosovo, pre-school education is divided into kindergarten and pre-primary education. Generally, Kosovo educators have used the term 'pre-primary' to refer to the preparation class in primary school. In the 1999-2000 school year, this class was attended by pupils between six and seven years of age. With the new structure of the education system, all six-year-old children were required to attend grade 1, and therefore the pre-primary education in Kosovo now covers the five- to six-year-olds. The other part of pre-school education is kindergarten. In Kosovo, the term 'kindergarten' has been used to refer to full day-care services for children from nine months to seven years and, since September 2001, to six years of age.

Before the 1998-99 conflict, only a small minority of children had access to pre-school education. The pre-school kindergartens were provided by the State as child-care for working parents and, in some cases, were built next to factories. The majority of Albanian children did not have access to these institutions during the parallel system. Many pre-schools were damaged during the war; some were used as refugee centres. Early-childhood programmes were started again in 1999, but access to pre-school education in Kosovo is very poor. The majority of children cannot access formal early-childhood education programmes.

Primary and lower secondary education

From the school year 2000-01 onward, compulsory education was extended to nine years and divided into primary and lower secondary education. The first cycle of compulsory education, i.e. primary education, was prolonged to five years, beginning at the age of six. The implementation of this new structure has been slow, but it has been obligatory since September 2002. Compulsory education comprises nine grades: five years of primary and four years of lower secondary education. After grade 9, there are internal tests, after the completion of which the pupils are awarded school leaving certificates.

Upper secondary education

Upper-secondary education in Kosovo lasts three or four years. It is divided into grammar school and vocational education. General grammar school takes four years, while it is possible to complete vocational education after three years by means of final exams. After four years of studies in grammar school or vocational institutions, there are *Maturita* exams, which are both written and oral. During the school year 2001-02, a total of just over 90,000 pupils were enrolled in upper secondary education; almost 50% of these attended vocational schools.

Existing structure	Age	Grade	New structure	Age
Preschool education	3-5	Kindergarten	Preschool education	3-5
	5-7	Pre-primary		5-6
Primary education (compulsory)	7-8	Grade 1	Primary education (compulsory)	6-7
	8-9	Grade 2		7-8
	9-10	Grade 3		8-9
	10-11	Grade 4		9-10
	11-12	Grade 5	Lower secondary education (middle school) (compulsory)	10-11
	12-13	Grade 6		11-12
	13-14	Grade 7		12-13
	14-15	Grade 8		13-14
Secondary education	15-16	Grade 9	Upper secondary education (Theoretical and Vocational Technical Gymnasias and Vocational Schools)	14-15
	16-17	Grade 10		15-16
	17-18	Grade 11		16-17
	18-19	Grade 12		17-18

Source: TA-DEST

Education for children with special needs

The Transitional Administrative Department of Education, Science, and Technology emphasizes a policy of inclusion for children with special needs. This means that all children have a right to attend school. The long-term objective is to include children with disabilities into regular schools and classes, rather than segregate them into special schools. Inclusive education focuses on identifying and removing barriers to participation and learning. Instead of trying to mould such children into 'normal' pupils, the emphasis is on adapting the regular school environment to meet the pupils' special needs. However, this will be a long and difficult process; its implementation can only be done by means of a gradual, step-by-step approach. During the school year 2001-02, only a very small percentage of children with disabilities attended school. According to the Department of Education and Science, there are currently only 503 pupils in Kosovo attending special-needs schools and classes; very few pupils are participating in regular school classes.

Special education is being carried out in seven dedicated schools and seven attached classes in regular schools. Three of the special schools have dormitories; the children in another special institution reside there permanently.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The first faculties and institutions of higher education in Kosovo were founded between 1958 and 1969; they functioned either independently or within the University of Belgrade. When the University of Pristina was founded in 1970, it had four faculties: philosophy, law, engineering, and medicine. By 1990, the number of faculties had grown to thirteen; seven were attached to the University. Today, the University of Pristina has fourteen faculties and six colleges. The colleges offer courses of studies that are more vocationally oriented than those of the faculties, and they are located in different parts of Kosovo.

The University offers four types of programmes. These are undergraduate courses (of a minimum of four years), and academic postgraduate, professional postgraduate, and artistic postgraduate courses. Some of the colleges within the University offer two- or three-year undergraduate programmes. In practice, there are no doctoral or professional studies in the University of Pristina at present. Many postgraduate students take more than four years to obtain their Master of Science or Master of Arts degree. There is, furthermore, the possibility to convert this into a doctorate if the candidate has published at least one paper in a 'renowned international journal (with peer review)', and if the University agrees. Currently, no private higher education institutions exist in Kosovo. Although there is a faculty of Islamic studies, it is not part of the University of Pristina.

Because of the situation in Kosovo in the 1990s, the language of instruction at the University of Pristina is Albanian, with the exception of those departments where other languages are taught. There is, however, a strong desire to establish a Serbian-language university in northern Kosovo.

Adult education in Kosovo

The main obstacle for economic development in Kosovo is the lack of qualified personnel and private investment in enterprises. Therefore, the Department of Labour and Employment offers labour-market training. During the year 2000, different employment offices throughout Kosovo trained more than 10,000 jobseekers for different occupations. Computer and English courses were among the most frequently provided training schemes. Staff training is another common form of adult education that exists in Kosovo, especially within the public sector. An example of staff training is 'staff service training' for teachers. More than ever, many adults study the English language. In addition, literacy centres for women have been established.

Current problems and perspectives for development

If we describe the school year 1999-2000 (the first one after the war) as an effort to remedy the consequences of the war through emergency projects, then the school year 2000-01 may be considered as the year of establishing stability and starting development projects in education. This was the period when the authorities of UNMIK started to co-operate with their Kosovar colleagues in building the basis for a new education system that would satisfy the needs of all citizens of Kosovo. Several objectives have already been achieved: the establishment of a modern administrative structure of the education system, the design of a new curriculum of general education, teacher-training activities, special education, and progress in vocational education.

However, the Kosovo education system still cannot reach European standards. Most of the problems of the system still lie on the societal level: literacy, values, gender democracy, transparency, mindset, public space, and autonomy of the educational process. All these parameters indicate that the recently started reforms of the educational system must be continued. The issues of educational policy, however, should be focused on the sustainability of the reforms initiated.

References

- Kosovo Education Centre: Education in Kosovo. Figures and Facts. Pristina 2000.
- Kosovo Education Centre: Education in Kosovo 2000-2001. Joint edition in English and Albanian. Pristina 2001.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: Kosovo School Funding Handbook. Financial Management Information of Municipal Education Directors and School Directors. Pristina 2002.
- Statistical Office of Kosovo: Statistics on Education in Kosovo 2001, Version 2. Pristina 2001.
- United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK): Briefing Document for the Minister of Education, Science and Technology. Pristina 2002.
- United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK): New Kosovo 2002 Budget. Pristina 2002.
- University of Pristina: University of Pristina 1970-2000. Pristina 2000.

Kosovo

												Age																													
Upper secondary education		General (E Përgjithshme)	Vocational (Profesionale)	General (E Përgjithshme) 4 year (4 vjeçar)	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1							
					14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22																												
		Lower Secondary Education	General teaching - upper cycle (Mësimi lëndor - cikli i lartë)	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Compulsory education	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1															
				9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2		1	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1													
Primary education	General teaching - lower cycle (Mësimi klase - cikli i ulët)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Preprimary Education	Kindergarten (Kopshti)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	Childcare (Çerdhja)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

Latvia

History of the school system

Cultural background and corner-stones of the history of school education in Latvia

Latvia has experienced numerous different influences. During its history, it has been subject to diverse forces and policies. The Teutonic Order invaded the country in 1201, and crusaders founded the State of Livonia in 1270. Later, Polish and Swedish forces invaded, and by 1772 the Russian Tsarist Empire had conquered the whole country. Every instance of occupation left its mark on Latvia. The chief customs and policies of the invaders influenced the country's culture in general, and its educational traditions, both in the family and in school, in particular. Especially the German and Russian presence in the region brought its influence to bear. Even nowadays, the school systems show several similarities: in pedagogy as a science of instruction, in educational approaches concerning mental development, and in its humanistic outlook.

In the twentieth century, the national liberation movement became particularly strong. World Wars I and II destroyed the economic basis of the country, which was independent in the 1920s and 1930s, and 50% of the industrial enterprises were removed to Russia. The territory was divided up into separate parts, in which the different occupying forces exerted their respective influence. As a result, a unified national identity became a topical issue. In 1918, the Republic of Latvia was proclaimed. As one of the first official acts, the new government issued documents that advocated democratic and humanistic principles of education, recognizing equal rights and safeguarding the development of the Latvian nation and all minorities in Latvia.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the standards and prestige of education in Latvia had been traditionally high; they were seen as among the most important aspects of national progress. Because of the scarce natural resources of the country, education had acquired a particular significance as the basis for national development, competitiveness in the labour market, and social integration in a multi-cultural country.

Whilst the Latvian education system was subject to the laws of the USSR during the Soviet period, it was allowed to retain some of its distinctive characteristics, for Soviet legislation allowed for some national traditions within the Soviet school system. Within this framework, compulsory secondary education had been achieved by the 1980s, at which time more than 90% of pupils attended comprehensive or vocational secondary schools. The highly centralized nature of the education system did not provide for a choice of programmes, textbooks, or methods of teaching. The strong emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge in the specific subjects biased the

pupils' achievements towards theory; their good theoretical knowledge was not accompanied by well-trained practical applicability, which appears to be one of the weak points along with the system's ideological predisposition.

Reforms and innovations

It was only the ideas of *perestroika* that launched liberalization processes in schools, and as a result of an initiative by teachers and school managers, several important innovations have been introduced since the late 1980s. Among these was an educational reform which began in 1991 after national independence had been regained in Latvia and the first educational laws had been passed. As a result of fundamental political and economic changes, the education system became more decentralized and democratic. However, since the first laws formulated the objectives of education in a general, declarative way, they needed specification soon after they were passed.

Systematic and target-oriented changes were initiated in 1993 by means of several legislative acts and, first of all, by a new conception of general education. Rapid political and economic change, the collapse of industrial and agricultural production, and poor financial support made educational reform a difficult and very complicated process. Time to introduce new curricula and to re-train teachers according to an altered paradigm was very short, and this situation had lasting effects.

One of the major mistakes of this period of democratic change was the refusal to acknowledge the positive aspects of education during the Soviet era. There was no analytical reflection on how to stabilize the level of quality already achieved. The main documents on educational reform lacked systematic research to underpin innovations; incomplete and even contradictory solutions had often been borrowed from Western education systems and had been poorly adapted to the national traditions and value systems of Latvia.

Another drawback of the early period of reform was the lack of adequate understanding of the notion of the curriculum. Due to this misapprehension, the organization and content of school subjects were the most advanced components of the curriculum while the organization of pedagogical processes was less elaborate. As soon as political freedom had been regained, romantic ideas of automatic improvement in all spheres of life encountered numerous difficulties as a consequence of weak quality management. As a result, the academic performance of pupils deteriorated. These problems became a matter of constant discussion among educators as well as within the co-operation with foreign colleagues with the aim to find appropriate solutions. Such initiatives as regular seminars for educators at higher pedagogical institutions started in 1993 at the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology of the University of Latvia. They initiated the development of teacher-training programmes, which were to implement innovations in teacher training and the development of curricula at school level.

Educational legislation is constantly developing. Since 1991, the Laws on Education, General Education, Vocational Education, and the Law on Tertiary Education have been amended several times, for example in 1995 and in 1998. The present laws on education were adapted and improved between 2001 and 2004.

Socio-cultural context of the present school system

Educational targets and general functions of school education

The main aims and principles are defined in the Law on Education, which includes the conception of education in Latvia as well as the general standards of primary and secondary education. The planning for 2002 to 2005 has concentrated on the implementation of this conception, which aims at a knowledge-based and general education of children and adolescents, enabling them to create a democratic, socially integrated society. More specifically, the objectives of this conception are to raise the level of educational quality, to use the allocated finances efficiently, to prepare young individuals for lifelong learning, and to enhance the opportunities for everyone to develop their physical and spiritual abilities as well as their faculties of free and responsible individuality, that is, of becoming a creative and cultured person. The aims comprise, moreover, the promotion of the development of the pupils' knowledge, skills, and activities; of their independence, competence, and responsibility as a member of democratic society; of their adaptability and basic skills for both future vocational education and lifelong learning; and of personal culture, which includes the acquisition of general human and national values. These targets are based on the principles of differentiation and diversity rather than on uniformity.

Socio-economic context

Cultural values have always been held in high esteem among the Latvian population. Artistic education is integrated into numerous school subjects and is provided by a number of creative extra-curricular activities, such as choir singing, folk dancing, and handicraft. Every four years, the national festival of choir singing and dancing takes place; the last festival attracted ten thousand participants, most of whom were schoolchildren. The wide-ranging involvement of the population in these activities provides for the preservation and transmission of national cultural values. Pupils from ethnic minorities take part in and contribute to these activities with their specific ethnic cultural values, and their participation is scheduled in the programmes of these activities.

After the Velvet Revolution, those activities that were managed by local bodies decreased, mainly for financial reasons. Thus, the opportunities for pupils to become involved decreased accordingly. The economic collapse caused poverty and unemployment in the country, and these developments had a profound influence on cultural processes; signs of depression among parts of the population are evident. As a result, 'street children', who hardly attend school, emerged. Due to low academic achievements, 2.5% of the pupils in grades 5 to 9 are expelled from school.

The state policy towards the education of minorities is implemented by means of a special state programme. In order to integrate children from both majority and minority backgrounds, the use of Latvian as the language of instruction has been introduced. By 2007, minority schools have to complete the switch to Latvian as the language of instruction for grade 12. In 2002-03, 11% of all minority schools reported that they had accomplished the shift already, and 77% aim to be prepared to teach all subjects in Latvian by September 2004.

At present, 36% of teachers hold their classes in Latvian, 27% are bilingual, and 37% teach in the language of the respective minority. A four-year course for teachers to acquire Latvian was subsidized, and the funds provided exceeded four million lats. In 2004, 85% of pupils in grade 8, as well as their parents, confirmed that they were prepared to receive instruction in Latvian.

In order to support the state programme, 27.4% of minority schools' programmes are licensed for basic and 36% for secondary education. These activities reveal the socio-political significance of education and illustrate ways to solve current problems.

General education is provided by basic and secondary schools as well as by some of the vocational secondary schools. This also applies to schools with Russian, Polish, and other languages of instruction. They operate according to the choice of the pupils and their parents. By 2002-03, 1021 Russian-language schools with 93,744 pupils existed. In addition, 1003 pupils attended Polish schools; 307 pupils attended Ukrainian institutions, including other language schools; and 87 pupils went to Belorussian schools and classes.

Social position of the teaching profession

There is a national programme of continuous qualification for head teachers. Furthermore, in order to be appointed to this position, individuals have to meet high pedagogical requirements, such as the completion of special school-management courses.

In 2003-04 almost 84% of teachers in general education schools had a higher pedagogical qualification; 6.2% had only a secondary pedagogical; 4.2% a higher, but non-pedagogical; and 3.5% a secondary general qualification. The majority of those teachers that have no higher pedagogical education or whose qualifications do not correspond to the school level at which they are teaching have entered university or other institutions of higher education with the aim of obtaining appropriate pedagogical qualifications. The number of teachers enrolling in these programmes is considerable; as a result, the percentage of those teachers with higher qualifications is increasing rapidly.

School and the role of the family

In 2004 the Latvian Association of Parents was founded. The work of this Association is based on parents' previous involvement in school councils. A large number of parents have participated in school and class activities. The committees set up, initiate, and, to a certain extent, manage the improvement of the schools' material basis by attracting additional financial support. Other fields of the Association's activities are the processes of education and quality management, and issues that are on the agenda of the parents' committees at school and in classes. As a consequence, the influence of parents on the organization of school activities, the provision of appropriate opportunities for instruction, and the evaluation of results is considerable.

In numerous cities and rural areas, parents have, in co-operation with schools, organized committees to guarantee their children's security in the area, especially on the street. In some regions, fathers' clubs have started initiatives to increase, diver-

sify, and co-ordinate the influence of the family on school matters as well as to make the fathers' influence on education more target-oriented.

Most parents support the schools' activities and their children's extra-curricular involvement in educational, sporting, and other institutions. They also take the initiative in organizing these activities. The number of passive parents, however, remains considerable. In the case of parents who refuse or cannot cover these duties, local authorities provide support activities for schools. Social workers with a higher pedagogical degree, as a rule in social pedagogy, co-ordinate these activities and provide assistance to pupils, teachers, and parents. Teachers' salaries are paid from the budgets of the local bodies.

Organizational context and management of the school system

Basic legal principles, levels, and philosophy of management

The goals of compulsory education are defined in the Law on Education. Obligatory school education comprises two stages. The first or primary stage of compulsory education starts at age seven and covers four grades, whereas the second, lower secondary, follows the primary stage, and includes grades 5 to 9. After compulsory education, 65% of pupils enter upper secondary schools, 31% attend vocational schools, and 3% leave school (2002 data). Upper secondary education is not compulsory.

Only state schools are financed from the national budget, while other secondary schools are managed and financed by local bodies. The increasing popularity of secondary schools is reflected in the rising number of schools and pupils. Since 1995-96, enrolment in the last three years of secondary education, i.e. grades 10 to 12, has increased by more than 30%. This tendency can be explained by the pupils' will to pursue their education at a higher institution. A further reason is the lack of job opportunities at this age. Of those pupils who graduated from secondary school in 2002 (2003 data is not yet available), 64% entered institutions of tertiary education, 9% attended vocational schools, and 26% did not continue their formal education.

The main incentives to continue education, as reported by school leavers (after grade 9) and secondary-school graduates (grade 12) are to get a better job (4.30% and 4.88% of respondents respectively), to be respected by friends and acquaintances (4.53% and 4.88%), to achieve social stability (3.51% and 3.46%), and to obtain the desired qualifications and job (2.64% and 2.72%).

Both compulsory and vocational education are financed from the national budget. Over the last five years, an average of 15.5% of the budget has been spent on education. As the absolute figures, however, are not as high, schools experience financial shortages, which are partly covered by the subsidies received from local authorities or sponsors. The financial situation differs greatly among the Latvian regions due to the differences in funding attracted by the local authorities. Large differences also exist with respect to the number of pupils per class. Whereas in large cities the number of pupils in a class might exceed thirty children, rural areas are characterized by smaller classes with between thirteen and twenty pupils.

During the last two years, the number of computers available in schools has increased considerably. In 2002-03, state schools had, on average, one computer for every twenty-three pupils, and the Internet was accessible in 81% of the total number of schools.

Responsibilities, sponsoring, and school boards

The parliament (*Saeima*) passes and amends educational laws and those that affect educational matters. It also approves the part of the budget that is reserved for education. The Law on Education constitutes the basis for all normative documents concerned with educational domains.

The government (*Ministru Kabinets*) passes key normative documents that delineate the development of the education system and the standards of education. The government also supervises the budget. The Ministry of Education and Science releases normative documents in accordance with the law and the general conception of education; it also organizes the implementation of standards. In addition, it monitors the operation of schools, provides assistance within the framework of its financial possibilities, and prepares and conducts standardized examinations. The Ministry also publishes strategic programmes, such as 'Education 1998-2003', which provide the basis for constant progress in all educational domains, such as contents, structures, and financing. Finally, the Ministry of Education and Science is the central executive authority in the Republic of Latvia with respect to all educational issues. The majority of state schools, from pre-primary to secondary level, are subject to the policies of the Ministry of Education and Science, which are implemented by the regional bodies. In accordance with the budget, the national government pays teachers' and head teachers' salaries, including the obligatory social security contributions of 28% on average.

Local authorities have to pay for pre-school teachers' salaries and social security contributions. They also cover all expenses for the maintenance of school buildings and finance school libraries. Their budgets, however, vary from 0.80 to 3.80 lats per pupil and annum, as the revenue of the regions and the funds attracted from different local sponsors differ greatly.

The majority of special schools for disabled children and vocational and secondary schools are the responsibility of the national government. The government also funds the majority of those educational institutions that come within the purview of the Ministries of Agriculture, Welfare, and Culture respectively. At the local level, executive authority over educational issues is vested in consultative school boards.

The Law on Education (passed in 1998, revised in 2001) and the Law on General Education (passed in 1999, revised in 2002) delineate the structure of the curriculum and related policies. Changes to curricular standards were implemented from 1992 onwards; at the same time, the syllabi of individual subjects were improved. However, as the emphasis still rested on the acquisition of knowledge, further improvements became necessary. In 1996 the Ministry of Education and Science initiated a two-year project that aimed at the alignment of the national standard of education with the idea of reform.

In 2000 the government approved the National Standards of Primary and General Secondary Education in accordance with its educational policies, and the concepts of the reform of educational content at pre-primary, basic, and secondary school level.

Financing

Whereas education at primary and basic school level is entirely financed from the state budget, pre-school education is funded to the extent of two thirds from the budgets of local authorities and one third from the fees paid by the parents. State secondary schools are financed from the state budget, and other secondary schools from local budgets. The policy of the government has been to increase teachers' salaries on a regular basis. While the pay rises are only slight, they are granted regularly: since 2002, salaries have increased annually.

Since 1999, World Bank-sponsored projects have provided funds for innovations in education and, furthermore, for the investigation of possibilities to evaluate the efficiency of the current modes of educational financing. Within this framework, the refurbishment and reconstruction of school buildings have been funded. By advocating educational standards and the development of curricula, as well as by creating a system of school evaluation and examinations, these projects have, in addition, contributed considerably to the improvement of quality management and pupils' performance. Minority schools receive additional subsidies for special teacher training and Latvian-language textbooks.

Public and private schools

In Latvia, schools of general education are operated by one of the following three bodies: the State, local bodies, or private organizations.

The number of private schools and pupils attending these institutions is comparatively small, and has stabilized during the last five years. Most of them are secondary schools. Before 1991, there were no private schools.

In contrast, the number of schools that are run by the State and local authorities is still decreasing as a result of the declining birth rate. A further reason is the optimization of the school system in accordance with the educational policies of the government. In some regions, very small schools were closed as the number of pupils constantly decreased.

Those pupils who cannot attend full-time day schools for whatever reason go to evening schools. Currently, about 4% of all schools are evening schools, and just over 4% of all pupils attend these. In 2002-03, 124 vocational schools with 46,533 students and 5693 members of teaching staff existed.

General standards of the school system

The National Curriculum ('Standard') of Primary Education, dating from 1998 and revised in 2002, and the National Curriculum of Secondary Education of 2000, to be introduced in 2005, are designed to apply educational policies to school programmes in general, and to subject syllabi in particular. The aim is to achieve a fundamental reform. The main principles of this educational reform are to move the emphasis

from knowledge to its application, its practical use, and the ability to learn; to solve problems in instruction; to develop pupils' practical skills, capacities, and innovativeness; and to integrate the school subjects. These principles are designed to guarantee equal rights for all pupils, including those with special needs; to integrate the system of education; and to integrate the Latvian nation. The National Curriculum comprises the following sections: strategic aims and objectives of the programmes, compulsory core contents, and the main principles and evaluation procedures of pupils' performance. Once the government has ratified the curricula, they become compulsory for all teaching personnel working in those schools mentioned in them.

The curricula ('standards') of the school subjects are defined by the Ministry of Education and Science; head teachers, teachers, teachers' professional organizations, teacher trainers, parents, and pupils are also involved in this process. They include the main objectives of the school subjects, compulsory contents, requirements with regard to knowledge and skills, and methods of evaluation of pupils' achievements.

On the basis of the National Standards of Education, schools work out individual programmes or curricula. The development of these involves teachers, parents, pupils, and members of the local community. Since the quality of every programme has to be approved by the Ministry, schools are only allowed to implement licensed programmes. Programmes are evaluated with respect to their implementation and effectiveness. Finally, the Ministry of Education and Science has to register the programmes in accordance with the Law on Education. These curricula comprise general aims and concrete objectives, required entrance qualifications for the programmes, integrated educational contents of all subjects, plans for the implementation of the programmes, criteria for the evaluation of pupils' performance, and personnel, financial, and material provisions. The programmes of the individual subjects include the aims and objectives of the subject, the contents that are to be acquired, the order of acquisition, the time allocated, and methods and techniques of instruction.

Teachers may choose either to develop their own programmes or to use one of those that exist already and that correspond to the 'National Standards'. The programmes of the subjects are worked out by the Centre for Content and Evaluation (the Latvian acronym is ISEC) of the Ministry of Education and Science. This process involves experienced teachers, teachers' professional associations, subject teachers' associations, scientists, authors of textbooks, and other competent specialists. The subject programmes include the requirements of the Standards; in practice, however, the contents actually taught can exceed those outlined in the Standards. The programmes of the subjects developed by teachers are to be accepted by their head teachers.

In order to meet these targets, the schools offer a variety of choices. By 2002, about eighty programmes had been developed and were available. In many cases, pupils could choose from different content designs and methods of instructions. The literature programme for grade 5, for instance, has three options. In addition, teachers can choose among two or three different textbooks. If none of the offered programmes satisfy the particular needs of pupils, teachers or schools can develop individual programmes and textbooks; they need, however, to be approved by the Min-

istry as laid down in the Law on Education. The Ministry of Education and Science annually releases a list of recommended literature and textbooks. It includes all those textbooks and other teaching materials that are available and recommended by the teachers' professional associations.

Secondary schools can, in accordance with the profile chosen, expand the scope of the compulsory or additional school subjects and thus provide opportunities for pupils to specialize in those subjects from which they benefit most.

The framework of compulsory contents is standardized nationally, which enables pupils to move from one school to another. The National Curriculum is applicable to all types of schools at the given level of education. The Law on Education allows upper-secondary schools to introduce entrance examinations if they offer additional, specialized programmes. There are no entrance examinations for primary and lower secondary schools, nor usually for upper secondary schools, unless they make special demands on their pupils, as upper secondary education is not compulsory.

The National Curriculum of Basic Education comprises four domains, each with a set of subjects. The number of pupils within each domain differs according to the level of education (grades 1 to 3, 4 to 6, 7 to 9 respectively):

- Languages: the Latvian language, languages of the minorities, and foreign languages (32%, 32%, and 28%);
- Technology and sciences: mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, domestic science, geography, and computer science (28%, 28%, and 38%);
- The arts: music, performing arts, literature, and handicraft (23%, 19%, and 13%); and
- Man and society: history, the social sciences, geography, domestic science, handicraft, and sport (some subjects are represented in two domains as they play a significant role in more than one domain) (17%, 21%, and 21%).

The programme defines the main aims for each subject individually in accordance with the general educational objectives as defined in the current Law on Education.

Extra-curricular activities are popular among children and adolescents: 46% of all pupils take part in such activities in addition to the subject programmes. Among pupils in grades 1 to 6, involvement exceeds 50%. The nature of these activities differs between cities and rural regions. In the latter, participation is slightly higher than in the former. Whereas these optional activities are provided by the schools, there are also those that are paid for by the parents, in spite of high rates of unemployment and poverty. Especially in the countryside, this is a serious obstacle for numerous children to make use of the possibilities offered.

In 2002-03, a total of 66,240 pupils took part in a variety of extra-curricular activities including sport, and 1621 of these pupils required special pedagogical assistance. More than 23,950 hours were spent with these pastimes. In nursery schools, 641 children participated in additional courses such as foreign languages or dancing, whereas in sport schools, 1756 pupils were involved, 38 of whom had special needs. The total number of hours exceeded 1720. Among the adolescents attending vocational school, 1986 participated in out-of-class activities; altogether, they spent more than 489 hours on these. The number of teachers involved exceeded 1570.

Quality management

Pupils' performance is evaluated according to the following principles:

- Flexibility of criteria and requirements with regard to the quality of achievement;
- Evaluation of the received instruction by means of the total marks for knowledge, understanding, application of knowledge, and creative skills;
- Comparability of the tests at all levels of education that are included in the marking system;
- Variety of test tasks, including, for instance, written and oral tests, individual and group tests, and other methods that reveal the dynamics of success;
- Regularity of control and assessment in order to promote progress; and
- The obligatory nature of control and assessment, except in the case of a few exceptional students.

Depending on the level of education, evaluation and marking strategies for the assessment of pupils' performance differ. No marks are given in grades 1 to 3. Recent discussions, however, might result in changes in this respect. Intended as an evaluation for the parents, a brief oral or written report of the pupils' performance assesses their peculiarities with regard to learning activities and skills, learning style, communicative and co-operative behaviour, attitude to learning, and the dynamics of achievements.

In grade 4, performance is evaluated according to the same principles as in grades 1 to 3, with the exception of mathematics, the first language, and Latvian in those ethnic minority schools with a first language other than Latvian. In the latter subject, a ten-point system, in which '10' is the highest mark, is in use. The same ten-point scale is also employed in grades 5 to 9, the only exceptions being ethics, health instruction, and social studies, which are marked 'pass' or 'fail', and in all subjects in grades 10 to 12.

In basic and secondary school, the results can be expressed by either 'pass' or 'fail', especially in those cases in which marking is problematic, for instance when projects have not been completed.

Central examinations use a different marking system: the pupils' performance is graded from 'A' to 'F', with 'A' being the best mark. Performance in foreign languages is evaluated according to the recommendations of the Council of Europe. Those pupils who fail their final examinations after grade 9 of basic school or class 12 of secondary school are allowed to repeat the exams in those subjects in which they did not pass. They can do so only at the school which they attended and which issued their reports.

Pupils receive reports twice a year, namely at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. Pupils of grades 9 and 12 get reports only at the end of the first semester; only those who were not issued graduation certificates after grade 9 or 12 receive a second report at the end of the year. Those pupils or parents who are not satisfied with the evaluation can apply for the repetition of a school year and are thus offered the opportunity to improve on their knowledge and skills.

Children in need of pedagogical assistance have the opportunity to join specially designed programmes. The objectives of these programmes are to advance the de-

velopment of those pupils with a low level of knowledge and skills; to provide a positive learning experience; to create the conditions for the development of knowledge and skills, and thus to meet the requirements of the curriculum; to safeguard continuous education; and to facilitate the acquisition of new models of behaviour and values.

For pupils whose mother tongue is not Latvian, special models of education are offered in order to meet their needs and to guarantee that they obtain an appropriate command of the Latvian language. While in grade 1, Latvian-language instruction in one or two subjects is optional; pupils have to take one fourth of all subjects in Latvian when they reach grade 9. In grade 12, Latvian is the language of instruction in half of the subjects. By 2004-05, the proportion for grade 9 is to reach 60%. According to a second model, the pupils' mother tongue is used as the language of instruction from grade 1 to grade 3, with the exception of the Latvian language as a subject. Bilingual education starts in grade 4, when 60% of all subjects are taught in Latvian. This figure increases to 80% by grade 9. From the school year 2004-2005 onward, this ratio will be compulsory.

Support systems

Every school has a consultative council, which consists of representatives of local authorities, parents, and further persons as well as bodies that have an interest in the education of the children and the cultural development of the region. In addition, every institution has a pedagogical council comprising representatives of both the parents' and the pupils' councils.

Approximately one fifth of the Latvian population live on or below the poverty line. Local authorities are responsible for the welfare of these children as well as that of orphans; they have to pay for educational expenses such as books, school dinners, and transport. Education is included in the government programmes of regional development.

The current school system

General structure: overview

At present, there are four school types within the system of general education:

1. General (comprehensive) schools, which can be subdivided into basic schools, i.e. primary and lower secondary, and secondary schools;
2. Vocational schools, run by several ministries (Education and Science, Agriculture, Welfare, and Culture);
3. Special schools for disabled children with special needs; and
4. Evening (part-time) schools.

According to the basic principles of differentiation, pupils have the right to choose between different programmes (the choice of which is wider in urban schools), methods of instruction, and organizational forms. With respect to the latter two, usually one alternative is offered. Pupils are, moreover, entitled to individualized instruction and can opt for additional subjects or extra-curricular activities.

Pre-primary education

The political and economic changes of the Velvet Revolution have greatly affected pre-primary education in Latvia. Nursery schools changed their curricula radically. In contrast to their previous orientation towards organization and supervision of the children's activities, these institutions now emphasize their educational role. Due to financial restraints, pre-primary education is no longer compulsory (the Law on Education of 1999 made this first stage of education optional). However, it is being discussed whether attendance of nursery schools should be made obligatory again, as it is perceived as an important preparation for primary school. At present, draft legislation to re-introduce compulsory pre-primary education is being prepared.

The percentage of children attending nursery school decreased from 83% of all children at pre-school age in 1990 to 54% in 1995, and further to 40.3% in 1998. The total number of nursery schools fell accordingly. After 1998, a reversal of this trend could be observed, and by 2001, the percentage of nursery school children had increased to 52% again. This latter figure, however, is qualified by the extreme decrease in the Latvian birth rate: in 1998, the rate of newborn children was the lowest ever registered in any country. In 2001, 91.1% of all six-year-olds attended nursery school in order to prepare for their primary education. Children with special needs either went to specialized institutions or joined special groups at regular schools. Their total number amounted to 4729 in 2001. Those children who did not attend nursery school received preparatory instruction in 135 pre-schools.

The Curriculum (Standard) of Pre-Primary Education is designed to advance the children's general level of development; reading and writing skills are only of secondary importance. Pre-primary institutions prepare children up to seven years of age for school. If necessary from a medical point of view, and if the parents agree, pre-primary education can be extended for another year. Pre-primary-education programmes comprise the following core contents: development of individual characteristics; development of mental, physical, and social abilities; development of initiative, inquisitiveness, and independence; health care; acquisition of the psychological maturity to start school; and acquisition of basic linguistic skills. The programmes are developed under the direction of the Ministry of Education and Science. Pre-primary teachers, parents, scientists, and other experts are involved in this process.

According to the Law on Education, children may partake in organized activities of between fifteen minutes' duration at the age of two and sixty minutes' duration at the age of six or seven. The preparation of six-year-olds for primary school is one of the key challenges. Low attendance at nursery schools results in a disparate level of education among children, many of whom enter primary school unprepared. Not only the decrease in the number of nursery schools, but also the dire economic situation of numerous families prevent children from attending educational activities at pre-school age. In order to solve these problems, schools are obliged to register all children of the relevant age bracket and to encourage them to participate in preparation programmes.

Primary education

All children who reach the age of seven are enrolled into the first grade of the primary school closest to their home, unless there are indications that the child needs special care and must therefore attend a special school. The current Law on Education requires that all children between five and seven years of age attend either a nursery school or a pre-school group that prepares them for primary school. Preparation for school takes place in 545 nursery schools, 228 schools with pre-school groups, and 204 schools that have groups for five- to six-year-olds (2002-03 data). The programmes have to be approved by the Ministry. Primary education (ISCED 1, 1997) comprises grades 1 to 4. The Law on Education states that children must start attendance in the first grade at the age of seven. The main objectives of primary education are to provide opportunities for pupils to develop basic skills with respect to personality development and social competences, to create the academic prerequisites for pupils' education at the next level, to facilitate pupils' harmonious development, and to develop pupils' attitudes towards learning, personal identity, family, community, the environment, and the Latvian State. In addition, the programmes, or curricula, outline the workload for each subject, i.e. the lessons per week for each subject and grade.

Pupils' basic knowledge in the above-mentioned domains is acquired in nursery school and the first grades of primary school, as it is integrated into the curricula of several subjects and extra-curricular activities. Regular classes in the subjects, which are included in the programme, start later. Foreign-language classes begin in the third grade, and the first foreign language is usually English. Latvian history takes up about one third of the time allocated to the subject of history. Since 2002-03, only approved programmes have been admitted. By 2004, 595 programmes had been licensed. As a result, the quality management of primary education has become more consistent.

Lower secondary education

Basic school functions as a transitory stage between primary and secondary school, and it comprises grades 5 to 9. The average daily workload gradually increases from six lessons in grade 5 to eight in grade 9. The Curriculum (Standard) of Basic Education mentions those qualities that pupils should acquire in lower secondary school. They also form the basis for the final examinations after grade 9. In order to graduate from lower secondary school, pupils are required to take examinations in mathematics and in language and literature, both in the language of instruction and in Latvian. In addition, they have to pass tests in foreign languages, physical education, history, and social and natural sciences.

The graduates of basic, or lower secondary, school receive a certificate that documents their basic education and grants them the right to enter either secondary or vocational schools. Those pupils who do not manage to complete their programme are required to continue their education at basic-school-level until they have finished the programme or reached eighteen years of age. The certificate that pupils are awarded upon completion of basic school entitles them to enter a secondary school. Secondary schools which offer specialized programmes with expanded syl-

labi usually admit those basic school graduates who have performed better in the relevant subjects.

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education is not compulsory; it is, however, very popular among those adolescents who finish basic school. Upper secondary school comprises grades 10 to 12. The school year lasts thirty-five weeks for grades 10 and 11 and thirty-eight weeks for grade 12. Specialized schools with additional subjects are restricted to thirty-six lessons per week and eight lessons per day by the Standard of Secondary Education.

The Curriculum of General Secondary Education defines the goals for all the schools of this level in order to ensure that all pupils are offered equal opportunities to prepare for the tertiary level. The goals are the following: to provide an environment in which pupils can acquire the knowledge and skills that are necessary for further education; to advance pupils' physical and mental development; to sharpen pupils' awareness of a healthy way of living and the qualities of life; to develop pupils' critical thinking and a positive attitude towards citizenship, rights, and obligations; and to further the development of pupils' learning skills and motivation for continuous learning. The curriculum delineates the core subjects and the required amount of time that is to be spent on these. The curricula consist of four sets of subjects: general education; humanities and social sciences; mathematics, natural sciences, and technology; and vocational subjects.

Final examinations have to be taken in Latvian language and literature; in one compulsory subject which depends on the school's profile; in one subject chosen by the school, in which instruction has been given for at least 105 hours; in two subjects of the pupils' choice, also taught for at least 105 hours each; and in not more than four compulsory subjects. Every pupil has to pass at least five examinations. Central examinations were introduced in 1997 in the subject of English. The scope has been extended since, and now includes German, Russian, French, mathematics, history, Latvian, physics, and chemistry. The written examinations are evaluated by the Centre of Curricula and Examinations of the Ministry of Education and Science. This body has the right to introduce additional forms of assessment, with the aim of assessing the quality reached. By 2005, all examination results ought to be evaluated centrally and are to include twenty-three school subjects, both compulsory and optional. The nature of the examinations has to change gradually from the evaluation of formal knowledge to the assessment of practical skills and acquired abilities. The majority of the universities and other institutions of tertiary education accept the results of the central examinations. If they have large numbers of applicants, however, universities can introduce entrance examinations. Hence, teachers specifically train pupils for these examinations and adjust their training to the peculiarities of a particular institution.

The Latvian government has recently declared that all adolescents should acquire a basic education and the skills that are necessary to continue their education and to obtain qualifications that enable them to adapt themselves to a constantly evolving labour market.

Vocational education

The Law on Vocational Education was passed in 1999 and was amended two years later. It provides for the implementation of educational policies and the establishment of a new system of vocational education in the transformed socio-political environment. The main objectives of vocational education are to offer adolescents the opportunity to receive a comprehensive vocational education; to define the requirements that must be met in order to obtain specific vocational qualifications; to delineate the qualifications required of those teachers who are involved in vocational education, and the procedures that are to be followed when issuing certificates; and to evaluate the qualifications and the quality of vocational education in comparison with that of other European countries.

The Law also established the Co-operative Council for Vocational Education. This public consultative body comprises representatives of numerous institutions that are involved in vocational education. Its aim is to promote the development and advance the quality of vocational education in Latvia.

Whereas the number of different job profiles that were trained in Latvia had reached 1000 by 1990, this figure has now fallen to 329. This low figure implies, however, the broadening of vocational training, caused by restructured, market-oriented modes of production. Since 1990-91, the number of vocational schools has decreased by 14% as a result of the re-organization of several vocational schools, which were transformed into institutions of tertiary education. The classification of several job profiles changed accordingly. Three levels of vocational education exist: basic, secondary, and higher, or tertiary, vocational education.

The completion of secondary vocational education gives graduates the right to join a training programme at an institution of tertiary education. In order to graduate from secondary school, pupils have to sit final examinations in the core subjects. Seven further subjects of the curriculum are not concluded by means of final examinations; in these, however, the pupils must have achieved at least satisfactory results.

Vocational training experienced vast changes after the demise of the Soviet system. The decline in the number of pupils from 67,000 in 1990 to 48,000 in 2000 is a result of the transition to a market economy and the fall in production. Every third pupil acquires basic vocational training at secondary school. Both the Ministry of Education and Science and other ministries, such as the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Culture, issue standards, programmes, and final examinations. This shared responsibility inhibits the establishment of a co-ordinated system of education in Latvia. The fact that employers have little influence on the organization of vocational education is perceived as a further disadvantage. Vocational schools admit applicants between fifteen and nineteen years of age for full-time programmes. Only 8% of all pupils in vocational education participate in part-time programmes.

Special education

The Law on Education makes provisions for the education of disabled children. These arrangements are controversial, however, as late developers, maladjusted

children, and particularly gifted children also need special attention and care in addition to their regular school education. The most recent effort to provide this support has been the introduction of pedagogical programmes for children with problems concerning behaviour and socialization. The programmes offer between one and five hours of special courses per week. By 2002-03, five different programmes had been approved by the Ministry. In 2002 special schools and classes were attended by 3.01% of all pupils. The main aim of these schools is to help their pupils integrate into regular comprehensive or vocational schools, and thus into society in general.

The number of children with special needs increased from 8363 in 1999 to 10,055 in 2003. Among these, more than 10,000 children required long-term medical care. Special programmes were offered by sixty-four schools. In order to safeguard the education of the disabled, the national budget provided 16.221m lats, and additional funds were received from both local authorities and projects that are run in co-operation with other European countries.

The Ministry of Education and Science has set up the National Council, which investigates and organizes the integration of disabled children into compulsory education. Similar councils operate on the local level: after careful examinations and discussions with parents, they make recommendations as to whether children should attend special schools.

Several rehabilitation centres offer vocational education programmes for disabled adolescents. In addition, these centres run two-week orientation courses. These are designed to help people find an occupation that takes their special needs into account. Physically disabled pupils are offered the opportunity to attend special secondary education programmes. As a consequence, however, of the poor economic situation, these programmes have been reduced to just two, namely economics and computer studies.

The efforts of different bodies, both of the central government and the local authorities, have been co-ordinated in order to regulate the financing of the education of children with special needs and to take care of potential drop-outs. If a child moves from one school to another, it has to be guaranteed that the specially earmarked money follows the child; in other words, that the pupil retains his or her benefits. There is still a great need for new projects financed by a variety of sources, both existing and new, to solve at least the major problems of this branch of education. Local authorities are obliged to assist children in finding a new school in the event of small country schools' being closed. In addition, they are to maintain registers of high-risk families and their children, so that the authorities can help schools to integrate these children better, to provide appropriate activities, and to organize the situation.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

While institutions of higher education are financed mainly from the national budget, tuition fees paid by students also make up a considerable part of their total budget. The fees depend on the individual institutions, their popularity, and the degree

courses offered. Universities and other post-secondary colleges are relatively autonomous. In 2003-04, 32,257 students (approximately 27.1%) were enrolled in universities and colleges financed from the national budget, while 86,687 (about 72.2%) students attended institutions that charged fees.

Latvian tertiary education programmes have been developed according to the principles of the Bologna process in order to ensure the comparability of the qualifications obtained by Latvian students with those of other European countries. In 2003 thirty-seven state universities, fourteen privately-owned universities, and two private colleges existed. The total number of students amounted to 110,500, 90,316 of whom were enrolled in state institutions. Of the 40,993 first-year students in 2003, 28,653 started a degree course at a state institution. In the same year, 16,749 students graduated from the these universities, and the total number of graduates amounted to 18,917.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The main issues that are presently being discussed are the principles behind educational reform and their implementation. Although changes were initiated in 1990, fundamental transformations have only taken effect since 1996. A new conception of education in Latvia has been developed, and improvements in the legal framework and in teacher training strengthened the reform efforts. Since 2002, regional and national conferences have been held in order to discuss the reform of educational contents at all levels of education. The discussion aims at creating programmes to develop pupils' skills and creativity as well as the practical applicability of their knowledge, to co-ordinate the time allocated to subjects with the aim of providing pupils with the possibility to change school, to integrate the content of different subjects in order to make the learning process more efficient and systematic, to implement changes in the four domains of content, and to provide opportunities for the acquisition of information technology skills.

The democratization and decentralization of decision-making, encouraging schools and teachers to develop more creativity and responsibility, are at the centre of the reform. In order to accomplish this qualitative change, a core component of the reform must be focused on, namely the accomplishment of the transition from a knowledge-centred curriculum to an ability-centred curriculum that emphasizes the applicability of knowledge and practical skills. This issue is contingent on the availability of new textbooks and technological equipment in all schools. Academic quality, the applicability of knowledge, and pupils' adaptability are the main subjects of discussion at present.

Since 2002, the debate has been organized within the framework of the 'Implementation of the Standards of Basic Education', with the main accent on teaching techniques, methods of instruction that adhere to the idea of reform and introduce innovations in the pedagogical process, evaluation of pupils' performance, and quality management at schools. By 2004, the debate on the Standards' implementation is to include the efficiency of instruction and pupils' achievements. In addition, improvements on the Standards are to be put forward for further discussion. The im-

plementation of central examinations is also high on the agenda, and recommendations for further improvement are to be offered to the schools by 2005.

Pre-primary education and the training of pre-school teachers are subject to a contentious government policy, according to which the responsibility for a number of nursery schools is to be moved from the State to the private sector. This plan conflicts with the views of numerous parents and teachers. In addition, the higher fees charged by private institutions strain the budget of many families, despite the fact that local authorities support them with 28 lats per month for each child.

The teachers' workload exceeds twenty-four lessons per week and their salaries are low. The increasing amount of printed teaching materials eases their load, but these are only slowly becoming available. A further problem is the high price of textbooks, as many families cannot afford them. Less than 8% of the costs of textbook production are covered by the national budget. Another problematic issue is the fact that the teaching profession has lost some of its attraction for university graduates. As the salaries are dependent on qualifications and work experience, the first working years of young teachers are characterized by particularly low wages. More than 50% of all university graduates with a pedagogical degree (subsidized by the State) prefer to seek employment outside the education system.

The concept of continuous teacher training is also the subject of discussion. Electronically-based training courses, as well as their organization and content design, are being considered in the context of tertiary education.

The model of educational funding is currently undergoing major change; both the national and local budgets are to support pupils rather than schools. Budgetary funds are earmarked for each individual pupil: in case he or she changes school, his or her budget will move as well. Thus, the total budget available to a school depends on the number of pupils it can attract. This policy causes problems and its implementation should be more flexible.

At present, teacher training programmes make up a considerable percentage of all vocational and academic programmes. As a result, the quality of higher academic and vocational education has improved. Although students have to come up with between 40% and 60% (sometimes even 100%) of the tuition fees, the number of those on teacher training courses is constantly increasing, and the current student support and loan system is not adequate. According to government policy, all teachers are supposed either to have completed or to be enrolled in appropriate programmes of higher education by September 2004.

Every year, the Ministry of Education and Science defines and finances research programmes that have a high priority. Although there is no long-term research strategy, the programmes nevertheless support those teachers who are involved in research. In 2002-03, twenty-nine research projects supported by the national budget were launched. In general, research is oriented towards the implementation of the reformed conception of education.

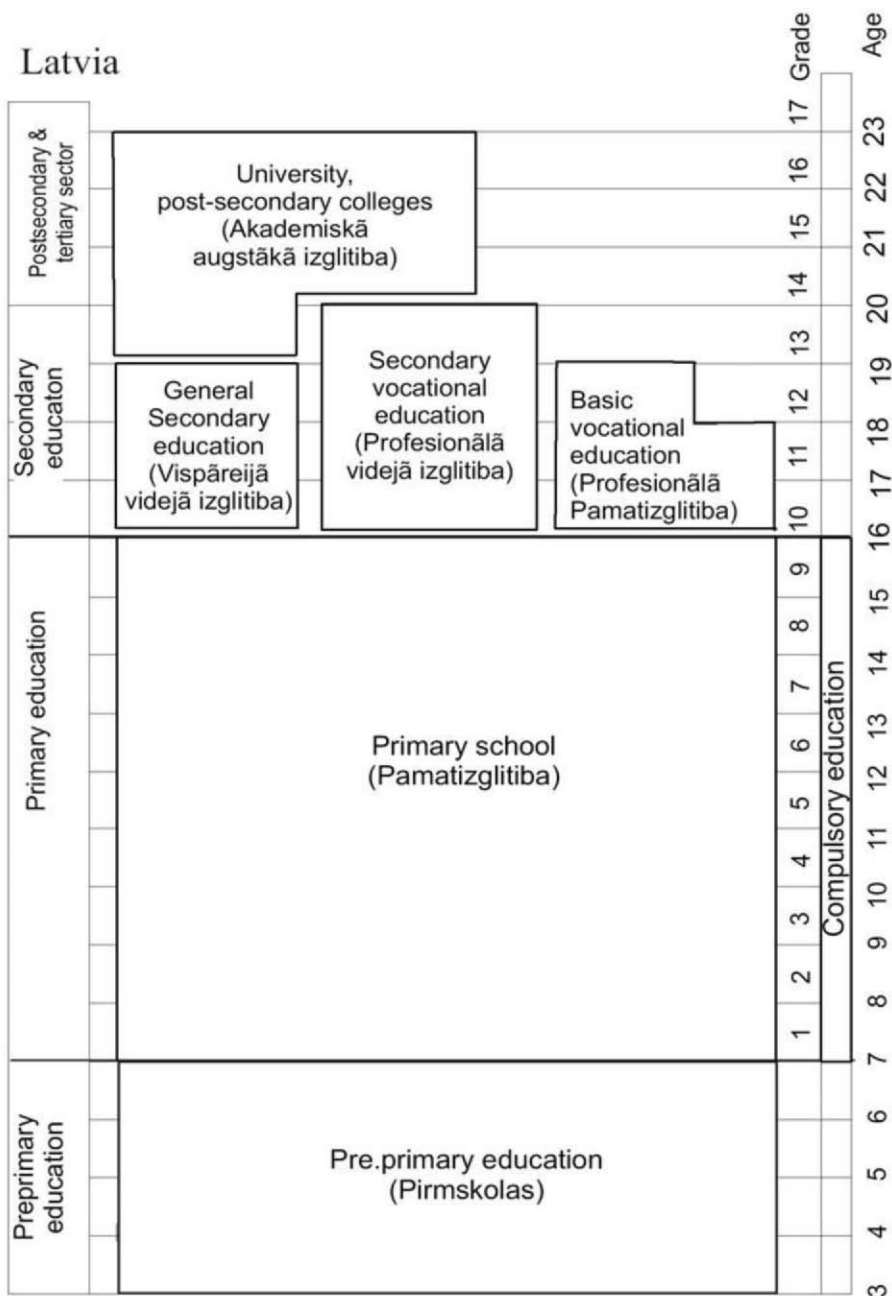
Latvia has participated in several international co-operation projects. Among thirty-eight countries participating in the Third International Study in Mathematics and Natural Sciences (second phase), the results of which were presented in the early years of the new millennium, Latvia ranked twentieth. Considering the coun-

try's economic situation and the poor state of school equipment, the results can be seen as acceptable. The second international study, 'Information and Communication Technologies in Education', explores how education systems adopt new technologies and adjust their curricula to the new trends of the information society, and investigates the effects of these innovations. Latvia was, also involved in the project 'Development of Educational Programmes and Teacher Training', in co-operation with Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Denmark. In the Baltic-Nordic project 'Curriculum Development and Teacher Training', 700 teachers were trained in the acquisition of new interactive methods of teaching and programme design.

Finally, numerous smaller projects initiated by the Ministry and projects between educational institutions, both Latvian and foreign, are investigating current problems; these are mostly projects of principally practical value. Among the supporters of these projects are institutions and bodies such as the Bosch-Stiftung, the Soros Foundation, the Phare Programme, and the Jena Plan.

References

- Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia: Education Institutions in Latvia at the Beginning of the School Year 2002-2003. Riga 2003.
- European Commission: Agenda 2000: Commission Opinion on Latvia's Application for Membership of the European Union. 1997.
- Eurydice Summary Sheet on the Education System in Latvia. Update 2003. www.eurodice.org
- IZM, ISEC: Valsts pamatizglītības standarts (The National Standard of Basic Education). Rīga 1998.
- Latvijas izglītības koncepcija (The Conception of Education in Latvia). Rīga 1998.
- Law on Education, Law on General Education, Law on Vocational Education, and Law on Tertiary Education. In: Izglītības likums. Vispārējās izglītības likums. Profesionālās izglītības likums. Augstskolu likums. Rīga 1999, pp. 3-19. <<http://www.izm.lv>> (home page of the Ministry of Education and Science)
- Ministry of Education and Science, Development of Education: National Report of Latvia. Geneva 2001.
- OECD: Valsts izglītības politikas analīze – Latvija. Ekspertu ziņojums (Analysis of the State Educational Policy – Latvia. Experts' report). Paris 2000.
- OECD: Review of National Politics for Education: Latvia. Paris 2001. <<http://www.izm.lv/>>
- Valsts vidējās izglītības standarts (The National Standard of the Secondary Education). <<http://www.izm.lv>>



Botho von Kopp

Liechtenstein

History of the school system

The introduction of a regular, formal school system can be dated to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when an edict of the Prince prescribed that each community set up a school fund and introduce basic compulsory schooling. The first Education Law was only passed, however, in 1927. Since the region of today's Liechtenstein was basically agricultural, the local population was largely interested in practical education. As early as 1793, a group of citizens wrote a letter to the Prince asking him to enable their children to receive a vocational education. Three boys were invited to Vienna for vocational training, followed by two more the next year (though then 'only reluctantly' (Negele, p. 1)). However, the 'first systematic efforts to provide for vocational training opportunities' were made much later, in the middle of the nineteenth century (*ibid.*). The school law from 1929 finally prepared the legal basis for public vocational courses for apprentices. However, plans to establish an independent vocational school were abolished, and instead co-operation with the neighbouring Swiss canton of St. Gallen was sought. In general terms, the philosophy and structure of pedagogy and schooling in Liechtenstein are bound up with the educational history of the central European area as a whole, and with the German-speaking countries in particular. Thus, issues such as educational philosophy and its role in society, parents' values, and the socio-cultural position of learners and teachers are basically very similar in Liechtenstein to its neighbouring regions.

Reforms and innovations

Since Liechtenstein still streams its school population after primary school (fifth year of schooling), it seems at first sight to have a very traditional system. Nevertheless, many reforms and innovations have taken place in recent decades. Although the growing need for education became increasingly urgent, it was not possible for such a small state to provide a diversified education equal to that of medium size or large countries, especially at the post-secondary level. Thus, a network of agreements with foreign countries, organizations, and institutions (EU, ministries, and schools) has been constructed, securing easy access for learners to schools and institutions of higher learning abroad. In Liechtenstein itself, a corner-stone of school development can be seen in the 1971 School Act. It fundamentally altered the structure of the school system, extended compulsory schooling to nine years, and reformed the structure of education governance and administration by establishing the Office of Education. Reform discussions, however, continued. In the 1980s they culminated in two reports, the first one, 'Whither school?' of 1984 and the second one, 'Guiding principles for the Liechtenstein school system' of 1987. Other important changes include the upgrading of the former Liechtenstein Engineering College

to the University of Applied Sciences, and the establishment of two further tertiary institutions. With regard to a core issue of reform discussions, namely the abolishment of streaming in secondary schools and the creation of comprehensive schooling, some far-reaching plans were made, but found no general approval. However, a set of measures making the existing system 'more comprehensive' was put into practice.

General social context of schooling

The Principality of Liechtenstein describes itself as a 'constitutional hereditary monarchy based on democratic parliamentary principles'. The authority of the State lies with the ruler and with the State Parliament, which is formed by means of common elections. Recently, however, there have been some changes: 'In a referendum on 16 March 2003, Prince Hans-Adam, who had threatened to leave the country if he lost, won a large majority (64.3%) in favour of overhauling the constitution to effectively give him more powers than any other European monarch. The new constitution gave the Prince the right to dismiss governments and approve judicial nominees and allowed him to veto laws simply by refusing to sign them within a six-month period.'¹ The Principality of Liechtenstein came into being through the purchase in the years 1699 and 1712 of two territories that had been ruled by various families of counts. Liechtenstein was established as a new political unit within the Holy Roman Empire in 1719. As a consequence of the Napoleonic wars and the dissolution of the Empire, it gained formal sovereignty within the new Confederation of the Rhine in 1806. After Napoleon's definitive defeat, within the new European order negotiated by the Vienna Congress, and after the eclipse of the German Confederation in 1866, Liechtenstein managed to preserve its independence, and it has continued to do so up to the present day: 'In the long run, Liechtenstein became the only small German state able to maintain its independence.'²

In 1868 Liechtenstein disbanded its army of eighty men and declared permanent neutrality. Liechtenstein's predominantly agrarian population was rather poor and most of its members had to make their living as migrant workers or by emigrating permanently. The country also suffered greatly in economic terms during World War I. The small industrial basis in textiles had come to a complete standstill. Politically, the state was confronted with the disintegration of the Austrian Empire, and the house of Liechtenstein faced the loss of quite substantial estates in Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia. A new economic alliance with Switzerland was sought and, after creating a monetary union with this country, the economic situation gradually

¹ <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/History%20of%20Liechtenstein>

² http://www.liechtenstein.li/en/pdf-fl-lik-geschichte-03_geschichte.pdf

improved. It was, however, only after World War II that Liechtenstein enjoyed the economic boom that made it a member in the club of the per capita richest countries. Today's intimate relationship with the neighbouring Swiss cantons is felt to be grounded not only in a common economic basis but also in 'the experience of a common history, the kindred dialect, the Rhine valley as a common *Lebensraum*', and thus is a 'witness to the fact of how important this closeness is' (*Berufliche Bildung*, p. 3). The country has been a full member of the European Council since 1978. In 1991 it joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and in 1995 the European Economic Area (which Switzerland declined to join). Since that time, Liechtenstein has also participated in programmes of the European Union such as Socrates and Leonardo.

Liechtenstein occupies an area of 160 square kilometres (which is somewhat less than half the size of Malta) and has approximately 33,000 inhabitants (less than one tenth of Malta). Since the 1960s, the number of foreigners has increased substantially and in 1991 reached 34% of the population and 60% of the working population (more than half of them being commuters from neighbouring Switzerland and Austria). 75.7% of the population are Roman Catholic, 7.0% are Protestants, and 4.2% are Moslems.¹

It is common knowledge that the financial services and banking sectors found very favourable conditions in Liechtenstein and greatly contributed, together with a policy of low taxes, to the prosperity of the country. It is less well known, however, that the country in no way relies on this economic 'monoculture' alone. Situated in a region which was traditionally predominantly agricultural, in recent decades a well-diversified economy has developed. Roughly 51% of the workforce is employed in commerce and services, and over 47% in trade and industries - among others in metal processing, mechanical engineering, precision tools making, and the pharmaceutical industry. Only 1.2% of the workforce is today employed in agriculture. As a consequence of this process of commercialization and industrialization, the focus is nowadays placed on a well-developed vocational education system which can serve the needs of the economy. Another consequence is the fact that today only about 59% of the total workforce are residents of Liechtenstein, while 41% are commuters, predominantly from Austria and Switzerland (including foreign residents in those countries). The proportion of foreign residents in Liechtenstein is 34%, the majority of whom are, however, from German-speaking countries: 10.8% are Swiss, 5.9% are Austrian, and 3.4% are German. Others are: Italians (3.3%), nationals of the former Yugoslavia (3.3%), and Turks (2.6%).² The proportion of foreign pupils in primary schools is 29%, in the *Oberschule* 50%, in the *Realschule* 21%, and in the *Gymnasium* 28%.³

¹ Figures for 2003 http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%BCrstenentum_Liechtenstein

² http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%BCrstenentum_Liechtenstein

³ Year 2003-04: http://www.llv.li/pdf-llv-sa-statistik_02_03_a.pdf

Governance of the current school system

In accordance with the Constitution, the entire education system, public as well as private, is under state supervision. The main agencies of educational governance under the jurisdiction of Parliament are: the Office of Education, the Office of Vocational Training, and the Councils of Education, of Vocational Training, and of Adult Education. These offices and councils are appointed by the government for a four-year term. On the community level, local school councils are directly responsible for the management of kindergartens and primary schools. They are appointed for a four-year term by the local government (local councils). Among other responsibilities, they make proposals and vote on the appointment of primary school teachers, decide on the establishment of school districts, and advise local councils in all educational matters and in matters related to the financing of schools. All the above-mentioned offices and councils act as planing, advisory, and partly dependent, partly independent executive bodies in accordance with the allocation of competencies as set out in the relevant laws and regulations (Principality Education 2002, pp. 9-10). School attendance in public schools is free of charge. Kindergartens and primary schools are funded and run by local communities. They contribute mainly to current expenses and to the maintenance of buildings.

Private schools

There are two private schools in Liechtenstein, the ‘formatio’ bilingual school⁴, and the Liechtenstein Waldorf School⁵. The ‘formatio’ includes an integrated primary cycle with half of the teaching time in German and half in English, and a secondary cycle. At the secondary level, English lessons are given five times a week and at least one subject is taught in English. French is taught from the fourth grade. The ‘formatio’ follows the general curricula of the state schools, but it employs a distinctive pedagogical concept emphasizing self-guided learning, project work, and child-centred education. The Liechtenstein Waldorf School with its attached kindergarten operates according to the general philosophical (anthroposophical) and educational ideas of Rudolf Steiner, that is: integration of cognitive, emotional, and manual-practical learning, and an emphasis on music, dance, and the humanities. All or most of the lessons are usually taught by one and the same class teacher through years one to eight. Foreign language teaching starts in the first year.

As the figures in table 1 show, in PISA 2003 Liechtenstein was ranked fifth in all three categories and thus performed not only very well but by far the best among all German-speaking countries and countries with a German-speaking minority. However, some clarification is needed: Liechtenstein did not participate in PISA 2000 directly, but rather in an additional survey together with the three Swiss cantons of Bern, St. Gallen, and Zurich using the PISA methodology. Because of some slight

⁴ <http://www.formatio.li/>

⁵ <http://www.waldorfschule.li/>

alterations, and mainly because of the small size of the test group, the results of the surveys cannot be compared directly with the international results.⁶

On the other hand, both the surveys in Liechtenstein covered practically the whole learner population in question, which is unique. In very general terms, there were few differences in 2000 between all four regions (St. Gallen, however, performed significantly best of the four); in fact, they were smaller than those between some French-speaking Swiss cantons and much smaller than those between some German federal states.

PISA

Table 1: Pisa 2003 Results of the six most successful countries and German speaking countries or countries with a German speaking minority. Numbers refer to rank and mean performance scores.⁷

Mathematics		Literacy		Sciences	
1. Hong Kong	550	1. Finland	543	1. Finland	548
2. Finland	544	2. Rep. of Korea	534	2. Japan	548
3. Rep. of Korea	542	3. Canada	528	3. Hongkong	539
4. Netherlands	538	4. Australia	525	4. Rep. of Korea	538
5. Liechtenstein	536	5. Liechtenstein	525	5. Liechtenstein	525
6. Japan	534	6. New Zealand	522	6. Australia	525
8. Belgium	529	11. Belgium	507	12. Switzerland	513
10. Switzerland	524	13. Switzerland	499	14. Belgium	509
18. Austria	506	21. Germany	491	18. Germany	502
19. Germany	503	22. Austria	491	23. Austria	491
23. Luxemburg	493	27. Luxemburg	479	27. Italy	486
31. Italy	466	29. Italy	476	29. Luxemburg	483

In literacy (reading) and sciences, the mean performance of Liechtenstein (497 and 485 respectively) was nearly equal to the mean of all OECD countries (500); in mathematics it was higher (524). The differences between pupils inside Liechtenstein are relatively small. Results are, as in other countries, more homogeneous and better if immigrants are not taken into consideration, although immigrant children also appear in the group with very high scores, and generally the gap between immigrant and non-immigrant children seems to be much smaller than for example in Germany.

Although, as mentioned, the results cannot be compared directly, Liechtenstein's schools seem have to improved greatly and to perform in general terms very satisfactorily. This is certainly due to a set of factors, rather than to a single reason. The

⁶ For methodological reasons, the questionnaire was only given to fifteen-year-old pupils in the ninth grade, See: Moser et al.

⁷ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/PISA>

contrast with Germany is especially striking, the more so as both countries adhere to the very traditional form of streamed schooling. There are, however, substantial differences:

- In the case of Liechtenstein, coherent and structured pre-school learning is nearly universal and for children with a mother tongue other than German obligatory. Improvements in the performance of pupils is also achieved through early diagnosis of risk factors and intervention, control of the early learning environment, and care and support (especially individual) for slow learners and problematic cases.
- Division into secondary school streams is carried out one year later.
- The measures to create, at least implicitly, a higher level of comprehensiveness in lower secondary schools seems to work well, and a certain unification of the core curriculum of the first two years in the various schools might contribute to a better working and support climate.
- The supporting systems, the care, and thus the performance in Liechtenstein's *Oberschule* may be generally on a higher level and may thus lead to better results than in its German counterpart, the *Hauptschule*; the same could be true for the very well-developed vocational education and training sector.
- Last but not least, in general terms a coherent policy and efficient support systems are easier to implement in intimate, small scale communities with a high degree of social coherence and control – a factor which possibly also contributed to the good results in Finland.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Pre-school covers kindergarten and some special pre-school groups preparing for entrance into the compulsory school system. The above mentioned Pedagogical Therapy Centre operates a school for handicapped children. Apart from this, there are two kindergartens and three primary schools in Liechtenstein which integrate children with minor handicaps. Compulsory schooling lasts for nine years and is completed in the five-year primary school and in the three types of secondary school, i.e. general secondary school (*Oberschule*), intermediate secondary school (*Realschule*), and the lower level of grammar school (*Gymnasium*). Recently, curricular reform has made transfer between these schools easier. For those who have completed compulsory education in an *Oberschule* but do not (or not yet) plan to proceed to a higher school, there is the possibility of completing a non-compulsory tenth year of schooling. Initial vocational education is provided in the 'dual system' of apprenticeship or in full-time vocational schools. Graduates of vocational education courses can study in a part-time secondary vocational school (*Berufsmittelschule*), which provides qualifications eventually allowing entry to higher education. The tertiary sector consists mainly of study programmes in applied sciences. Most graduates who hold the school leaving certificate, the *Matura*, study at a tertiary institution outside Liechtenstein

Kindergarten and pre-school education

Children who have reached their fourth birthday may enter kindergarten. Under the School Act, each community is obliged to offer sufficient places so that all children of the respective age group can attend kindergarten for two years. Enrolment is free of charge and voluntary in principle; however, children with a mother tongue other than German are obliged to attend a kindergarten facility offering special German language teaching for at least one year. The outline curriculum is compulsory, and emphasis is laid on 'social education and personal development; the development of speech, the senses, and movement; musical and rhythmical education; and graphic design'. Early childhood musical education was integrated into the kindergarten curriculum in 1980. There are no statistical figures available for attendance levels, but comparing the average number of children in primary school per year with those in kindergarten, it can be stated that over 90% of each age group takes part in pre-school education.⁸

Primary education

A new and flexible regulation enables the earliest school start for children who have reached the age of five by the end of June in the current year. However, some parents want their children to start school later, and other children may not be mature enough to start. The latter are offered a special enrolment programme including specialized, partly individual support measures. This is organized either as a one-year pre-school programme that is continued in the first year of primary school, or as a two-year programme in a so-called induction class, after which the child progresses to the second year of primary school. Both programmes are part of the compulsory school system. Children with learning or social problems can be taken care of in the Pedagogical Therapy Centre. Since 1993 early music education, building on corresponding activities in kindergarten, has been integrated into the first two years of primary school in co-operation with the Music School of Liechtenstein. English and religion start in the third year. Since 1999 primary school pupils no longer receive numerical marks, but only verbal assessment containing comments on both the previous and forthcoming year. Progress to the next year is automatic, but pupils may voluntarily repeat a grade.

Progression to secondary school

At the end of the five-year primary school, children are allocated to one of the three secondary school types. The primary school (the class teacher) prepares a recommendation during the last semester based on the assessment of the child which is given to the parents. In cases in which the parents do not agree with this recommendation, the school council and the psychological education service will be called in. Liechtenstein's school system thus adopts early streaming and the percentage distribution of children in the three types of lower secondary schools is as follows: *Oberschule*, 29%, *Realschule*, 48%, *Gymnasium* (first to fourth year) 23% (Eurydice,

⁸ Year 2003/04, drawn from: http://www.llv.li/pdf-llv-sa-statistik_02_03_a.pdf

p.15). Beginning with the year 1999, the core curricula for the first two years of all three secondary school types (grades 6 and 7) were unified in order to facilitate transfer between school types and thus the correction of previous decisions.

Lower secondary school

Oberschule (secondary modern school)

The *Oberschule* covers years six to nine. It caters primarily to pupils who will enter the world of work immediately or who will take up an apprenticeship (currently about 80% of those who complete the *Oberschule*). This school type is defined as a multi-level school offering various special support measures to children falling short of the standard curricular requirements, additional instruction for pupils who want to extend or deepen the standard curriculum, and, last but not least, special support for pupils who perform well and who wish to transfer to the second year of the *Realschule* or *Gymnasium*. Pupils who perform very well in the basic subjects are automatically recommended for transfer to the *Realschule*. Others must take a test. Pupils are graded numerically in a set of basic subjects, but they also receive assessment in terms of diligence and co-operation in all other subjects. In addition, social and learning behaviour are assessed. For foreign children lacking full command of the German language, special instruction in German as a second language is provided. Graduates of the *Oberschule* receive a certificate which takes into consideration the final year's continuous assessment and the marks of the last two half term reports.

Realschule (secondary technical/intermediate school)

The *Realschule* covers years six to nine and in contrast to the *Oberschule* prepares pupils for both further study and transition to an apprenticeship (roughly 60% of the graduates). Its name indicates its mission to communicate the 'real' – that is practical – knowledge needed in life. Theoretical teaching is somewhat more demanding than in the *Oberschule* and the set of subjects, although very similar to the one in the *Oberschule*, is somewhat extended, offering subjects such as Latin and others. From the second year onwards, ability streaming on two levels is adopted. Stream A prepares mainly for later entry to technical colleges and demanding technological apprenticeship programmes, stream B for vocational training in general technical, service, and economic professions. Pupils with very good marks in the first year can transfer to a grammar school (*Gymnasium*) without any further examination.

Non-compulsory tenth year of schooling

Those who complete the *Oberschule* or *Realschule* can attend a tenth school year on a voluntary basis. The tenth year is regarded as one of the regular secondary school forms. It caters to graduates of the *Oberschule* who want to gain a qualification equivalent to that provided by the *Realschule*, to all those who need more time to make a choice of future career, and to those who need a tenth year in order to be admitted into vocational training courses that require ten years of previous schooling. There are three main streams: languages and social professions, IT and handicrafts, and a general learning year. Career guidance and information about possibili-

ties of further education are emphasized. Part of the tenth year also consists of practical training in industry or service companies. Presently about 14% of pupils who finish their compulsory schooling in the *Oberschule* or *Realschule* choose this non-compulsory tenth year of schooling.

Gymnasium (Grammar school)

Today's *Liechtenstein Gymnasium* was founded as a Catholic school for boys in 1937 with the name *Collegium Marianum*. Girls have been admitted since 1960. The *Gymnasium* has been a state school since 1981. Based on multi- or bilateral agreements, the graduation examination, the *Matura*, provides entrance to university in many countries. There are two forms of *Gymnasium*, the first of which provides eight years of schooling after the fifth year of primary school, and the second of which is open to those who transfer from the second or the third year of the *Realschule*; its emphasis is on commercial subjects. At the upper level, a variety of specialized combinations (languages, arts, music, economics, sciences, and mathematics) of compulsory subjects and of electives is offered.

Vocational education and training

Vocational education developed in close co-operation with and integration into the Swiss system, including mixed financing and management of schools; training facilities, including those in technical colleges; and the preparation of master tradesmen (*Meister*). Since 1977 all new Swiss regulations for vocational training have been adopted automatically in Liechtenstein. Strong emphasis is given to career guidance and there exists a well equipped Vocational Information Centre that cooperates with schools and provides materials and instructors for school subject career guidance, which is compulsory in the third and fourth year of the *Oberschule* and the *Realschule*. The Vocational Information Centre also offers individual guidance and trial apprenticeships.

Initial vocational training is offered in some courses in vocational colleges (*Fachschule*) or, more usually, in the form of an apprenticeship. It is open to young people over sixteen years of age (usually up to the age of twenty). Apprenticeship programmes mostly take three years and finish with a certificate. During this time trainees must attend (usually) once a week a vocational school which teaches general subjects and profession-related theory, and which provides a certain amount of practical instruction. School attendance may also be organized in blocks of several days or weeks. The proportion of practical training within this so called 'dual system' amounts to 60 to 80%. Only authorized companies or shops or service organizations (private and public) are entitled to carry out this training. Today in Liechtenstein one also refers to a 'tripartite' system, since training is now also provided in special facilities which are run by groups of enterprises or professional associations and which offer a number of regular or additional courses. For companies based in Liechtenstein, certification is given by the Office for Vocational Education. In addition to the regular initial vocation training programmes, there are two other forms of training: a less demanding programme which is completed with a practical examination but no final examination in the vocational school, and a special, so-called pre-

apprenticeship for young foreigners in the form of regular work in a company for one year. In addition, German language is studied in the Interstate Vocational Training Centre in the Swiss city of Buchs. Although Liechtenstein, because of its small size, does not have its own complete and separate vocational training system, more than 750 authorized Liechtenstein companies train about 1000 trainees in more than 100 professions with about 50% in crafts, 30% in services, and 20% in industry. About 20% of the trainees in Liechtenstein companies are commuters from Switzerland (Liechtensteinisches Amt, p. 38 and Negele, p. 3). An increasing number of additional (day or evening) courses or secondary training programmes are currently being offered which deepen and broaden or upgrade existing qualifications.

Some vocational qualification courses, such as courses in tourism, arts and crafts, and secretarial studies, are not dual but are offered in professional schools. A commercial school also exists. By attending two-year evening courses in an upper secondary vocational school (*Berufsmittelschule*), graduates of initial vocational training may gain a so-called professional *matura* entitling them to continue their studies at a tertiary-level institution. In general, all persons who have worked for at least three years can attend a preparatory course in order to gain the certificate enabling them to enter a *Fachhochschule* in Liechtenstein, Austria, or Switzerland without taking an entrance examination. These courses cost about 300 euros per term.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The higher education sector is very small and the majority of Liechtenstein's students attend foreign universities. The following higher education institutions can be found in Liechtenstein:

- The Technical College, (also called the College of Applied Sciences - *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein*). Apart from regular courses, there are specialized or upgrading courses in a variety of professional areas such as construction management, logistics, management of fiduciary companies, economic engineering, and others.
- Liechtenstein, together with two Swiss cantons, also operates the Technical College in Buchs in Switzerland (*Interstaatliche Fachhochschule für Technik*).
- The International Academy for Philosophy (*Internationale Akademie für Philosophie*) is a private institution. Courses lead to the M.A. or the Ph.D.. Students should preferably already have completed one or two years of study before enrolling, and they must be in full command of at least one of the two main teaching languages, German and English.
- The Liechtenstein Institute is an institute for academic research which does not, however, teach, except on an individual basis in the context of special research visits. Certificates of attendance, but no formal academic qualifications can be given.

Teacher training

Teachers for nursery schools are trained in teacher training facilities (colleges and upper secondary vocational schools) in Austria and Switzerland which are part of the upper secondary system and provide either a double qualification (vocational plus secondary upper school leaving certificate in Austria) or a diploma (in Switzerland). Correspondingly, the structures and conditions of training courses vary. In all cases, a certain amount of guided practical experience is integrated into the training. Admission requirements also vary. In some cases, an entrance examination is required, in other cases a secondary school leaving certificate or the completion of a practical year may be required. Pre-school teachers are required to attend at least three days of further education per year. Since Liechtenstein does not have its own facility for teacher training, primary school teachers must hold a corresponding Swiss teacher training diploma. With regard to primary school teacher training, Liechtenstein has the status of a Swiss canton. In-service further education is compulsory. Part of it consists of a special training course in pupil assessment. Teachers for lower secondary schools (*Oberschule*) are usually trained in a special course, for the *Realschule* in some Swiss cantons, and for the *Hauptschule* in Austria. Teachers for the *Realschule* either hold a teacher qualification from a tertiary training facility (university or other higher education institution) or a corresponding, recognized certificate. For teachers of both school types regular participation in in-service training is compulsory. Teachers at the *Gymnasium* must hold a university qualification allowing them to teach at this school. Teachers are expected to participate regularly in in-service training. The average number of children per teacher is: primary school, 9.5; *Oberschule*, 5.5; *Realschule*, 7.3; *Gymnasium*, 7.3 (1998-99 cf. Eurydice, pp. 12-19).

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Already in 1987, a commission proposed substantial reform measures and the introduction of a new school structure. These proposals, however, had no clear support from the public. In 1992 a commission was appointed to develop a new model. Discussion focused on the extension and form of a more comprehensive system without giving up the existing tripartite structure. Thus, some formal and practical preconditions for more flexibility of transfer between lower secondary schools were put into practice. In the field of vocational education, emphasis has been put on supporting more demanding training in attractive and innovative fields, combined with an increase in double qualification courses leading to a *Matura* in general and theoretical vocational subjects. The teaching of foreign languages, especially English, is seen as a priority. In the context of the PISA 2000 results, as in Switzerland, an emphasis on the usage of standard German inside school was also discussed, as some experts blame the use of regional dialects for unsatisfactory results in literacy. As in other countries, the number of immigrants will rather increase than decrease, and decisions must be made as how to integrate their children even better and how to support their literacy skills in the official language in order to lessen the gap in the perform-

ance between immigrants and non-immigrants. PISA stimulated further discussions on general improvements to the school system.

References

- Liechtensteinisches Amt für Berufsbildung, Leonardo da Vinci Büro Liechtenstein (Ed.): Berufliche Bildung im Fürstentum Liechtenstein. Schaan 1997.
- Eurydice Unit, Nationale Eurydice-Informationsstelle (Ed.): Liechtenstein. EURYDICE, CEDEFOP, Structures of Education, Initial Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe. Brussels 1999.
- History of Liechtenstein:
http://www.liechtenstein.li/en/liechtenstein_main_sites/portal_fuerstentum_liechtenstein/fl-lik-liechtenstein_in_kuerze/fl-lik-geschichte.htm;
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liechtenstein>;
- http://www.liechtenstein.li/en/pdf-fl-lik-geschichte-03_geschichte.pdf
- Negele, M.: Berufliche Bildung in Liechtenstein. Unpublished paper. Schaan o. J.
- Moser, U./Berweger, S. (Kompetenzzentrum für Bildungsevaluation und Leistungsmessung an der Universität Zürich): PISA-Ergebnisse des Fürstentums Liechtenstein im Vergleich mit deutschschweizerischen Kantonen. Bericht zuhanden des Schulamtes des Fürstentums Liechtenstein. Zürich 2002.
- Principality of Liechtenstein - A Documentary Account: The Liechtenstein Education System. Press and Information Office. Vaduz 2002.
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>
- Office of Education: <http://www.llv.li/amtstellen/llv-sa-home.htm>

Liechtenstein		Grade	Age
Postsecondary & tertiary education	[Foreign Country]		
	College of applied sciences or University (Fachhochschule, Universität)		
	"Liechtenstein Institute"	17	23
	"International Academy for Philosophy"	16	22
Upper secondary education			
	Grammar school (Gymnasium)		
	(Foreign Country) Vocational college		
	(Foreign Country) Vocational school		
Lower Secondary education	Lower level of grammar school (Gymn. Unterstufe)		
	Intermediate secondary school (Realschule)		
	General secondary school (Oberschule)		
	Upper level special schools		
Primary education	Primary school (Primarschule)	10	16
		11	17
		12	18
		13	19
Preprimary education	Kindergarten	14	20
		15	21
		16	22
		17	23
		18	24
		19	25
		20	26
		21	27
		22	28
		23	29
		24	30
		25	31
		26	32
		27	33
		28	34
		29	35
		30	36
		31	37
		32	38
		33	39
		34	40
		35	41
		36	42
		37	43
		38	44
		39	45
		40	46
		41	47
		42	48
		43	49
		44	50
		45	51
		46	52
		47	53
		48	54
		49	55
		50	56
		51	57
		52	58
		53	59
		54	60
		55	61
		56	62
		57	63
		58	64
		59	65
		60	66
		61	67
		62	68
		63	69
		64	70
		65	71
		66	72
		67	73
		68	74
		69	75
		70	76
		71	77
		72	78
		73	79
		74	80
		75	81
		76	82
		77	83
		78	84
		79	85
		80	86
		81	87
		82	88
		83	89
		84	90
		85	91
		86	92
		87	93
		88	94
		89	95
		90	96
		91	97
		92	98
		93	99
		94	100

Lithuania

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

The fourteenth century is held to mark the beginning of the development of formal education in Lithuania. A surviving document from 1397 attests to the existence of a school at the Vilnius Cathedral. Other schools mentioned during this period were the *Naujieji* (New) School in 1409, the *Senieji* (Old) Trakai School in 1472, and the school at Kaunas in 1473. In 1469 another school was set up at the Cathedral in Varniai. For almost 150 years, the institutional network was limited to the lower level of the system; in addition to cathedral schools, the network of parish schools was spreading very slowly (www.smm.lt).

In the sixteenth century, in Lithuania as well as in the rest of Europe, there was a growing need for literacy, and the importance of schooling was universally recognized. The complete system of institutional education started developing from the middle of the sixteenth century (www.eurydice.org). A network of colleges and parish and cathedral schools was developed which expanded very rapidly. More than 100 schools were established, not counting those which belonged to monasteries.

The education system in Lithuania during the eighteenth century was completely in the hands of the Jesuits. The ideas of the Enlightenment, such as those of physiocrats or J. J. Rousseau, spread throughout the schools of higher education in Western Europe (www.smm.lt). Certain members of the aristocracy, who retained close relationships with European institutions and manor estates, propagated the ideas of the Age. The Jesuits were forced to change the subject matter and teaching methods at the schools in the face of such progressive ideas. Thus, the Jesuits increased the number of secular subjects taught, introduced foreign language teaching, and included discussions regarding new philosophies. They also began to employ secular teachers to work at their schools (www.smm.lt).

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a new step was taken in Lithuanian education when the old system of education, which had operated from the second half of the sixteenth century, could no longer satisfy the changing needs of society (www.eurydice.org). The education system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1387), which had been, as mentioned above, in the hands of Jesuits, was threatened with collapse. Educational reform began at the national level; an education commission was established by the *Seimas* (Parliament). The main aims of this commission were: general education of the nation without social restrictions, an extended and secularised reorganization of the contents of education, and the abolition of corporal punishment and authoritarianism.

After the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, the greater part of Lithuania was occupied by Russia for the next 120 years. Under Tsarist rule,

Lithuanian schools were not permitted to operate, Lithuanian publications and the Latin alphabet were forbidden, and the Roman Catholic Church was suppressed. The Lithuanian language was not officially taught in schools, and the University did not offer it as a subject. Only Russians were hired as teachers, and all courses were taught in Russian.

Opposition to this cultural and educational occupation arose in the form of an entire network of underground Lithuanian schools. The network of secret Lithuanian schools, which lasted for forty years, is a very important phenomenon in terms of Lithuania's educational and cultural evolution. Training at these schools was very poor, but they provided an opportunity to learn, and they encouraged interest in the illegal Lithuanian press. In terms of education, small schools played a unique role in promoting the patriotism of the common people and expanding their knowledge (www.eurydice.org).

In 1918, after World War I, Lithuania declared its independence, having fought off German ambitions of annexation. In 1918 the constructive, organized reform of education (both institutional and non-institutional) also started on a national scale: 'Education of the people - that is the issue touching our lives and our future', announced the first Minister of Education of Independent Lithuania, J. Yčas. The greatest efforts of the government were concentrated on developing the system of education. The educational legacy of the Russian occupation was poor; 33% of the population of Lithuania was illiterate in 1923. The illiteracy rate needed to be lowered, and the general level of education to be increased.

This process was conducted on a democratic basis, and it was very important to replace alien cultural foundations with local ones. At the same time, the education system was refounded on the principles of humanism and democracy, and close ties were developed with Western European pedagogical traditions. Much attention was paid to the idea of making schools more democratic, which included the concepts of parental rights, the self-management of pupils, and the development of the school community (cf. www.smm.lt).

Primary school teachers, youth organizations, and educational societies organized courses and training groups. They operated small libraries and reading rooms, and formed evening schools. The Labour Exchange organized courses for workers and education was provided in the army as well.

General education was almost fully implemented during the twenty years of independence. Compulsory education was gradually introduced and the school curriculum expanded. New principles in didactics were formulated, and education was linked with life skills. Many changes took place, not least in relation to school reform and in the expansion of educational facilities. A comprehensive system of education began to emerge. Lithuanian became the language of instruction, and the period of independence witnessed the development of a Lithuanian press and of Lithuanian literature, arts, and music. Educational provision was also greatly expanded. In 1918 the Ministry opened eight gymnasiums and eleven pro-gymnasiums. By 1939-40 there were nearly 3000 primary schools together with ninety-eight high schools (gymnasiums and secondary schools). Compulsory education was introduced and the curriculum was progressively enlarged.

During a period of fifty years (from 1940 to 1990) the Lithuanian education system was controlled from the outside. The national Lithuanian school system partially collapsed. On the other hand, schools took the position of defenders and maintainers of traditions. Non-institutional sources of culture and education, such as dance and song groups, ethnological clubs, the theatre, etc. facilitated this process.

Reforms and innovations

In 1988 the concept of the 'national school' was announced, which is considered to be the beginning of modern Lithuanian educational reform. The concept of the 'national school' was first propagated in 1988 and in the 1990s became the main vehicle for the development of Lithuanian education. In 1990 the *Seimas* (Parliament) confirmed the concept of the national school. In the first stage of educational reform, the foundations of theoretical educational reform (concepts of school types and curricula) were developed, the legal documents of reform (Law on Education, school regulations, etc.) were prepared, and the institutions which govern education (the Ministry of Education and Science, the educational departments of municipalities) were reorganized. In 1990 the *Seimas* of Lithuania assumed responsibility for the legal basis of education. On 25 June 1991, the *Seimas* passed the Law on Education, which fixed the structure of the Lithuanian education system and the foundations of the activities and governance of the educational institutions (with the exception of higher educational institutions). This had a decisive influence on the process of educational reform. The ideas driving the educational reform and their implementation introduced qualitative changes into the fundamental functions of the whole education system.

The programme for the reform of Lithuanian education was announced in October of 1991. In 1992 the Lithuanian government approved a General Concept of Education (work on which started back in 1989), which is the main and most important document of the whole educational reform, as it discusses the entire structure of the education system and sets out the fundamental principles of Lithuanian education: humanitarianism, democratization, nationalism, and innovation. The General Concept of Education in Lithuania set out fundamental guidelines for the reform of the education system. Following its approval by the government and the *Seimas*, it became the basis for the new Law on Education in 1991 (OECD 2002).

From 1991 to 2002 a package of documents and publications regulating school activities was issued: Regulations on General Education in Lithuania, The Concept of the Youth School, Regulations on Vocational Schools, Regulations on Pre-school Institutions, Regulations on College-Type Schools, The Concept of the Gymnasium, Regulations on the Kindergarten School, The Concept of Preparatory Pre-primary Education, Regulations on the Youth School, The General Curriculum of Preparatory Pre-primary Education, the General Curricula of the Lithuanian School of General Education, Standards of General Education for Grades 1 to 10, and other legal acts and normative documents (www.eurydice.org).

2001 saw the completion of the second stage of educational reform, which devoted special attention to the modernization of education, the upgrading of its quality, the creation of the necessary conditions for social-pedagogical self-education, and the

strengthening of relations between educational institutions at different levels. Furthermore, in 2001 the Lithuanian National Education Forum was established. The Forum pledged itself to a consistent and purposeful transformation of the Lithuanian system of education. It was registered at the Ministry of Justice as a public organization on 18 February 2002 (www.eurydice.org). In 2002 general programmes for grades 11 to 12 and education standards were published. After a decade of educational reform as laid out in the Concept of Education in 1992, the Ministry of Education and Science prepared Guidelines for Education in Lithuania from 2002 to 2012 to reflect the reforms of the past decade and planned changes. The Ministry of Education and Science has declared that Lithuanian educational reform has entered a new stage, whose main priority is ensuring the quality of education (www.smm.lt).

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

On 25 June 1991, the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania was enacted. A modification of this Law (2 July 1998) added several essential amendments: the introduction of basic ten-year education, the admission of school children from the age of fourteen to vocational schools, new regulations for teacher appraisal, etc. The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania sets out the following main goals of the education system:

- To develop the mental and physical abilities of all individuals, to lay solid foundations of morality and a healthy way of life, to cultivate the individual's intellect, providing conditions for his or her further development;
- To offer children both general and vocational education in conformity with the current level of science and culture;
- To provide possibilities of continuing education for the residents of Lithuania;
- To foster civic awareness and an understanding of individual rights and duties to the family, the nation, society, and the State of Lithuania, and to promote an understanding of the need to participate in the cultural, social, economic, and political life of the Republic; and
- To ensure equal rights and opportunities for members of traditional religious communities to educate their children at educational institutions according to their beliefs (www.eurydice.org).

In the General Concept of Education in Lithuania of 1992 (work on which started back in 1989), which is the most important document of the educational reforms and the basis for the new Law in 1991, the following were defined as the most important goals of the education system:

- To help the individual to discover universal human values and base his or her life upon them;
- To foster critical thinking, the evaluation of existential questions, responsible decision-making, and individual independence;

- To foster individuals who are prepared for professional work, and who are determined and able to adapt to an ever-changing social and economic environment, and to participate in its betterment;
- To develop the individual's national and cultural consciousness;
- To prepare the individual for democracy; and
- To produce responsible citizens of Lithuania (www.eurydice.org).

The General Concept set out the fundamental principles of Lithuanian education, which are based on the humanistic values of the nation and of world culture, on democratic principles, and on generally recognized human rights and freedoms:

1. Humanism (affirming the absolute value of the individual and his or her freedom and responsibility to choose);
2. Democracy (affirming a person's ability to base his or her life and activities on democratic values such as equality, tolerance, and democratic relations with others);
3. Nationalism (including a commitment to care for national culture and history, and the necessity of taking into consideration the interests of other cultural minorities in Lithuania, such as Poles, Russians, Jews, and Belorussians; and
4. Constant reform and renewal.

In 2003 the *Seimas* (Parliament) adopted a revised version of the Law on Education. The Law on Education states that the Lithuanian education system shall be based upon the following principles:

1. Equal opportunities. The education system shall be socially fair and guarantee equal opportunities for all individuals regardless of their gender, race, nationality, language, background, social status, faith, beliefs, or attitudes. The education system shall ensure access to education for all persons, provide conditions for acquiring general education and the first qualification, and create conditions to improve the acquired qualification and obtain new qualifications.
2. Contextual interdependence. The education system is closely linked to the economic, social, and cultural development of Lithuania, and must constantly adjust to these developments in order to meet the changing needs of society.
3. Effectiveness. The education system shall ensure high quality results through a prudent and economical use of available resources, as well as through the constant assessment, analysis, and planning of its activities by means of effective management and appropriate and timely decision-making.
4. Continuity. The education system shall be open and flexible, and based on the interaction of various institutions in a variety of forms. It shall create conditions for lifelong learning for all individuals (www.smm.lt).

The general programmes of the Lithuanian schools of basic education specify the purpose, values, and tasks of such schools. Their purpose is the development of a modern, open, and democratic Lithuanian state. Schools are responsible for developing democratic relationships, and supporting their maintenance within the community. Finally, schools are required to foster tolerance and intellectual freedom, as well as other values.

The goals of school as an institution include: openness, dynamism, tolerance, horizontal lines of communication rather than hierarchical subordination, and a Lithuanian society based on the initiative of free individuals.

Socio-economic context

In the first half of 1999, the ethnic composition of the population of Lithuania was as follows: 81.8% Lithuanian, 8.1% Russian, 6.9% Polish, 1.4% Belorussian, 1% Ukrainian, 0.1% Jewish, and 0.7% other ethnic groups. Thus, the non-Lithuanian population comprised 18.2%. The majority of the non-Lithuanian population lives in Eastern and South-Eastern Lithuania, as well as in the towns of Vilnius, Klaipėda, and Visaginas. According to the Lithuanian Law on Education (25 June 1991), in the areas populated by ethnic minorities conditions should be provided for minority children to receive state or non-state pre-school instruction; a number of comprehensive/secondary schools operate in Lithuania with a language of instruction other than Lithuanian. In 2000-01 there were 213 ethnic minority schools with 63,679 pupils who comprised 10.9% of the total school population. Russian schools had 41,162 (7%) pupils. Polish, Belorussian, Ukrainian, German, Jewish, Armenian, Karaim, and Tatar groups have their own Sunday schools (www.eurydice.org).

According to the statistics received from the education departments of municipalities, the number of immigrant children attending schools of general education in Lithuania is not significant. The only school where immigrant children account for 20% of the total school body is the Santarvė school in Jonava, which is attended by seventy-two children of immigrants from the refugee centre in Rukla.

According to data submitted by municipalities to the Ministry of Education and Science, 40% of children of foreign nationals attending schools of general education are children of refugees, while the rest are children of migrant workers. The data show that the average number of immigrant children attending Lithuanian schools of general education has been fluctuating between 100 and 150 per school year. Most immigrant children attend government- or municipal-dependent schools free of charge. In September 2003, forty-six schools of general education were attended by 197 immigrant children. The above mentioned pupils are mainly from Chechnya (879), Russia (33), Belorussia (9), and Latvia (8) (www.eurydice.org).

To ensure the accessibility and quality of educational services in Lithuania, special attention has traditionally been given to ethnic minorities, rural populations, females, and people with physical or mental disabilities. The 2003-05 general education plans for schools of general education stress the importance of integration into school learning. Special attention is paid to the organization of language teaching to immigrant children. To quote some examples (www.eurydice.org):

- Additional pedagogical support is provided to fill in the educational gaps of those immigrant children or pupils transferred to a school whose language of instruction is not their first language.
- Intensive courses in the Lithuanian language are offered to pupils who enrol in primary schools without any knowledge of the language of instruction.

- Immigrant children study Lithuanian using learning materials developed for teaching Lithuanian to pupils of ethnic minority schools (www.eurydice.org/Documents/Mig/en/frameset_immigrant.html, p. 5).

Recent processes, however, such as changes in social relations, the development of the information society, and globalisation, have presented new challenges to education and demand new ways of meeting the educational needs of the groups under discussion. With these changes in socio-political realities and relations, other educationally vulnerable groups are coming into focus. These are the unemployed, the young who have discontinued school, senior citizens, refugee children, and children of mobile working parents. Their educational needs demand increasing attention, additional resources, and new ways of providing educational services.

During the period 1990 to 1995 there was a 1.9% increase in the number of children failing to attend school. In 1994 the Department of Statistics undertook a sociological survey of rural and urban families. The main reasons why rural children did not attend school were poor health or disability, inappropriate clothing and footwear, and the need for children to work on farms. In cities children did not attend school mainly because they did not want to study or were neglected by their parents; in addition, low household incomes often forced them to start working. Poverty in the family was reported as the main reason for the failure of children in rural families to attend school (UNDP 1997).

There are still concerns about an increase in non-attendance during the years of compulsory schooling, grades 1 to 10. While the numbers are not high, there are still too many children (5171 in 1998) who do not attend primary school and adolescents who do not attend compulsory lower secondary school (16,219 in 1998). A small proportion of these are children with severe disabilities, but others have left school prematurely, many as a result of socio-economic or family conditions. The system of family support that existed in communist countries before the transition was an achievement recognized in the West as promoting child development and the health of both children and mothers. While the retreat of the state is welcome in many areas of life, basic services essential to the well being of families and children have suffered in terms of coverage, efficient delivery, and equitable distribution. The impact of rising unemployment, the fall in real wages, and the loss of social safety nets have meant that more children now live in poverty than did so before the transition began. A 1998 study showed that poverty typically affected persons with a low educational level; households with unemployed members, three or more children, or several generations living together; and single-parent families. The highest poverty level was found in rural areas, the lowest in the large cities.

Concerns also exist about those who leave education at sixteen, many of them without adequate preparation for employment. In Lithuania there has been a noticeable increase in youth unemployment, poverty, and delinquency. The crime rate among juveniles is growing faster than the overall crime rate and nearly half of all criminal offenders are between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four. In response, a programme for the prevention of crime among children and teenagers was approved in March 1997.

Of great concern as well are ‘at risk’ children: street children, homeless children, children from families in conflict, orphans, and young people who because of inadequate schooling or lack of ability have difficulty in adapting to changing economic and social conditions. ‘Youth schools’ for adolescents with motivation and learning problems have been established covering grades 7 to 10; they offer more individualized and practical education to at-risk adolescents and encourage them to return to mainstream vocational or academic education.

Furthermore, the integration of children with slight mental and physical disabilities into mainstream schools remains a problem in Lithuania. In 1999 the Law on Special Education was passed, which encompassed the entire education process for people with special needs from early childhood to higher education. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2000–01 there were 53,308 pupils with special needs (9% of the total number of pupils). 45,539 of these children were studying in basic schools together with children of the same age. Nevertheless, there still remains the problem of children with special needs, who have limited opportunities to enter further education or choose a vocation. In 2000–01, there were only 169 such pupils studying in vocational training and education groups at special education schools. Schools cannot and must not distance themselves from the provision of social and pedagogical support for special needs children and their families during this very complicated period of Lithuania’s transition.

All of these problems demanded a focus on efforts to find a solution. One of the measures currently being considered is the creation of a new profession which will concentrate on the above issues. In March 1999 a working group, formed on the order of the Ministry of Education and Science, confirmed the need for the profession of social pedagogue. The fields of professional specialization of social pedagogues include:

- Educational institutions (comprehensive secondary schools of all types, vocational schools, institutions for the protection of children’s rights, children’s care homes, pre-school institutions) and
- Specialized educational or care institutions for physically or mentally handicapped children and groups at social risk (drug or alcohol addicts, victims of violence) (Giedraitienė 2000, pp. 185–187).

Social position of the teaching profession

Educational changes now taking place in Lithuania require high quality teachers. Both in the past and today, teachers’ personalities have been highlighted as being of paramount importance. In 1918 the magazine *Lithuanian School* included the following statement: ‘Give every school a good teacher and mankind will be happy and will live to see perfect people’ (*Lithuanian School* 12, 1918, p. 21). About the same time, Pranas Mašiotas, a writer of children’s literature, expressed the qualities required of an effective teacher in his ‘pedagogical sayings’:

- Do not take the teacher’s seat if you do not like children – it will do neither yourself nor them any good;
- Children like to learn, but they do not like bad teachers; and
- Industrious teacher, industrious class (*Lithuanian School* 9/10, 1918, p. 17).

Moreover, K. Karklys in his article 'Education for Life' stresses the teacher's exceptional responsibility for his or her work and says: 'Parents give birth to the person and teachers must serve his or her growth' (Lithuanian School 14, 1918, p. 17). These examples show how important the role of a teacher is. Currently, however, the salaries and status of teachers are very low, especially by Western standards. There may also be a relationship between low financial reward and the high proportion of females in the teaching profession. In both primary and secondary schools, the typical ratio is 9:1 or even higher. For those remaining in the profession, the salary depends upon both the number of years worked and the position reached. There are currently four professional levels: teacher, senior teacher, teacher-methodologist, and teacher-expert. The salary depends on the teacher's professional level, and the difference between salaries is quite large: from 700 *litas* for a teacher to 2000 *litas* for a teacher-expert (3.5 *litas* = 1 euro).

Working conditions. Teacher to pupil ratios in primary schools (for pupils from six or seven to ten years old) average 1: 24, in secondary schools (for pupils from ten to eighteen years old) a ratio of 1: 30 is the maximum. The retirement age for women and for men is sixty. Pensioners are provided with a state pension, but this is so small that it is difficult for retired teachers to live in any degree of comfort. Many teachers seek to continue working after reaching retirement age. Such a situation creates problems for school directors. Young teachers, who are more energetic, cannot be employed in schools where older and pensionable teachers seek to retain their positions. This also creates unemployment for teachers, especially for primary school teachers.

Teachers training at universities and colleges. At the universities teacher trainees are able to obtain a bachelor's or a master's degree. At colleges they receive only professional qualifications. After completing college they are able to continue their studies at university to obtain a bachelor's or a master's degree. The professional development and effectiveness of teachers is closely linked to re-qualification. Four categories or levels of professional responsibility distinguish the teaching profession in Lithuania, and in order to progress through these levels teachers must attend in-service courses, write reports, and be successful in the tests administered for each level. Article 23 of the Law on Education provides a definition of the professional rights, responsibilities and commitments of teachers.

School and the role of the family

Every school in Lithuania has a pupils' board and a school board. There are seven to eight teachers on the latter, and a similar number of parents and others from the community in which the school is located. The Chairman of the Board is normally elected from among the board members. Additionally, pupils themselves can elect five to six representatives to the Pupils' Board, a body which can be included in the School Board itself, and which is generally concerned with supporting and promoting the activities of pupils attending the school. In particular, the School Board has the right to approve the school working plan for the academic year and to take part in discussions on the problems of teachers and pupils, on teaching and learning, on extra-curricular activities, and so on. One difficulty, however, is that many parents

remain passive onlookers and show little initiative in terms of participating in school life. This phenomenon is noticeable in some other countries and, as elsewhere, the degree of participation depends upon not only the issues and priorities under discussion, but also the kind of relationship that exists between the School Director and the School Board.

In Kaunas (the second town of Lithuania), P. Martinaitis conducted a research project with the aim of gaining information about the current relationship between schools and parents. The results showed that as many as 1% of parents are themselves obstacles to their children's access to school. These parents belong to social risk groups and do not care about their children. 75.7% of parents visit their children's school only when they receive a specific invitation because of the problems that their child is experiencing or causing, 12.5% take an interest in school only when their children have exams in the tenth and twelfth grades, 10% visit schools when their children have to decide on their future options, and only 0.8% of parents are active helpers for teachers - they are the real members of the school community. This situation is a legacy of the Soviet era, when teachers were responsible not only for the academic achievements of children, but also for the development of pupils' personality (Martinaitis 1995, pp. 164-165).

In 2001 the Centre for Education Policy in the Faculty of Philosophy at Vilnius University received a commission from the Ministry of Education and Science to carry out a research study on the attitudes of the parents of pupils towards current educational problems. The study aimed to clarify parents' opinions on the current education system in Lithuania, and to discover what they knew about the reforms being implemented and whether they approved of the steps taken (www.eurydice.org).

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

Lithuania is still a rather centralized country with the central government playing a prominent role. Education is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES).

Educational institutions directly responsible to the central authorities (essentially vocational schools and colleges, and some institutions for children with special social or educational needs) are established, reorganized, or closed by the MoES or by other ministries or government bodies.

To a certain extent, responsibility for the provision of education is shared between the central government, county governors, local governments, and governing bodies of educational institutions. The country is divided into ten administrative areas or counties, each with a Department of Education. A significant part of the competencies belonging to the Ministry of Education and Science has been delegated to the departments of education, which are primarily responsible for organizing the supervision of schools. The county governors similarly run schools through the county authorities (boarding schools and schools for special education).

The local government councils, following the approval of the MoES and the county governors, administer schools through local authorities (pre-schools and schools of general education). The general secondary school system is administered at two levels, by regional departments of education and by county administrations on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science (OECD 2002; www.ibe.unesco.org).

As the Lithuanian school system is affected more and more by the phenomenon of globalisation and the concept of the free market, a certain number of decentralizing tendencies are emerging. Schools and municipalities, for example, have become partly more independent in the decision-making process, and local communities, teachers, and heads of schools have more control over the monitoring of the contents of education. Schools enjoy more flexibility in the co-ordination of the contents and methods of education with pupils' (customers') demands, and local governance strives for quality teaching. In this context, it is important to note that some schools try to liaise with local communities in order to establish the best means of providing educational services to the local communities.

Financing

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the development and implementation of education policies, and defines the criteria for the allocation of financial resources. The year 2002 saw the introduction of a new system for the financing of general education schools, based on a per capita model (whereby money follows the pupil). The new system of financing provides for the budget of general education schools to be drawn on the basis of pupil 'baskets' (per capita) in addition to funds for the educational environment (operational resources and capital assets), targeted funds for programmes and projects, funds from sponsors, etc. Pupil 'basket' funds are allocated to municipalities as targeted grants. The funds of pupil 'baskets' are to be used for the implementation of the educational policy approved by the Minister of Education and Science, i.e. to remunerate teaching and non-teaching staff, acquire textbooks and other teaching aids, and implement teacher in-service training policy.

Public and private schooling

Non-state educational institutions may be established, reorganized, and closed by private persons or recognized legal entities, with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science. However, there are only fifty-six such institutions, compared to 2912 public ones. Non-state educational institutions are maintained by their founders. They may offer education whose standard is formally approved by the State, along with its certificates, curricula, and teaching practices. Alternatively, as 'alternative courses', they may operate with their own curricula, in which case their activity is governed by regulations approved by the MoES (OECD 2002).

General standards of the school education system

The 1992 General Concept of Education set out core subjects and the levels (A and B) to which these can be studied in the upper grades. The present version of the Law

on Education requires that all schools operate according to a national curriculum, approved and organized by the Ministry of Education and Science (Art. 31). This new national curriculum is essentially a framework that gives broad guidelines but also allows some flexibility for schools to adapt it to their own needs. For primary schools and general secondary schools, national curricula were revised and 'de-ideologized' immediately after the restoration of Lithuania's independence, and new types of education programmes were drawn up allowing schools themselves to control between 20% and 30% of the time allocated in the timetable to each grade and subject. The curriculum is seen as an ongoing task, and efforts are made to co-ordinate new curricula with the introduction of new textbooks, new methods of diagnostic and summative assessment, and teacher in-service training.

National standards have been developed to serve as a basis for the assessment of learners. Their fundamental purpose is to ensure that all pupils receive the level of education to which they are entitled by law, regardless of where they live or who they are. Other purposes are: to specify what is to be taught, and to what extent; to ensure progression ('harmonization' or coherence) from one year to the next, and from one school or municipality to another; to form a nationally understood basis for the measurement of pupil learning; to motivate teachers and learners; to provide a frame of reference for trends over time; to influence and help define the development of the (29% to 30%) school-based curricula; to guide evaluation and system quality; and to enable international comparisons (Rimkeviciene 1998).

The Lithuanian educational standards describe expectations at three levels: a minimum level, achievable by nearly all pupils and necessary for day-to-day life; a basic level, achievable by a majority of pupils, which reflects functional and social literacy and lays the basis for further learning; and a higher level, achievable by the most able learners (OECD 2002, p. 58).

Quality management

The quality of education is one of the priorities in Lithuanian education policies. Numerous changes have taken place since the beginning of the educational reforms: the new contents of general education have been to a large degree determined, specialized teaching and state school-leaving exams have been introduced, and school auditing and education monitoring documents have been drafted. In 2000 the introduction of the Concept of Evaluation of an Educational Institution included: the concept of evaluation, its objectives and goals, objects of evaluation, principles of evaluation, organizational procedures, and the projected use of evaluation data (www.eurydice.org).

The achievements of pupils are at the moment recorded by the National Examination Centre. Investigations into the achievements of primary and secondary school pupils have been carried out in Lithuania since 1992. The National Examination Centre carried out the following international investigations: TIMSS (IEA), PIRLS (IEA), PISA (OECD), CIVIC, COMPED, and others. However, not all of the tests were adjusted to the contents of education in Lithuania. Lithuania participated in international large scale assessments, namely PIRLS in 2001 and TIMSS III in 2003. Experimental research was carried out in 2004 by the National Examination Centre.

In addition, the establishment of a national system for the assessment of pupils' achievements has been undertaken. In 2001 a draft concept for the assessment of pupils' progress in the process of education was put together and implemented. In 2002 the first experimental national investigation into the achievements of sixth grade pupils in reading, writing, and mathematics was carried out. Currently, testing of pupils' achievements is conducted on a national basis, with the level of achievement being assessed in four main fields: Lithuanian, mathematics, science, and social sciences in the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth grades.

In order to enhance education quality in secondary schools, an education enhancement project was started in 2002, to be completed in 2005. One of the components of the project is the creation of an education quality management system. The purpose of such a system is to ensure access to timely and relevant information necessary for making better decisions at the national and local levels, which will contribute to a more effective education system and a better quality of education. The process of designing, implementing, and evaluating education policy on the basis of information and political analysis has already started (www.eurydice.org).

In addition, the further application of the principles of universality, transparency, stimulation, and openness, along with the accreditation of the secondary educational programmes of secondary and adult schools, adult teaching centres, education centres, special schools, special education centres, and vocational schools will be carried out in the period 2004 to 2012.

Support systems

In the academic context, there are support programmes for special needs children at all levels of the education system. Special needs pedagogues and social pedagogues work in this field. Special needs pedagogues employ programmes which are adopted and confirmed in schools according to the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science. In the social context, there are day centres in many schools, which provide support for children from social risk groups. In these centres pupils have access to pedagogical advisors and are provided with food. However, these centres have a low status, because of the low social status of the children attending them. Support systems are in place in youth schools as well. Many children from social risk families are generally neglected and are very often abused. They need social assistance and psychological support.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Lithuanian schools are classified in accordance with the level and type of programmes that they offer. The principal groups are:

- Schools of basic education (*bendrojo lavinimo mokyklos*),
- Vocational schools (*profesinės mokyklos*),
- Upper schools (*aukštesniosios mokyklos*),
- Higher schools (*aukštosios mokyklos*), and

- Institutions of post-school (informal) education (*papildomojo ugdymo (neformaliojo švietimo įstaigos)*).

The type of school is established in accordance with the formal programme of the highest level implemented by it. The classification of educational programmes in Lithuania is dual: *vertical*, indicating the hierarchical status (pre-school – primary – general – secondary – post-secondary – higher), and *horizontal*, indicating the type of programme (special forms and specializations). Due to national peculiarities, Lithuanian educational classifications differ slightly from ISCED 1997. In 2001 the institutions of formal education were attended by 24% of the national population (885,175 out of 3,692,645). There was a ratio of 2288 pupils and students to 10,000 inhabitants. In 2002, 10% of learners attended pre-school educational institutions, 22.3% primary education institutions, 38% general schools, and 12% secondary schools. Colleges were attended by 3.5% and higher schools by 13% of all learners.

In 2001 the total number of learners grew steadily, increasing from 772,260 to 885,175 (a 13% increase). On the level of general education, the shift from a nine-year to a ten-year-system contributed to this growth. Secondary education became one year shorter, however, which is why the total number of secondary pupils decreased in 1999, but after that grew steadily. Due to the diminishing birth rate, the number of pupils in primary schools has been decreasing since 1997. The number of students in higher education has grown significantly, doubling over a period of five years.

Pre-primary education

Pre-school education caters to three- to six-year-old children. Its function is to help the child to satisfy his or her innate cultural, ethnic, social, and cognitive needs. Pre-school education for children with special needs starts at the age of three. It helps not only the child but also his or her parents to better understand the child's problems. It assists in understanding both medical and social problems. A one-year pre-school programme (just before primary school) is provided for all children. Its function is to help the child to prepare for the primary education programme and starts at the age of five to six. Parents are very active in pre-school community life.

Primary education

The function of primary education is to help the child to acquire the fundamentals of moral, cultural, and social maturity; to acquire basic literacy skills; and to prepare for further education in the general education programme. It is designed for children from six or seven to ten or eleven years of age. The programme lasts four years, and consists of two sub-programmes of two years each.

In Lithuania great attention is paid to primary education for children with special needs. Teachers use special programmes which help children to achieve good results by evaluating their real possibilities.

Lower secondary education

General school consists of three phases: an adaptation phase (grades 5 to 6), an observation phase (grades 7 to 8), and an orientation phase (grades 9 to 10). Its function is to provide pupils with the fundamentals of moral, socio-cultural, and civic maturity; general literacy; and the basics of technological literacy. The programme lasts six years, and consists of two sub-programmes: grades 5 to 8 and 9 to 10. The age of children at general basic school is ten or eleven to fifteen or sixteen. The programme lasts six years. Alternative education is designed for non-adaptive adolescents. Comprehensive general education for children with special needs is provided according to the Law on Special Education. From the fifth grade onwards, teaching is divided into subjects, leading to examinations at the end of compulsory school. As pupils progress to grades 9 and 10, the emphasis on basic subjects continues, alongside a greater variety of optional courses. Optional subjects are provided to help pupils with respect to their future educational and professional aspirations, and some subjects can be taken at a basic or advanced level with the possibility of changing levels at a later stage. At the end of compulsory schooling and upon successful completion of the tenth grade, pupils receive a general basic school certificate. Many then enter upper secondary school and continue their education for a further two years, while others choose to train towards a profession at vocational school.

General vocational school (the first level of vocational education) lasts three years, and provides general education (giving pupils the opportunity to finish the tenth grade and to get a professional qualification) from the age of fourteen. Through the programme, pupils receive a general education and a professional qualification. General vocational training, which provides a professional qualification at level 1 and lasts three years, starts from the age of fourteen. Completion of the programme leads to a professional qualification. The course which provides only a professional qualification lasts two years. Adult comprehensive education is provided from the age of eighteen.

Upper secondary education

This programme is designed to provide secondary education that prepares pupils for studies in higher-level programmes or allows them to acquire a professional qualification. The duration is two years. Upper secondary school includes grades 11 and 12 for children from fifteen or sixteen to eighteen or nineteen years old. The programme is oriented towards specialized teaching and differentiated educational contents. The contents consist of two parts: the core comprehensive education, compulsory for all pupils, and subjects chosen by pupils in accordance with their chosen specialization. Pupils can choose from four specializations: humanities, non-classical, technological (provided by vocational schools or technological gymnasiums), and arts (provided by art gymnasiums, the National Arts School and conservatories). The completion of the secondary education programme and the passing of school leaving exams leads to a certificate of upper secondary education. With a certificate of upper secondary education, pupils are able to continue their education at universities, colleges, and vocational schools.

General vocational schools (the third level of vocational education) provide secondary education and a professional qualification in accordance with the programmes of level 3. These are provided from the age of sixteen, the duration is four years, and completion leads to a certificate of upper secondary education and a professional qualification.

General vocational school (the second level of vocational education) can be attended after finishing tenth grade, and provides only a professional qualification in accordance with the programmes of level 2. General vocational school can be attended from the age of sixteen. It lasts three years, and completion of the programme leads to a professional qualification. General professional education is also provided for persons with special needs in accordance with the programmes of level 2. However, Lithuania has problems organizing effective education for children with special needs. Adult comprehensive secondary education is provided from the age of eighteen.

Special education schools

The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and of pupils oriented to an academic education has led to the establishment of youth schools and gymnasiums: the former include grades 6 to 10, the latter includes grades 10 to 12. Currently, youth schools are an alternative to basic schools for pupils with motivation and learning difficulties. The teaching processes are more individualized in these schools. Pupils are provided with pedagogical and psychological assistance in order to overcome learning difficulties, deal with personal problems, and choose further education. The curriculum may include basic and secondary education, pre-professional preparation, and supplementary teaching via practical activities. It promotes the pupils' desire to learn and subsequently to attend a regular school or to continue studying at a vocational school. In the 2000-01 school year, there were twenty-four youth schools in Lithuania which were attended by 2601 pupils. In comparison, at the same time there were 2311 schools of general education. Youth schools are most often attended by children from single parent or social risk families. Children from such families are generally pedagogically disadvantaged. Without restoring their motivation to learn, it is impossible to help them. Many of these children also need social assistance.

A gymnasium is a separate, four-year school providing a more extensive basic education with higher demands on the pupils compared with other types of secondary schools. Today gymnasiums exist which specialize in the sciences, in humanities, and in arts. The learning process at those schools is more flexible and includes active teaching methods and models.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Post-secondary vocational studies (fourth level of vocational education) providing professional qualifications are designed for school leavers with secondary education. The duration is one year.

Higher studies: The function of higher studies is to help pupils to acquire higher education and upper-level qualifications, and to prepare them for participation in the labour market and the social life of the country. Higher education and its accompanying qualifications are acquired after the completion of a programme of upper studies, defence of a graduate paper (project), and/or successful completion of final examinations.

Undergraduate studies. This programme is designed to provide students with the theoretical foundations of a profession and to develop the basic professional skills necessary for independent work. Upon completion, the student is granted a professional qualification and/or a bachelor's degree; the graduates of non-university institutions are granted a professional qualification. A master's programme is undertaken after the completion of a bachelor's degree. The duration is one and a half to two years. Completion of the programme leads to a master's degree. Special professional studies are designed to provide a professional qualification. Residential studies are designed for persons with qualifications in the fields established by the government to prepare for independent work. Non-university studies are one-level professional studies in a higher school oriented towards practical work and leading to the acquisition of a professional qualification based on applied research.

Doctoral studies: The function of doctoral studies is to train researchers. Students enrol after the completion of a master's degree or diploma, which was awarded before 1990. Studies are organized in accordance with individual doctoral programmes, at the end of which a doctoral thesis is defended.

Arts post-graduate studies: The function of arts post-graduate studies is to train teachers of arts subjects for higher schools.

Perspectives for development

In order to improve the quality of education in the basic schools of Lithuania, the Ministry of Education and Science introduced the Education Improvement Project. The project is funded from a World Bank loan and co-financed by the government of the Republic of Lithuania and from municipal funds. The strategic line of the project was approved by the government in October 2001 and included in the action plan of the government programme for 2001 to 2004. The most important priority of the Education Improvement Project is the improvement of the basic school. The strategic objectives are to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at basic schools and to optimise the utilization of educational funds and resources.

Areas of development covered by ongoing and planned reforms include:

- Rationalization of the school network,
- Creation of an efficient and effective education management system based on reliable information,
- Monitoring of the education system,
- Pre-service and in-service teacher training,
- School evaluation (internal and external audit),
- Curriculum development, and
- National standards of attainment (www.eurydice.org).

Furthermore, Lithuania plans to participate in international large-scale assessments such as TIMSS 2007, PIRLS 2006, and PISA 2006.

References

- Classification of Lithuanian Education (Lietuvos švietimo klasifikacija). Vilnius 1999.
- General Concept of Education in Lithuania. Vilnius 1994.
- Giedraitienė, E.: The Position of Social Pedagogue in Lithuania. In: Peck, B. T./Mays, A. (Eds): Challenge and Change in Education: the Experience of the Baltic States in the 1990's. New York 2000, pp. 185-189.
- Giedraitienė, E.: Teacher Personality and Educational Reform. In: Peck, B. T. (Ed.): Teaching and Learning in Lithuania since "Rebirth". New York 1998, pp. 117-123.
- Klaipėda University: School in Lithuania: the Past, the Present, the Future (Lietuvos mokykla: praeitis, dabartis, ateitis). Klaipėda 1997.
- Kriauciūnaitė, R.: Science and Studies in Lithuania. Vilnius 2002.
- Lithuanian School 9/10 (1918).
- Lithuanian School 12 (1918).
- Lithuanian School 14 (1918).
- Martinaitis, P.: Family and School Relationship in Education (Šeimos ir mokyklos sąveika auklėjime). In: Lithuanian Family. Vilnius 1995, pp. 164-166.
- OECD (Ed.): Reviews of National Policies for Education. Lithuania. 2002.
- Peck, B. T./Hill, A. (Ed.): Representing Parents in School Decision Making Around the World, Scottish School Board Association. UK 2000.
- Rimkevičienė, V.: Education. In: United Nations Development Programme and Social Policy Unit: The Lithuanian Education System. Vilnius 1998, pp. 89-100.
- UNDP: Lithuanian Human Development Report 1996. Vilnius 1997.
- UNDP: Lithuanian Human Development Report. Vilnius 2000, pp. 69-77.
- UNDP: Lithuanian Human Development Report. Vilnius 2001, pp. 33-39.
- UNDP: Lithuanian Human Development Report. Vilnius 2002.

Web-based references:

- www.smm.lt
- http://www.smm.lt/en/edu_reform/OECD_report.pdf
- <http://www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/Application/frameset.asp?country=LT&language=EN>
- http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/Fiches_nationales/en/frameset_EN.html
- http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/Mig/en/frameset_immigrant.html
- <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/Databanks/Dossiers/mainfram.htm>
- <http://www.pedagogika.lt/sbuk01.htm>
- http://www.smm.lt/svietimas_bukle/docs/apzvalgos
- <http://www.sti.lt/monitor/turinysl.htm>
- <http://senna1.std.lt/STATISTIKA/Socialine/svietimas/1000-iui.htm> 2002 04 26

Lithuania

	Preprimary education	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education	Postsecondary & tertiary education	Grade	Age
	Kindergarten and school preparatory phase (Ikimokyklinis ugdymas)	Primary school (Pradinė mokykla)	Basic education (Pagrindinė mokykla)	Secondary school	University (Universtetas), College (Aukštesbioji mokykla), Non university education (HEI / kolegija)	17	23
			artistic high school	Gymnasium (Gimnazija)		16	20
				Technological Gymnasium		14	18
				vocational school (Profesne mokykla)		13	17
						12	16
						11	15
						10	14
						9	13
						8	12
						7	11
						6	10
						5	9
						4	8
						3	7
						2	6
						1	5
							4
							3

Luxembourg

History of Luxembourg's school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

There is no fundamental difference in the history of education in Luxembourg compared to that of neighbouring countries and border regions. Formal schooling began in the Middle Ages with the development of schools attached to the Benedictine monasteries in Echternach (698) and Luxembourg (Altmunster, 1083).

While the countryside continued to languish in ignorance, by the fifteenth century these ecclesiastical initiatives were replaced by a school for children of the nobility and the gentry, placed under the authority of the city of Luxembourg's magistrate. It was not until 1603 that the Jesuits created, as part of the Counter-Reformation, a secondary school in Luxembourg, which introduced a complete curriculum of the classics. Some 200 pupils attended this school, which was mainly literary, aiming at the mastery of Latin and Greek; the use of modern languages such as French and German was limited to translating the classic authors. Pupils who intended to take up ecclesiastic, administrative, or judiciary careers had to leave the country in order to continue their studies at European universities, mainly at Louvain, Heidelberg, Cologne, or Paris.

In this country, which traces its origins back to a Lotharingian principality and straddles two cultures, one Germanic, the other French, teaching has been bilingual from the Middle Ages to the present day. The country formerly comprised a German-speaking community and a French-speaking community, the Walloon district. At that time French was the mother tongue of half the population and the administrative language throughout the country. The situation changed, however, in 1839, when the Walloon district became part of the new Kingdom of Belgium. Henceforth, the inhabitants of the country that would become an independent nation in 1867 all spoke Luxembourgish, a Germanic dialect that was spoken but not written.

In primary school, children were taught to read and write in German. Remarkably, French was kept as the language of secondary education as well as the language of administration, law, and politics. In 1839 the authorities must have felt that abandoning the French language would affect a centuries-old tradition and would risk the utter destruction of a linguistic regime that was certainly complex but also original and image-enhancing.

Between 1848 and 1912, the State took over responsibility for schooling and education, and laid the foundations of Luxembourg's school system. It defined the levels of primary, secondary, and higher education, and fixed their lengths: primary education as six years plus three years to complete compulsory schooling, secondary education as seven years, and higher education as one year of higher studies in letters and sciences. In addition to the gymnasium, which taught the classics, it estab-

lished modern secondary schools focusing on modern languages (German, French, and English) and the sciences. When the fast-growing iron and steel industry gave the country's economy a major boost, the State introduced vocational training. Higher education remained in the embryonic state of just one year of university courses. At this time, the influence and presence of the clergy in the schools was clarified, a process that could not be carried out without leaving in its wake a trail of bruised antagonists.

Obviously a country of some 200,000 inhabitants can only produce a limited number of researchers and thinkers capable of influencing educational standards. It is thus understandable that over the years of its development, Luxembourg's school system has built upon experiences gained either in France, Germany, or Belgium. The country's enclosed and cramped territory explains the necessity for Luxembourg to open up to and join greater economic and political structures. In the absence of a university, students were forced to settle abroad and to register with foreign universities. In the absence of a market large enough to sell the products of Luxembourg's economy, mainly from the iron and steel industry, membership in the *Zollverein*, then in the Benelux and the EEC was imperative. Furthermore, fluency in the languages of its German- and French-speaking neighbours became vital for the country's intellectual and economic development.

Due to this geographical situation, school leavers were faced with a rather limited labour market throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. The fear of producing an oversupply of young graduates has deeply marked Luxembourg's school system.

Managing a school system in such a close community has the advantage that decisions can be taken without too much ado and adaptations can be made in a pragmatic way if the situation calls for it. This is especially true if there is consensus on decisions to be made, such as the creation of business schools to further the development of the financial marketplace. It becomes something of an obstacle, however, in large debates touching the very essence of school. When protagonists mix with each other on a near-daily basis, debates inevitably turn personal, political, or ideological, and on each occasion threaten to divide society.

Reforms and innovations

If on occasion Luxembourg's school system was the object of heated debate, this was due to the fact that not only educational, but also socio-political or socio-economic matters were at stake. Thus, the education policy implemented in recent decades strongly reflects aspirations that emerged from society. The educational reform of 1968 abolished school fees and introduced a system of financial help for children from families on low income. Continuing in this spirit of social justice, extra-curricular activities were introduced at all school levels to create the nucleus for a social environment in which everybody has access to cultural activities. On a different level, mixed classes for boys and girls were introduced, and non-confessional ethics appeared alongside traditional religious instruction to meet the demands of a society seeking emancipation.

A second wave of changes came some years later with a transformation of the contents and structures of studies in order to further their democratization. Luxembourg introduced a binary secondary education system by setting up technical secondary education to run parallel to traditional secondary education. This innovative form of education offered vocational training courses as well as technical and business studies. Some diplomas, such as the technical baccalaureate, opened a second path of access to higher education and gave a second chance to those pupils who had not been admitted to a traditional secondary school (1979). The decade also saw the creation of the first education centres for children with disabilities and special needs (1973).

Throughout the seventies, fierce discussions took place concerning the establishment of a comprehensive school covering the first three years of traditional and technical secondary education. Over the whole of a legislature period (1974 to 1979), debates raged as to the best way of organizing school in order to make it socially just while at the same time upholding academic standards. A law was finally passed (1979), but never implemented. The discussion was taken up anew some ten years later in the context of integrating children from immigrant families.

During the 1990s, reforms centred on modernizing the different forms of vocational training and on introducing continuous professional training. It was a period of awareness that open access to higher education was a corollary of a greater heterogeneity of the student population. Reducing poor performance also became a major preoccupation, leading to successive reforms of learner assessments and examinations.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

Tradition has it that Luxembourg's school system defines each level of education in association with the next level, without detailing intrinsic objectives. Pre-primary education leads to primary education, whose mission in turn is to prepare pupils for secondary education, where they are prepared either for higher studies or for working life. Feedback coming from the 'buyers', in particular the appreciation of the performance of students from Luxembourg by their university teachers, often helps to evaluate standards and requirements.

Although the authors of laws and decrees are extremely reluctant to determine objectives for the different levels of education as far as aims and results are concerned, Luxembourg's school system has nevertheless had to move with the times. The results of the PISA study forced Luxembourg to realize that a large part of its school population did not possess the expected minimum levels of competence, and drew attention to all pupils and to the attainment levels they should have reached by the end of their compulsory schooling. It has also become apparent in recent years that these standards cannot be defined by acquired knowledge alone. During the 1990s, the concept of key knowledge found its way into vocational training; more recently education centred on acquiring competences and attitudes has taken centre stage in reform plans.

Socio-economic context

These concerns reflect the far-reaching changes affecting Luxembourg's society that has been growing constantly over two generations. The number of inhabitants is still growing, having risen from 350,000 to 450,000 during the last thirty years. This growth was mainly due to a massive inflow of foreigners that rejuvenated the age pyramid of the population. Obviously the size and number of school classes followed this development; during the same period the number of pupils and students grew from 65,460 to 80,000. This in turn led to a considerable increase in the demand for infrastructure and teachers, which is expected to last till 2020.

The development of the iron and steel industry (end of the nineteenth century) made Luxembourg attractive for immigrants. Annual rates of immigration fluctuated over the years according to economic growth, but over the past decade hovered around 10%. Today some 38% of the population are foreigners, and in some schools this percentage is even higher: 43% in pre-primary education, 39% in primary and in technical secondary education, but only 16% in traditional secondary education. Among the non-Luxembourgers, a majority of the children are of Portuguese origin (52%), followed by children from the countries of former Yugoslavia (12%), Italy (8%), and France (7%). It is of interest that the percentage of children who do not speak Luxembourgish as their mother tongue is even higher.

The profound changes in the structure of Luxembourg's economy have also affected the socio-professional structure of its population. Today the active population is formed by 37% Luxembourgers, 27% resident foreigners, and 36% cross-border commuters. Luxembourgers are still in the majority among the self-employed and the civil service. In all other areas of the economy they are in the minority. Leaving out officials of the EU and managers of foreign firms whose children do not attend schools in Luxembourg, foreign residents form a large proportion of the members of society on low incomes. For schools, the stakes are huge. They are the melting pot in which the cohesion of future generations is founded. At the same time they must preserve the opportunities of success for gifted pupils regardless of social and cultural background, continue to strengthen the foundations of an economic productivity that is said to be the highest worldwide, and ensure the competitiveness of young people who are educated in an environment facing strong competition.

To date, fluency in different languages has been the main pillar of Luxembourg's competitiveness:

- Luxembourgish, as the national language and the mother tongue of Luxembourgers, is used in everyday oral communication.
- French is, by tradition, the language of administration and the intellectual elite. Migratory movements from Italy and Portugal and daily contact with Belgian and French cross-border commuters have led to a larger use of French in the workplace.
- German still dominates in the written press and Luxembourgers prefer to watch German TV channels.
- English is used more and more in industry and in the computing sector, in banking, and in tourism.

Social position of teaching profession

On the pay scale, a teacher in secondary education ranks at the same level as a court judge or a government councillor. This equality dates back to a period when a teacher was considered a person of superior knowledge, knowledge that was not readily accessible to the common mortal. Today Luxembourg's teachers are seeking a new identity, wavering between a fall-back position and new openings through what is termed 'professionalization', which involves new ways of transmitting knowledge, new contents, new methods, and possible solutions to current problems. In the foreseeable future, teachers, as training specialists, will redefine their status in society, and will assume a position perhaps less prominent but nonetheless highly valued.

School and the role of the family

Good relationships between school and parents have yet to be established. This lack is mainly due to the system's inherent selectivity, which all too often clashes with the parents' aspirations to see their children gain access to the more prestigious forms of education. Furthermore, there is a growing demand for school to take as much responsibility as possible for children, the result of which is that it struggles to live up to all of society's expectations. The fact that about half of the parents are of foreign origin and that a third did not receive any secondary education (PISA 2000) does not make dialogue any easier. Recently, first steps have been undertaken to set up a partnership whereby all the members of a school community are made aware of their rights and duties, and are placed in a position to exercise them. Plans for a closer involvement of parents not only in the school community but also in the progress and orientation of their children are being implemented.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The underlying principles of Luxembourg's school system can be found in the parsimonious wording of the Constitution, and consist mainly of the State's obligation to ensure the organization of free and compulsory primary education and its accessibility to every person living in the Grand Duchy. No distinction is made between children of different origins (be they Luxembourgers, EU-citizens, or non-EU-citizens) and children from families of different social status (nationals, immigrants, asylum seekers). On the other hand, the Constitution also states that everybody is free to attend school either in Luxembourg or abroad. Free choice of universities, which is of vital importance in ensuring diversity of studies and open-mindedness, is based on this statement. Furthermore, thanks to an expanded public transport system, it enables children who experience problems at their local school to attend a school in a bordering region. 6% of children receive secondary education in a Belgian school. On a general level, the founding fathers of the Constitution placed their confidence in the wisdom of Parliament when they ruled that the law settles all matters relating to education. Thus, they made certain that any initiative having some

impact on school organization would receive democratic legitimization. The time taken up by all the necessary procedures in itself constitutes a moderating influence meant to avoid any inopportune reorientation. On the other hand, it is rather difficult to set up a system differentiated enough to leave room for individual initiative.

School organization has always been centralized. Short distances and brief procedures made this possible. The hierarchy has three levels. At the top level, the Minister has governmental as well as administrative responsibilities. Although the organization of primary education lies in part with the communes (establishing infrastructures, recruiting teachers, and organizing classes), the contents of school programmes are decided at a central level. The administration mainly ensures that the individual actors play their part in implementing decisions and orders. Everything is determined and overseen by the central administration: programmes, most textbooks, pupil assessments, final exams, training of teachers, management of human resources, and allocation of budgetary resources.

In primary education, the transmission of instructions and information, the implementation of policy as defined by the Minister, and educational control fall within the range of competences of inspectors. In secondary education, this responsibility lies with school directors. They represent the second level of the hierarchy and are the direct and personal representatives of the Minister. The ever increasing diversity of functions and the disciplinary responsibility that directors nowadays have to assume make the job ever more complex. A recent law has added to the Director's competences, who is now not only in charge of the efficient running of the school, but has also been designated *expressis verbis* as responsible for the implementation of educational programmes and contents. As such, he or she exercises close control over courses and educational programmes, all the while enlarging his or her directorial team. This enlargement has been implemented in order to prepare for a change from a centrally regulated administration and *a priori* control to a system based on evaluation of results achieved.

Financing

Education expenditure is divided between different contributors from the public sector. As far as primary education is concerned, the costs of teachers' salaries are borne by the State (66.6%) and the communes (33.3%). As for capital expenditure, the State (Home Office) takes over part of the construction costs of primary schools.

The State shoulders all the costs of secondary education: salaries and operating costs fall to the Ministry of Education, construction and maintenance of school buildings to the Ministry of Public Works, and transport charges to the Ministry of Transport. Higher education is also State-financed, but different forms of public-private partnerships are being considered.

In 2002 costs for a pupil in primary education were up to 10,565 euros per year, compared to 15,528 euros per year for a pupil in secondary education. The education budget amounts to 11.21% of the State budget. Schools' financial means vary considerably according to children's needs. Positive discrimination mainly translates into extra financial resources. Thus, 1.8 times more lessons are provided for pupils in technical secondary education than for those in traditional secondary education;

for children with special needs this factor is as high as 3.4. However, the introduction of a system to reward schools or teachers according to results achieved is at this time not an option.

Public and private schooling

Luxembourg has always maintained a certain distrust of freedom of educational choice. Although the School Law of 1848 authorized the creation of schools that were not subsidized by the State, only a few religious communities founded schools offering secondary education to young girls, and these have remained few in number. Private schools mainly offer post-primary education only, and this offer was and still is taken up by some 12% of pupils. In fact, it took the better part of a century for the premise of the right of private schools to exist to be accepted, and even then only under the condition that public authority would safeguard their pupils' best interests. A law dating from 1982 first organized relations between the State and the private schools, by allowing substantial grants to those schools that closely followed the official school curriculum and lower grants to those that followed programmes of their own (such as the Waldorf school). In order to take into account the growing influence of international schools, which teach the children of managers of international firms taking up temporary residence in Luxembourg, a law of 13 June 2003 allotted equally substantial grants to these schools. However, the State's participation in the financing of private schools remains based on the priority principle for State schools: if public investment is reduced, grants offered to private schools are lowered; the State's contribution must remain below the budget of State-run schools.

General standards of the education system

The school curriculum and the programmes of the different subjects are the same nationwide. The pre-primary and primary curriculum gives a detailed description of objectives, methodological choices, and assessments. The official textbooks follow these plans closely. National committees set up the programmes of post-primary subjects; each secondary school has one representative per committee and subject.

The specific linguistic situation requires special programmes and books, but Luxembourg has neither sufficient human resources, nor the required institutions, nor publishing houses specialized in the production of textbooks. In primary education, most books are designed by teachers, who receive a reduced teaching load by way of compensation. In secondary education, the books are usually either German, French, English, or even Swiss textbooks. For some subjects there are bilingual editions. In vocational and technical training, programmes combining professional training and vocational orientation have been elaborated in close co-operation with representatives from the economic sector.

Over the years, the programmes became bulkier and more ambitious; as a consequence there was less and less time left for the extension of knowledge and the application and repetition of subjects studied. This left teachers in considerable doubt as to which aspects of the programmes were essential and which less so. The results from PISA 2000 have made apparent the need to introduce standard programmes in mathematics and languages.

Quality management

Luxembourg's participation in international assessment programmes is usually centred on the whole of one age group, for example all the pupils who have reached the age of fifteen. Because of the small number of children, testing a sample group would not be representative. The possibility of observing the evolution of performances in the medium term is a big advantage. However, participation in this kind of survey is costly in terms of human resources, and a transfer of budgetary resources in favour of surveys and assessments might prove detrimental to pedagogic innovations and reforms. Furthermore, all too often the accuracy of these results is relative. For example, certain benchmarks based on surveys (Labour Force Survey) conducted with the entire active population, a majority of which was educated in other school systems, does not offer a true reflection of the efficiency or inefficiency of Luxembourg's school system.

It is in Luxembourg's best interests to concentrate quality management on the organization of its educational establishments. A reporting system is being set up, comparing measures undertaken by different schools with the results they achieve.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Starting at the age of four, all children have to attend pre-primary education for two years. This is followed by six years of primary education from the age of six to twelve. At this point, pupils are directed either towards traditional secondary education or towards technical secondary education (60%). Whereas the first leads to the baccalaureate after a seven-year study course, the second offers a larger range of certificates: technical baccalaureate (seven years), technician's diploma (seven years), certificate of technical and vocational aptitude (six years), and certificate of technical and vocational initiation (five years). This graduated scale of diplomas is best-suited to the heterogeneous school population in technical secondary education.

Higher education is of less importance since the majority of students finish their university or higher education abroad. However, there are programmes for teachers (bac+3) and educationalists (bac+3), for industrial engineers (bac+4), and for students wishing to gain an advanced technical training certificate (bac+2). Other courses leading to a bachelor's or master's degree are about to be set up as part of the University of Luxembourg.

German is the main language used in class throughout primary education and lower secondary education, while in upper secondary education French takes over. This means that all pupils, be their mother tongue Luxembourgish or any other language, are taught in a foreign language.

Evaluation remains the same over the whole school cycle: it is summative and based on individual subjects. Marks are awarded between 0 and 60 points; a mark below 30 is considered insufficient. Behaviour and attitude are also assessed, but are not taken into account for progression to the following year. Recently, steps have been undertaken to introduce formative assessment in order to produce a more balanced summative evaluation and to describe transverse competences.

It is also planned to adapt evaluation according to pupils' maturity; marks could be of less importance during the first years of primary education, while resits at the end of the summer holidays, which a lot of secondary pupils have to take, could be replaced by other forms of remedial instruction.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education (four to six years old) has been compulsory since 1992. At the time it was considered essential, for reasons of equality, that the State should offer the opportunity to all children to develop their intellectual, motor, and sensory abilities before attending primary school. There is little doubt that pre-primary education was rendered compulsory with the idea of using these two years to teach children from different social and cultural spheres to live and to develop by playing together. In recent years it has become clear that this initial socializing process is precious in a society that is becoming ever more multi-ethnic. Moreover, pre-primary education was given an additional task: to teach all children to understand and speak Luxembourgish. Children from different cultural backgrounds learn the country's language of oral communication, which is an essential preparation for learning to read and write in German.

In 1998, the State implemented a measure to increase this period of socialization through the introduction of optional pre-school education from the age of three. Children are free to attend this pre-school on several half-days per week, where they are under the care of a teacher and an educationalist. In 2004 65% of children attended pre-school education.

Primary education

The six years are divided into three levels of two years each; the first level is spent learning the basics. In order to allow all children to learn and progress at their own pace, in 1999 the first two-year level was transformed into a cycle that can be finished within one, two, or even three years without repeating a class. This cycle concept is about to be extended to the other two levels.

Children learn to read and write in German, which is also the common language for the other primary levels. This is fairly easy for children whose mother tongue is Luxembourgish, as they learn German by assimilation. However, children who have another mother tongue (39%) and who are of mainly romanophone origins experience difficulties, especially as for them the use of German is practically limited to school. For some years now, German has been taught as a foreign language to all pupils. A parallel project of teaching children in French was abandoned because of the lukewarm response from those concerned. French is taught from the third term of the second year. The question has been raised as to whether this is not too early and too ambitious, for it appears that a lot of pupils acquire only a superficial knowledge of foreign languages during their primary education.

Other subjects taught in primary education are: Luxembourg's history and geography in a European context, introduction to sciences, artistic expression, sports, and Luxembourgish, which the children learn to read. The teaching of Luxembourgish as a written language remains rather basic. Parents of Portuguese origin have the possi-

bility of enrolling their children in an integrated Portuguese language course. In this programme, introduction to sciences and history are taught in Portuguese. One third of Portuguese children follow these courses, another third attend Portuguese language courses organized by the Embassy outside regular school hours, and the final third attend none of these courses. Other communities also organize language courses outside the regular school curriculum, but these courses are less extensive (Italian, Chinese, and Serbo-Croatian). Foreign children arriving in Luxembourg at an advanced school age are enrolled in 'insertion classes' that offer intensive courses in only one language: German in primary school, French in technical secondary education.

In primary school, differentiation is in the hands of the teacher, who organizes special support sessions or help with homework to alleviate momentary difficulties. On occasion, a team of teachers takes charge of several classes, so that one teacher can work more closely with one particular group of pupils (team teaching). Pupils with pronounced learning or behavioural problems are kept in their regular class as long as the teaching remains profitable for all children. This explains the fairly low percentage (1%) of children enrolled in special schools (see 4.6). With the help of the mobile re-education service, (Service ré-éducatif ambulatoire - SREA) created in 1994, children with specific needs can get help in class for several lessons per week. Recently, special classes were introduced at several schools to cater during part of the teaching programme to children who have problems that prevent them from attending all the courses in their regular class.

The idea that school is a centre of learning as well as a place for living is taking root in people's minds. More and more schools welcome children before and after classes and take care of them outside regular school hours, including midday meals and extra-curricular activities. Some services have been outsourced, such as counselling with the school inspector, psychological help, orientation from the Childhood Guidance Service, and specific help for children with visual or hearing deficiencies. In order to facilitate access to these services, the State has created regional centres so that parents seeking help need contact only one address.

At the end of the sixth year of primary education, children are directed towards either traditional or technical secondary education. Since 1997, an orientation procedure that includes different tests, the opinion of a commission that includes the primary teacher and secondary education teachers, and consultation with the parents has replaced an admission exam that enjoyed a surprising longevity. Although pupils' entry into traditional or technical secondary education is not linked to their socio-economic background, the distribution among the different forms of secondary education of children from immigrant families still serves as an indicator: foreign children represent 39% of the pupils in primary education, but they make up a mere 16% of pupils in traditional secondary education.

There are numerous criticisms of this system, which divides children into two different orders of education and entails, willingly or not, a selection that is of a social order as well. To make matters worse, this selection involves a local segregation: some of the children continue their studies at a traditional secondary school, the

others at a technical secondary school. Since 1994, however, all newly created establishments must offer both orders of secondary education.

Lower secondary education

The first years of traditional and technical secondary education are dedicated to the improvement of basic knowledge and to pupils' preparation for future educational and vocational orientation. The subject matters are largely identical. Teaching in the two orders mainly differs with respect to the level of ambition concerning objectives, to the level of abstraction with regard to concepts, and to the level of analysis and metalanguage. In both orders, pupils learn English as a third foreign language starting from grade 8. The possibility of beginning the teaching of English in the seventh grade is being considered.

During the past decades, orientation at the end of lower secondary education has increased massively in importance, especially in technical secondary education, where pupils have to choose a specific vocational training programme by the end of the ninth grade. The same is true, however, for secondary education, where enthusiasm is limited for the subject areas that are deemed difficult (mathematics and natural sciences).

Technical secondary education includes a preparatory phase that inducts pupils who have not attained the objectives of primary education. According to their abilities, they are given assistance to catch up and to make their way into one of the regular classes of technical secondary education, or at least to acquire a minimal but vital education that will allow them either access to vocational training leading to a certificate of technical and vocational initiation, or entry into working life.

Evaluation is once again summative and based on a number of areas. Insufficient marks can be compensated if the overall average is sufficiently high. In technical secondary education, attitude towards work is also taken into consideration in the calculation of this average. According to their results, pupils are admitted either directly to the next class, or on the condition that they pass a supplementary test at the end of the summer holiday. The number of failures in these supplementary tests is significant, and it is a constant concern of the authorities to find a means of distinguishing between inevitable failures and those that could have been avoided, without lowering the level of exigency and performance. Currently solutions are being investigated that would on the one hand trigger preventive action as soon as problems appear, and on the other would provide remedial instruction that demands extra efforts throughout the following school year; this solution, it is true, would place more responsibility on all concerned parties.

Upper secondary education

Traditional secondary education prepares pupils for university. At the end of the fourth year, which broadens and deepens general knowledge, pupils choose a specialization for the remaining three years: literature, natural sciences, economics, mathematics, arts, music, or social sciences. Since 2001, specialization has been postponed by one year in order to give pupils a better preparation in the basic subjects as a stepping-stone for their future choice. Additionally, various optional sub-

jects allow pupils to develop personal interests, for example Italian or Spanish language, mass media, history of religions, and digital graphics.

Technical secondary education prepares pupils for working life. Some pupils also obtain a diploma that allows access to higher studies. The challenge of technical secondary education consists in diversifying training and qualification levels to allow all pupils to complete their studies according to their abilities. At the moment, three parallel streams lead to different levels of qualification:

- A technical stream with three sections (commercial, paramedical, and general technical studies) leads to the technical baccalaureate and allows access to higher studies after four years of mainly theoretical, scientific, or technical studies.
- A training stream for technicians in the areas of agriculture, arts, commerce, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, and information technology. Studies are organized on a theoretical as well as a practical level and over four years prepare for middle functions (team leaders) in private enterprises. In reality, many successful candidates move on to higher education.
- A vocational stream.

Due to the low number of potential candidates, it is impossible to set up highly specialized training courses. Thus, so-called specializations must keep up a high level of diversity, and responsibility for integration into the job market lies with the companies.

Special education schools

Luxembourg's school system has firmly set its sights on the integration of children with special educational needs. Half a century ago, parents would hide away a handicapped child. Later, certain communes created centres for these children, while the more serious cases were entrusted to institutions run by religious orders. In 1973 the State extended compulsory schooling to children with special educational needs and introduced special needs education, which took care of these children in specialized centres. In subsequent years, the idea took root that all children are entitled to education even if an extensive special programme has to be set up for them. Since the nineties, specialized educational staff have worked out an individual educational programme for each of these children. Likewise, the State has increased budgetary resources in order to keep as many children with special needs as possible in regular school classes. Thus, in 1993 the mobile re-education service was created, a service whose agents operate in the school that the child with special educational needs is attending. Today 757 children attend school in special education centres, 978 are assisted by the mobile re-education service, and 110 are enrolled in specialized institutions abroad. Because of the small number of children involved, it is sometimes difficult to provide a programme that is as extensive as parents request or as the children need. With the number of children suffering from serious psychiatric disorders constantly increasing, the creation of an institute that offers both continuous schooling and psychiatric treatment is being considered.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The most distinctive features of higher education in Luxembourg are the extreme youth of its university and the large number of courses leading to advanced technical training certificates. The University of Luxembourg, the Grand Duchy's first university, was created by a law dated 12 August 2003. Before this date, higher education in Luxembourg was limited to different university-type programmes lasting three or four years and mainly dedicated to the training of professionals for different sectors of Luxembourg's society and economy, such as teachers for pre-primary and primary education, and industrial engineers. Alongside these programmes leading to specific professional qualifications, there existed other university courses of a more general nature, in fields such as social sciences, sciences, law, and economics. With some rare exceptions, these courses lasted a maximum period of only two years.

This limited range of programmes was the result of a conscious decision made by Luxembourg's politicians and society. After all, students from Luxembourg have always studied abroad, and this mandatory mobility was and still is considered one of the major assets of Luxembourg's economy as well as an essential tool in positioning the Grand Duchy in a European context of innovation and research.

The creation of the University of Luxembourg does not contradict this idea of mobility. It is not conceived as a university with a wide range of faculties and degrees, but rather as a specialist university, of smaller size, combining high level research with high quality teaching. Thus, the University of Luxembourg is a university that conducts independent research and sets research priorities, out of which evolve specialized courses leading to a master's degree or a doctorate.

As for the structure of its courses, the University of Luxembourg adheres strictly to the Bologna Process, which aims at coherence and transparency in Europe's higher education in order to keep it competitive in a global context of international studies. The University of Luxembourg prepares students for degrees situated between master's and doctorate, as well as for some bachelor's degrees in highly specialized areas. Furthermore, programmes are organized according to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). Finally, on all levels a distinction is made between professional and fundamental subjects. The former prepare students for working life, while the latter are directed towards further study and research. The programmes for teachers and industrial engineers that existed before the creation of the University have been integrated into the professional courses.

In addition to the courses offered by the University of Luxembourg, there exists a series of programmes leading to advanced technical training certificates, at a level of Bac+2. These programmes are either in business studies (secretarial studies, marketing, and management) or in the artistic domain (media operator, cartoon designer). Organized in two different technical secondary schools specializing in business studies and arts respectively, these courses are aimed at students looking for a short term practical training programme that offers placements in industry.

The University of Luxembourg is a university open towards Europe and to the world, a university with clearly defined international ambitions that takes account, however, of Luxembourg's very individual character.

Thus, student mobility, which remains of capital importance, is preserved as a mandatory part of the University's curriculum. For instance, all programmes include a period of study at a partner university. Furthermore, this mobility is not unilateral; the University of Luxembourg also welcomes foreign students who spend part of their courses of study in Luxembourg. Polyglottism, another of Luxembourg's specific characteristics, is also an important part of its university. Reflecting the linguistic reality in Luxembourg, the common language may change from one course to another, and each course must be offered in two different languages.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Luxembourg's school system had some problems in coming to grips with the results of PISA 2000. For the first time in its history, it had to face the awesome truth of conspicuously bad achievement, a fact that provoked a reaction of disbelief. It was a laborious process to get research under way to look for solutions to the most obvious deficiencies that had been made visible, namely that a large number of children were incapable of applying the knowledge they had been taught at school. In the meantime, different measures are in the pipeline: defining basic competences for certain levels of schooling, pruning programmes to leave time for the application of knowledge, a more coherent structure for the teaching of languages, more importance given to reading competences, special tuition the moment pupils start to show problems, and better co-operation with the parents. In order to make these initiatives converge, plans are under way to create an experimental secondary school based on a totally new concept for Luxembourg. It defines a common level of skills that all children should reach, while teaching is conceived in a way that allows children to apply their knowledge, with periods of instruction followed by phases of further development of a subject. As a consequence, secondary education will need more time, and the experimental school will thus be the first all-day secondary school in Luxembourg. The timetable is not conceived as simply providing custody of pupils outside normal school hours, but aims to encompass teaching, deepening knowledge, and following up results.

Luxembourg's schools are no longer the only suppliers to the employment market. In an economy increasingly reliant on a foreign workforce that outnumbers the local workforce, it is in serious competition with the school systems of neighbouring and even distant regions. Old fears of producing an oversupply of graduates need to be replaced by the concern to give pupils in Luxembourg the best starting position in a labour market subject to competition. The question of investing time and effort in the learning of several languages is of crucial importance. In the event of a competition between two people having identical professional qualifications, fluency in several languages is a major asset in Luxembourg's multilingual labour market. This asset must be maintained, but without turning access to a diploma or qualification into an obstacle course, as is all too often the case. The government aims to reposition the teaching of languages at school, and to redefine objectives and methods in order to achieve a double aim: fluency in as many languages as possible and qualification of as many pupils as possible.

In the foreseeable future, a new dimension of lifelong learning may well introduce important changes into Luxembourg's school system. The tendency to extend training in the same measure as professions become more complex would lessen if one could conceive of a coherent system of initial, integrative, and continuous education. This is all the more important for Luxembourg, where secondary education lasts one year longer than in most other European countries. A modular concept for at least some vocational training courses must also be taken into consideration in order to allow each trainee, whether youth or adult, to progress according to their abilities or to resume training on the basis of certified professional knowledge.

Luxembourg's school system, which developed in a very centralized way, has taken its first cautious steps towards a certain autonomy of educational establishments. Although it is limited, this autonomy allows schools to adapt the timetable, to organize classes, and to manage their own budget. These first steps have of course not been taken without some apprehensions: are the different actors sufficiently prepared? Will the State be able to guarantee the same conditions and chances of success for each child? Under the circumstances, it is understandable that, before taking the next step, the administration is setting up the necessary guidelines for this transfer of competences. Should the establishments be allowed to compete with each other? Given the small size of the country, a table based solely on the results of final exams would create an unhealthy climate of competition. It seems wiser to wait for a more complex evaluation table, based on further criteria and taking into consideration pupils' socio-economic origins and the benefits of the experiment's pedagogic innovations.

Throughout the twentieth century, Luxembourg has been very attractive to immigrants. Several generations of German immigrants, followed by Italians, found their place in Luxembourg's society. Starting in the seventies, migratory waves grew in importance with the massive arrival of Portuguese families, and then became more diversified in the nineties (refugees from the Balkans, citizens of the former USSR and of Middle-Eastern countries, etc.). The demands of one or the other of these communities to establish a specific school for their children were rejected. Whenever possible, the different mother tongues find their place in the school timetable. Different forms of official recognition and certification are being considered, but the knowledge of one of these languages will never exempt pupils from learning French, German, and English. The integration of these foreign citizens and hence the maintenance of social cohesion are placed at risk if they are not actively fostered in school. This is one of the reasons why the State takes great care to maintain Luxembourg's school system as a single unit and to give the same instruction and education to all children, regardless of their origins.

The government is also aware that it is not enough to let the different communities grow without establishing relations among them, without some common aim. With this in view, schools have set up active programmes of knowledge and understanding for children and young adults of different cultural origins. Recently, in the framework of a study plan aimed at introducing a course on moral values, a programme has been set up to give young people an idea of the principal religious and philosophical convictions they are likely to encounter.

References

- Schmit, M.: Regards et propos sur l'Enseignement Supérieur et Moyen au Luxembourg. In: Publications de la Section Historique de l'Institut Grand-ducal, vol. CXVI. Luxembourg 1999.
- Schmit, M.: Die Gründungsjahre. Luxembourg 1991.
- Vuillermoz, G.: Das luxemburgische Primärschulgesetz, eine rechtsgeschichtliche und kirchengeschichtliche Untersuchung. Luxembourg 1990.
- Meyers, J.: Luxemburg unter der Regierung Wilhelms I. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Schulwesens in unserm Lande. Luxembourg 1889.
- Histoire de l'instruction publique dans le Grand Duché de Luxembourg. Recueil de mémoires publiés à l'occasion du 3^e centenaire de la fondation de l'Athénée Grand Ducal. Luxembourg 1904.
- Pinnel, R. : La situation de l'instruction primaire au Département des Forêts. Luxembourg 1989.
- Levy, J.: Bildung und Migration in Luxemburg. Luxembourg 1985.
- Ministère de l'Education nationale: Chiffres-clé de l'Éducation nationale, Statistiques et indicateurs 2002-2003.
- Statec: L'économie luxembourgeoise au 20^e siècle. Luxembourg 1999.

Luxembourg		Grade	Age	
Postsecondary & tertiary education	BTS	14	17	
		Maîtrise	15	16
			16	17
	University (Université de Luxembourg)	15	16	
		16	17	
		17	18	
		18	19	
		19	20	
	Upper secondary education	Vocational education	11	12
			12	13
Technicians education		11	12	
		12	13	
Technical A level		11	12	
		12	13	
Classic secondary education (Lycée classique)		10	11	
		11	12	
		12	13	
		13	14	
	14	15		
	15	16		
	16	17		
	17	18		
Lower secondary education	Technical secondary education (Lycée technique)	7	8	
		8	9	
		9	10	
		10	11	
		11	12	
	Classic secondary education (Lycée classique)	12	13	
		13	14	
		14	15	
		15	16	
		16	17	
Primary education	Primary school (Enseignement primaire)	1	6	
		2	7	
		3	8	
		4	9	
		5	10	
		6	11	
		7	12	
		8	13	
		9	14	
		10	15	
Preprimary education	Kindergarten (Spillschoul)	1	4	
		2	5	
		3	6	
		4	7	
		5	8	
		6	9	
		7	10	
		8	11	
		9	12	
		10	13	
		Compulsory education		

Christopher Bezzina and Grace Grima

Malta

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

Malta is made up of a group of small islands, two of which are inhabited. The larger island, Malta, has a population of about 350,000, while Gozo, the second largest island, has around 29,000 inhabitants. The archipelago of islands covers a surface area of about 316 square kilometres. It lies ninety-three kilometres to the south of Sicily and 290 kilometres to the north of the African coast. Its position in the middle of the Mediterranean and its natural harbours have attracted a number of colonial powers – the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Normans, the various houses of Spain, the French, and the British – who at one time or another took possession of the islands. As a result, Malta has not only an extremely rich neolithic inheritance, but also several ancient and medieval cities and citadels surrounded by excellent examples of military architecture and fortifications, numerous fine churches, and a rich array of folklore and traditions.

Malta has the highest population density in Europe, with 380,000 inhabitants at an average of 1200 persons per square kilometre. Overall population figures are considerably increased by a heavy tourist inflow (estimated at around 1.2 million for 2000) which is spread throughout the year but more heavily concentrated during the period from May to October. Malta is a small nation with a distinctive language (predominantly Semitic) and culture. History and geography has made its population cosmopolitan, while a flourishing tourist industry continues to reinforce this national trait.

Education in Malta can be traced back to medieval times. Records exist of local schools being set up with local and foreign teachers employed to teach. In the 1850s Canon Pullicino (Director of Education and Professor of Primary School Pedagogy) set up a model school for teaching. The 1924 Compulsory Attendance Act prescribed school attendance until the age of twelve. In 1928, compulsory school attendance was raised to the age of fourteen for pupils registered in state and private schools. The 1946 Compulsory Education Ordinance made primary education compulsory for all Maltese children between the ages of four and fourteen. Until 1970, Maltese pupils only had access to secondary education after passing the 11+ admission examinations or by enrolling at a private school. In 1970 secondary education for all was introduced. Secondary education was based on a selective system. The more academically oriented children were channelled into the established schools which predated the reform (state grammar and secondary technical schools and private secondary schools). Pupils who failed the 11+ examinations, who previously stayed on in primary school until they reached school-leaving age, were now grouped in the newly established state general secondary schools. The curricula of

these new schools were effectively modelled on the needs of pupils likely to leave school as soon as they attained school-leaving age (Bonnici/Soler 2002). In 1972 the entrance examination to the state grammar schools was abolished and all pupils proceeded from their local primary school to a secondary school in their area.

Reforms and innovations

Significant reforms have taken place at primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels over the past thirty years. The practice of streaming is still in use in Malta. Streaming in primary school started in 1962. Up to 1985, pupils were streamed from year 3 to year 6; in 1986 streaming was removed from year 3 and in 1990 it was removed from year 6 (Pace Moore 1999). In the church and independent sector all children are in mixed ability classes.

At primary level, 1981 witnessed the introduction of the junior lyceum entrance examination, which led to the return of selectivity at 11+. Pupils who pass this examination go to junior lyceums, whereas the others go to area secondary schools, which are less academically oriented. In the secondary sector we have witnessed major developments, the main one being the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen years in 1974 (Ventura 1996). Over the years we have seen the establishment of a tripartite system made up of area secondary schools, trade schools (set up in 1972), and junior lyceums (set up in 1981). In 2002 trade schools ceased to exist; pupils now go to area secondary schools.

The Education Act of 1988 brought with it major developments. A national minimum curriculum (NMC) was promulgated for pupils from primary school level to the upper secondary school level, and school councils were set up in an attempt to minimize the traditional and excessive centralization of the education system. Recent developments include further devolution of authority to schools through school development planning, and a review of the NMC which included a long process of consultation with all stakeholders prior to its introduction in 1999.

Developments have also taken place at post-secondary level with the setting up of two types of college, one which caters to academically oriented students who want to pursue further studies (mainly at university), and the College of Arts, Science, and Technology (MCAST), which runs various vocationally oriented courses. The late 1970s saw radical changes to the university system with the introduction of a student-worker scheme in 1978, when all courses were modified to include professional practice. The Education Act of 1988 reversed many of the policies introduced during the previous decade. Today students who have the necessary course requirements are admitted to the courses of their choice.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

Malta's drive to join the European Union has led to a number of initiatives across all sectors of society. Education is at the forefront of these developments. The education system is addressing the responsibilities connected with the prospect of Euro

pean citizenship and the political and economic realities which full EU membership entails. The socio-economic evolution that has taken place in recent years is characterized in particular by the decentralization and globalization of ideas, by the emergence of an information society, by an intensification of the process of secularization, by a crisis of values and traditional lifestyles, by the threat to the physical and social environment, and by the challenges posed by demographic shifts. These developments require a comprehensive response by all stakeholders in the education enterprise.

The above challenges are of direct interest to those responsible for the planning of education programmes, and to all those connected with the education process. The education community generally agrees that the curriculum should provide an educational experience which:

- Promotes fundamental values amongst pupils:
Several studies (e.g. Baldacchino/Mayo 1997) have shown that the family is a key feature of Maltese identity. From its early stages, education affirms the value of the Maltese family, which is adapting to different ways of life. The family is central to the creation and maintenance of social solidarity. Moral and spiritual development are central values of social cohesion and understanding. The school, like the home, should foster among pupils respect for others and for their right to enjoy freedom, peace and security, and the benefits of a society governed by law and order within a context of multi-culturalism.
- Facilitates their holistic development:
Holistic education acknowledges the interdependence of psychomotoric, intellectual, affective, social, and cultural learning. The main aim of education is to facilitate children's overall development at all levels. Self-criticism, reflection, and co-operative efforts are essential skills for lifelong learning.
- Motivates and prepares them to be lifelong learners:
The concept of lifelong education entails that pupils emerge from their obligatory curricular experiences with skills and attitudes that enable them to continue to learn and live effectively and productively.
- Enables them to lead a full and productive life in a shrinking global village:
An education with a global perspective allows pupils to realize that much of what is taking place in Malta is conditioned by international events. It prepares them for the world of work, where change is a fact of life.

The education system should equip all learners with a balanced mix of wisdom, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will allow them to operate effectively in tomorrow's world of work. Linked to this is the need to make good use of one's free time: knowing how to make good use of leisure time by direct involvement in NGOs or by engaging in sporting activities, cultural pursuits, etc.; planning and making good use of one's time; and appreciating the importance of free time and using it constructively.

Socio-economic context

Malta continues to take in returning migrants, people of other nationalities who want to retire in Malta because of its pleasant climate, and refugees who are seeking po-

litical asylum and/or a better life. Whilst our schools have opened their doors to all these types of foreign pupils, we are as yet not in a position to analyse the existing systems to provide these children with an inclusive education, nor to study the impact that these children are having on the system at different levels.

Social position of the teaching profession

The Division of Education currently employs three categories of teaching staff, as follows:

- Professional staff who have been professionally trained either at a teachers' training college or the faculty of education in a university;
- Staff with second or higher degrees, not necessarily in the field of education (these are also accorded professional status);
- Non-professional staff, designated as instructors, who possess either a technical or vocational qualification or a number of passes at ordinary level and one at advanced level; and
- Supply teachers who are also enrolled in a number of subject areas and address existing needs.

Entry into the professional service is at the grade of teacher, which enjoys the same status as other professional officers (e.g. doctors, architects, and engineers) employed within the Civil Service.

School and the role of the family

The participation of parents has always been evident in all sectors of education. However, over the years we observe some major developments in the way parents are encouraged to participate. In the past, and still in a number of schools, parents were mainly involved in fund-raising activities and were encouraged to take part in various school activities (e.g. outings, open days, and fairs). However, the setting up of school councils in the mid-1990s created an opportunity to bring parents closer to the educational programmes that are run in schools. Parents are now being encouraged more than ever to actively participate in a number of 'learning' activities, so that they also fulfil the responsibility they have for their children's education. Various initiatives, some of them at a national level, are aimed at involving parents in a campaign addressing literacy concerns. Parents are involved in learning about what is being done in schools and also how they can help their own children at home. One of the principles of the NMC is to increase parental (and community) involvement in school life and in educational matters in particular.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The Division of Education comprises all state schools and educational institutions. The Education Act of 1988 lays down specific goals for the Division, primarily to ensure an effective and efficient system of schools that provides education and train-

ing which are of relevance to Maltese society. Within the terms of the Act, the right of the individual to develop all of his or her cognitive, affective, and operative skills is considered a moral obligation of society, and a necessary investment in the continued development of the nation. The Education Act of 1988 is the main legal instrument governing educational provision in the Maltese islands. It has introduced a number of major innovations with respect to previous Acts, which are explained below.

In conformity with the edicts of the Constitution, the State is held responsible for the educational provision required by the Act. In Section 2 of the Act, the duties of the State are explained as follows:

- To promote education and instruction;
- To ensure the existence of a system of schools and institutions accessible to all Maltese citizens catering for the full development of the whole personality, including the ability of every person to work; and
- To provide for such schools and institutions where these do not exist.

The Act acknowledges the right of the State to establish a minimum curriculum for all sectors of the education system, irrespective of whether schools are administered by the State itself or by private individuals or organizations. Similarly, the State has the right to establish minimum conditions which both its own and private schools have to fulfil. The Act also recognizes basic individual and parental rights:

- It is the right of every citizen [...] to receive proper education and instruction without any distinction of age, sex, belief, or economic means (Article 1); and
- It is the right of every parent of a minor to give his or her decision with regard to any matter concerning the education which the minor is to receive (Article 4).

Until 1987, education in Malta was compulsory between the ages of six and sixteen. The 1988 Act extends this provision in two important ways: education is now compulsory between the ages of five and sixteen, and the Minister of Education now has the power to extend the period of compulsory education for certain courses as he or she may prescribe by regulation.

Financing

Financial constraints are being imposed by several demands made on the national budget due to an expansion in the welfare service and infrastructural developments. In recent years, the financial provision for education has increased from 8.3% of the national budget in 1991 (Lm 34.7 million) to 11.6% in 2001 (Lm 88.8 million).

Public and private schooling

A section of the Act (Article 6) provides all persons with the right to apply to the Minister of Education for the grant of a license to establish and operate a school. In turn, the Minister is obliged by the Act to grant a license where the applicant is either the Catholic Church (which represents the official religion of the country and which operates a large number of schools), or where the applicant is a voluntary

society of a non-profit-making character. In both cases, of course, the applicant has to ensure that the school conforms with the national minimum conditions.

In Malta, two thirds of the school age population attend schools in the state (public) sector, whereas the remaining one third attend schools in the church and independent (private) sector. A steady growth in the independent sector can be observed over the past fifteen years. Whilst independent schools are all fee-paying institutions, church schools are heavily financed by the government.

General standards of the school education system

The year 1999 saw the introduction of the national minimum curriculum (NMC) after several years of public debate involving all stakeholders. Currently the NMC is being implemented in schools. The curriculum promotes fifteen principles and fourteen objectives which are inspired by the belief in social justice. The principles aim to provide quality education for all with respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and with a focus on holistic education. To achieve this, the education authorities are further promoting a policy of decentralization, and are helping their schools establish their identity and autonomy. The NMC gives schools the power and responsibility to review and modify existing educational programmes so as to meet the needs of their particular pupils. In the process, parent and community involvement are encouraged. Currently, the challenges of decentralization are affecting schools and its members in diverse ways. Most initiatives are stalled, however, while long and arduous negotiations take place between government and the strong Teachers' Union.

Quality management

Management in the Education Division has so far fulfilled the major functions associated with managing a school, except for the actual day-to-day running of it. To date, the Division has been responsible for the following functions:

- Recruitment, promotion, and deployment of staff;
- Curriculum design, development, and prescription;
- Selection, procurement, and deployment of learning materials;
- Design of assessment procedures;
- Setting of annual examination papers;
- Allocation of pupils to schools;
- Preparation of specifications, procurement of equipment, etc., and its deployment;
- Maintenance of premises and equipment;
- Organization of national pupil activities;
- Organization and running of in-service programmes; and
- Provision of school support services.

Given the move towards decentralization, we are seeing a concerted effort to devolve greater responsibilities to the school and its community. Currently, the role of central authorities is being reformulated in order to take on a more regulatory func-

tion. At the same time, the government, through its Ministry of Education, is formulating a series of policies that will facilitate the management of change.

To date, Malta has not participated in any international assessments, mainly due to financial restraints. Locally, the only benchmarks are the 11+ selective examination for entry into secondary school and the annual examination papers, which are centralized and common to all pupils in state schools. At the end of compulsory schooling at age sixteen, pupils sit secondary education certificate examinations which are set by the University of Malta. The options of sitting foreign IGCSEs and GCEs are still available locally. At the end of post secondary education at the age of eighteen, pupils register for the matriculation certificate, which is made up of two subjects at 'A' level and three subjects at intermediate level, plus systems of knowledge. This certificate, which is based on the international baccalaureate model, provides pupils with the necessary university entry qualification.

Support systems

In response to the principles of inclusion and respect for diversity, the Ministry of Education has, over the past decade, undertaken various initiatives to facilitate the inclusion of children with learning difficulties in mainstream education. The provision of a facilitator to provide assistance and the required support to these children and their class teachers started at the primary level and is being extended to the secondary level.

The government provides free education to refugees who seek temporary asylum in Malta. Refugee children attend state schools of the locality in which they are residing. These children qualify for special support given to pupils facing learning difficulties (e.g. language and socialization).

The current school system

General structure: overview

Education in Malta is compulsory between the ages of five and sixteen. There are three types of school: state, church, and independent. The State provides free education, including free textbooks and school transport in primary and secondary schools. It also provides study grants to practically all students in post-secondary education.

Church schools, which are almost entirely run by the religious orders, currently charge no fees for primary and secondary education, and are subsidized by the State, which covers all their teacher salaries. Parents contribute term 'donations' to cover other expenses. Students in post-secondary church schools are also paid a study allowance as long as they have the minimum qualifications established for entry into comparable state institutions. The independent sector is made up of a number of pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools. These are fee-paying schools and are usually run by a board of governors.

Pre-primary education

Kindergartens were first set up in 1975 to cater for four-year-olds. This educational provision was extended to three-year-olds in 1987. The law requires the State to set up such centres in each town and village, most of which are attached to primary schools. Attendance is entirely voluntary. It is estimated that approximately 94% of three-year-olds and all four-year-olds are enrolled in kindergarten education in state, church, or private schools.

There are several private nursery schools, some of which are operated by the religious orders, and others which are operated by private individuals. The current programme lays an emphasis on the socialization of children, and encourages opportunities for guided intellectual, emotional, creative, and physical development. At this level, the emphasis is meant to be on play. The teacher to pupil ratio for the pre-primary level within the state sector stands at 1:10, whereas that of the independent sector stands at 1:20. Kindergarten teachers (known as kindergarten assistants) are recruited from amongst candidates who successfully complete a specialized post-secondary two-year course organized by the Division of Education.

Primary education

Primary education lasts for six years. State primary schools generally cater to the needs of all children within each town and village. However, a number of parents opt to send their children to church and independent schools. State primary schools are all co-educational (since 1980), as are the majority of independent schools. Church primary schools, on the other hand, generally cater to either boys or girls. Classes in primary schools normally do not exceed thirty pupils, and have one main classroom teacher. The teacher to pupil ratio at this level within the state and church/independent sector currently stands at 1:19. Teachers in the areas of the creative arts, physical education, and science visit the schools on a regular basis to provide specialized lessons. Educational psychological services are available for primary school children. An individualized complementary education programme is provided for pupils experiencing difficulties in the mainstream programme. Facilitators are allocated on a one-to-one basis to pupils facing specific physical and/or learning difficulties. This is in line with the current inclusive education policy.

State primary education is broadly divided into two cycles of three years each, with the first three years emphasizing social skills and pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, gradually progressing to more formal skills. In this cycle of primary education, where pupils are generally under the pastoral care of a separate head of school, all classes are of mixed ability and informal pupil assessment is carried out. Progression from one year to another is normally based on age.

The second cycle of primary education is also of three years and lays more emphasis on academic skills. Formal end-of-year examinations take place in years 4 to 6 in English, Maltese, mathematics, religion, and social studies. In years 5 to 6, pupils are streamed on the basis of their performance in these examinations. At the end of primary education, selective examinations take place. These require satisfactory performance in Maltese, English, mathematics, social studies, and religious knowledge (pupils may opt out of the latter on grounds of conscience and faith). The

breadth of the examination is intended to ensure adequate coverage of all areas of the primary curriculum. Success in these selective 11+ examinations in the five main areas leads to entry into single-sex junior lyceums. 73% of the year 6 population in primary schools sat the 11+ examinations (75% of boys and 71% of girls) in 2001. The current pass rate is around 54%. Currently, about 52% of the male candidates and 56% of the female candidates qualify for entry into the selective junior lyceums. The pupils who fail this examination or do not sit it proceed to general area secondary schools.

Church and independent primary schools have no formal division into cycles. Assessment is carried out independently by individual schools, and there is an increasing use of the varied services provided by the State. Whilst pupils attending these schools can, in most cases, proceed automatically to the secondary sector, a common entrance examination is held at the end of primary education for pupils who have not attended a church school or who have attended a church primary school that does not have a second cycle. Currently this opportunity is only available for boys. 1410 pupils sat this examination in 1999 and 440 were admitted.

Secondary education

After the six years of primary education pupils proceed to five years of secondary education (form 1 to form 5). The State provides single-sex education, of which there are two types: pupils who pass the five junior lyceum examinations are admitted into junior lyceums (grammar schools). These were set up in April 1981 (Ventura 1996). The other pupils are admitted into general area secondary schools. In 2001, 25.1% of sixteen-year-olds gained passes in the required subjects and were eligible for entry into post-secondary schools.

In both types of school the secondary course is divided into two cycles. Junior lyceums have an introductory two-year cycle in which pupils follow a common curriculum with limited options (e.g. choice of one foreign language), which serves to orientate pupils towards later studies. A more specialized three-year cycle follows, during which pupils elect to study a number of subjects alongside a compulsory core curriculum. In general, pupils are allowed to choose a range of subjects which will help them to realize their vocational and higher education aspirations.

Area secondary schools, on the other hand, have an initial three-year cycle with a similarly broad orientation as in junior lyceums. This is followed by a two-year cycle during which pupils opt for a number of subjects alongside the compulsory core curriculum. The teacher to pupil ratio at secondary level in the state and non-state sector currently stands at 1: 11.

Special education

Special schools provide education for children with special learning difficulties and special needs. With the current drive towards inclusion, the number of pupils admitted to these schools is decreasing. At the same time, the provision of educational resources for pupils with particular needs (e.g. profound physical disabilities, deafness, and blindness) is being extended and modernized.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Post-secondary education provides pupils with the opportunity to pursue further studies in various domains leading to university entry requirements, vocational courses, or the world of work. All education at this level is provided by the State, except for a small number of church and independent schools which provide university entrance courses. Post-secondary education is available to all pupils satisfying minimum entry requirements as requested by the different institutions. In general, pupils at this level are awarded study allowances to cover particular expenses incurred by them. All schools at this level are co-educational and staff are trained to at least first degree level.

Junior college

This institution caters for the majority of pupils wishing to pursue further studies at university. The entry requirements for junior college are six passes in the secondary education certificate examinations at grade 5 or better (or equivalent qualifications). The subjects must include English, Maltese, mathematics, one science subject, and two other subjects. Pupils follow a two-year programme leading to the matriculation certificate. At this college, pupils study two subjects at advanced level, and four subjects at intermediate level, one of which (systems of knowledge) is compulsory. In 2001, out of the 1981 candidates who registered for the matriculation certificate examinations a total of 1290 (65.5%) were awarded the certificate.

Higher secondary

Here pupils are provided with revision courses leading to the SEC examinations, and with the opportunity to study for the matriculation certificate. At this institution pupils are also offered the possibility of pursuing single subjects at advanced level. There are currently only two church schools and one independent sixth form school.

Tourism studies

The Institute of Tourism Studies, which currently falls under the Ministry of Tourism, runs a variety of courses. Courses currently offered include: hotel services, food preparation and service, food preparation and production, food preparation and production and food and beverage service, hotel services, accommodation services and supervisory studies, food preparation and production and supervisory studies, food preparation and production management, and two courses in management studies – one in hospitality management and the other in hotel operations. Entry requirements vary from course to course. While the minimum entry requirements for a number of certificate courses is a 'satisfactory school leaving certificate', other courses require a City and Guilds level 1 or level 2 qualification, together with a number of SEC passes. The advanced courses require at least two passes at advanced level. Upon completion of these courses, students can join the bachelor's programme at the University of Malta for the B.Com. (Hons) in Tourism.

Extended skills training scheme

An extended skills training scheme, launched in 1980 with ILO assistance, provides the more successful trade school graduates with extended training at a level somewhat beyond tradesman level. Other students from different institutions can also be considered for entry so long as they fulfil entry requirements. Trainees are employed by government departments, quangos, and private industry, and divide their time roughly equally between on-the-job training and formal studies at an appropriate institution.

University

The 1988 Act obliges the State to provide free university education to all students with the necessary entrance qualifications. Subject to fulfilling course entry requirements, every student has the right to register in a course of his or her own choice, with no barriers in the form of a *numerus clausus* or other factors. However, the University is not obliged to offer any course on a regular basis, and some courses, because of the restrictions imposed by available teaching facilities, are available every other year so as to ensure adequate standards.

The Act gives a large degree of autonomy to the University (founded in the late sixteenth century) in formulating its statutes and regulations, in the administration of its funds (both those which the Act requires Parliament to provide and those secured by the University from other sources), in the provision of courses, and in the appointment of staff. At the same time, however, the Minister has the right by law to instruct auditors to examine the books and accounts of the University and to report to him. The Registrar of Examinations, an official within the Ministry of Education, is empowered by the Act to monitor examinations held by the University.

The highest office of the University is that of Chancellor, who is appointed by the President of Malta, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister after he has consulted the Leader of the Opposition. The Chancellor may appoint a Pro-Chancellor. On the other hand, the Rector of the University is an elected post. The Rector may in turn appoint a Pro-Rector. The Secretary of the University is appointed by Council. Deans of faculties are also elected officials. All the University offices are held for a determined period of years, ranging from seven years for the Chancellor to one year for the Pro-Rector. The governing body of the University is the Council, which normally acts on the advice of Senate (responsible for academic matters and usually acting on the advice of the respective faculty boards), but which also has responsibility for appointing faculty, promulgating regulations, overseeing and approving expenditure, and ensuring that the University responds to the needs of the country as perceived by the government. The last function is given considerable importance in the Act, so that the government (through the Prime Minister) has the right to nominate a majority of members to the Council.

The roots of the University go back four centuries. The Education Act of 1988 contained important provisions about the University. The main provision is that the University is obliged to admit all students who hold the entry requirements without recourse to a *numerus clausus*. Current entry requirements are the matriculation certificate made up of passes in two subjects at 'A' level and three subjects at inter-

mediate level, plus systems of knowledge. A pass at least at SEC level is also needed in English, Maltese, and mathematics. The University is, however, free to decide which courses to offer, and some courses, notably in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, currently admit a restricted number of students due to constraints on space and equipment. The University is organized into eleven faculties as follows: Architecture and Civil Engineering, Arts, Dental Surgery, Economics, Management and Accountancy, Education, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Law, Medicine and Surgery, Science, and Theology. Bachelor's degrees are offered at either general or honours level, with higher degrees (master's and doctorate) offered in a number of faculties. Most faculties offer several certificate- and diploma-level courses, generally in the form of evening courses.

In Malta we can observe an upward trend of students wishing to study at tertiary level. While in 1985 only 1408 students (6.3%) of the eighteen- to twenty-two-year-old age group were enrolled at the University, this has steadily gone up over the years. In fact, in 2001 more than 7500 students (28% of the age group) attended the University.

Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (MCAST)

This college includes, under one umbrella, a number of institutes that cater to students wishing to pursue studies at higher education level. In October 2001, the following institutes were set up:

Art and Design, Building and Construction Engineering, Information and Communication Technology, Business and Commerce, Electronic Engineering, and Maritime Studies. A major common feature emphasized by all courses is vocational orientation. This implies courses that are designed around theory and practice, and which involve both course work at the various institutes and field experience through work engagements in different government and private institutions. Entry requirements for the institutes vary. Although the intention is to provide opportunities for as many candidates as possible who wish to further their studies or retrain, the number of available places is limited and applicants thus have to be selected according to merit, based on passes in compulsory subjects, elective subjects, and all other subjects at ordinary, intermediate, and advanced levels. Apprenticeship schemes in a number of courses are envisaged. All apprentices will be entitled to a maintenance grant. Given the College's orientation, the teaching staff that the various institutes aim to recruit may have either academic or vocational qualifications, or a first degree plus work experience in the relevant area, or a combination of these.

Whilst the College aims to bring together existing courses and introduce new ones, the main objective is to strengthen the provision of post-secondary vocational education alongside the courses offered at the University of Malta. As the country recently joined the European Union, it is imperative that its current and future labour force has the professional and academic expertise required to take the country forward. The College thus aims to create learning and work opportunities for post-secondary students as well as mature students. It is envisaged that lifelong learning both as a concept and as a strategy will become a way of life.

Teacher training

In the 1940s, two single-sex teacher training colleges were set up. The training programme began as a three-month programme in 1944. This was extended to a one-year course in 1947, to two years in 1954, and eventually to three years in 1971 (Xerri 1994). In 1978 the Faculty of Education was set up with the responsibility of preparing teachers for primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools. The Faculty runs a four-year bachelor's degree in education (B.Ed. (Hons)) and a one-year post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE).

The entry requirements for the B.Ed. (Hons) course are: the secondary education certificate (SEC) with passes in Maltese, English and mathematics; or the matriculation certificate; or the European computing driving license (ECDL). The Faculty of Education offers two main strands with a primary or secondary specialization. Students undertaking the primary specialization pursue a programme that will lead to a teaching qualification to teach pupils between the ages of either five and eight or eight and eleven. Students undertaking the secondary specialization pursue a teaching qualification to teach pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen. Students in both specializations take courses in philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Each specialization also includes a field placement component in each of the four years, which includes observation sessions in the first two years and teaching practice in the final two years. Students wishing to enrol in the PGCE one-year post-graduate programme need to be already in possession of a first degree and to attend an interview on teaching at secondary level. The continuing professional development of teachers provided by the University is of two kinds: certificate, diploma or master's degrees are offered by the Faculty of Education to those wishing to undertake advanced studies in education. At the same time, Malta University Services offers training opportunities in specific areas throughout the academic year. The Division of Education provides teachers with various opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge base in specific areas through INSET courses and seminars (Bezzina/Camilleri 1998).

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

As a starting point, it needs to be pointed out that due to financial constraints Malta currently does not participate in international assessment studies such as PISA. However, a number of local initiatives are being undertaken.

A number of initiatives over the past five years reflect a move by central authorities to give more powers of responsibility and authority to the schools. All state primary and secondary schools are being encouraged to develop draft school development plans. Such a move reflects the view that school improvement can be brought about by concentrating development efforts on the school, which thereby becomes the major engine of change in the education system. This is further supported by the current initiatives involving national curriculum reforms (Ministry of Education 2000, 2001; Giordmaina 2000). This concept provides an alternative view to the centralized, prescriptive model of school improvement that state schools have been used to. State schools in Malta have traditionally worked within a system

which is hierarchical, centralized, and bureaucratic. As a result, teachers have grown weary through disillusionment and stress (Bezzina 1995; Borg/Falzon 1989). Teachers constantly find themselves sandwiched between a belief in democracy and participation on the one hand, and the daily experience of a lack of decision-making powers on the other. Over the years, schools have not been given the opportunity to develop into vital places of learning and sites of professional inquiry and reflective practice (Bezzina 1997, 1998).

Moving from the shackles of dependency towards autonomy will not be easy. One cannot talk of such moves without properly understanding the culture and climate that have evolved over the years, that have led to the current situation, and that in fact determine to a large extent how people think and act. The present conditions and circumstances of schools could not be more antithetical to their becoming centres of inquiry and change. Among the worst of these conditions are: the isolation of educators (both teachers and school administrators) from one another, the fragmentation of the school day into separate subject matters, the assignment of specific amounts of time per subject, the untenable ratio of pupils to teachers, and the lack of time for genuine reflection, co-operation, and critical inquiry amongst teachers (Bezzina 1999). Any effort to improve the effectiveness of schools depends on an understanding of their dynamics. This implies exploring the actions and influences of teachers, learners, education officials, parents, community members, and the curriculum, and the ways in which these influences operate.

In fact, the NMC calls for radical changes in the whole culture of philosophical and pedagogical practices towards collegiality and collaboration among all stakeholders. The major challenge is indeed one of leadership. We need charismatic and transformational leaders who emphasize creative and collaborative co-leadership, and who appreciate the need for relationships and new work patterns. Currently, various initiatives being undertaken at the administrative and school level are aimed at developing such a culture whilst at the same time introducing various reforms whose purpose is to modernize certain practices and improve the quality of education.

Other initiatives being undertaken by the Ministry of Education include the clustering of schools, which is aimed at encouraging schools to focus on quality issues throughout the compulsory school years. It is also envisaged that schools will in this way be in a better position to provide an holistic education for the children entrusted to their care. This will also help to build on the policy to devolve greater responsibilities to the school site.

Another initiative is a national review of independent certification at the end of compulsory and post-secondary education. The aim of this review is to evaluate whether the current differentiated paper system is to be retained at 16+, whether the components of the matriculation certificate at 18+ are still valid, and whether the link between these two stages of education needs to be strengthened. The review will also study the tension between academic and vocational certification, and the dilemma between certification for all at the end of compulsory schooling and qualifications which necessitate the need for a standard to be reached in order for the qualification to be issued.

References

- Baldacchino, G./Mayo, P. (Eds): *Beyond Schooling: adult education in Malta*. Malta 1997.
- Bezzina, C.: *The Maltese Primary School Principalship: Perceptions, Roles and Responsibilities*. PhD thesis, Brunel University, School of Education. UK 1995.
- Bezzina, C.: *Restructuring Schools in Malta: the road to improvement*. In: *International Journal of Educational Management* 11 (1997) 5, pp. 194-202.
- Bezzina, C.: *Making Quality Work: the Challenge is Now*. Keynote Address at the MUT Conference, *The Role of Education Officers and Subject Co-ordinators as Agents of Change and Development*, 25th-26th April, San Maison Hotel, Pieta'. Malta 1998.
- Bezzina, C.: *Authentic educational leadership for 21st century Malta: breaking the bonds of dependency*. In: *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies* 4 (1999) 1, pp. 51-66.
- Bezzina, C./Camilleri, A.: *Teacher Education Reform in Malta: the voice From within*. Paper presented at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe. Limerick/Ireland 1998.
- Bonnici, B./Soler, L.: *Repeating Year 6: Views and Perceptions of Different Stakeholders*. Unpublished B. Ed (Hons) dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta. Malta 2002.
- Borg, M./Falzon, J.: *Stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Malta*. In: *Educational Review* 41 (1989) 3, pp. 271-279.
- Central Office of Statistics, Department of Information: *Education Statistics 2001*. Valletta/Malta 2001.
- Education Division, Curriculum Department: *Junior Lyceum Entrance Examinations 1999*. Floriana/Malta 2001.
- Giordmaina, J. (Ed.): *National Curriculum on its Way – Proceedings*. Floriana/Malta 2000.
- MATSEC, University of Malta: *SEC 2001 Statistical Report*. Malta 2002.
- MATSEC, University of Malta: *Matriculation Certificate Examinations: Annual Report*. Malta 2002.
- Ministry of Education: *Creating the Future Together – National Minimum Curriculum*. Floriana/Malta 2000.
- Ministry of Education: *National Curriculum on its Way - Strategic Plan*. Floriana/Malta 2001.
- Mizzi, C.: *An Overview of the Maltese Secondary Education Sector*. In: Faculty of Education, University of Malta: *School Experience Reader and Guidesheets*. 2001, pp. 12-15.
- Pace Moore, E.: *Modifying the Primary Curriculum to Suit Mixed Ability Classes*. Unpublished B. Ed (Hons) dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta. Malta 1999.
- Sultana, R.: *Education and National Development: Historical and critical perspectives on vocational schooling in Malta*. Malta 1992.
- Ventura, F. (Ed.): *Secondary Education in Malta: Challenges and Opportunities*. Valletta/Malta 1996.
- Xerri, J.: *Major Developments in Maltese Primary Education*. Appendix II. In: Farrugia, C. (Ed.): *A New Vision for Primary Schools*. Valletta/Malta 1994, pp. 289-316.
- Zammit Mangion, J.: *An Analysis of the Growth and Development of Education in Malta since 1946*. In: UNESCO: *Education in Malta – A look to the future*. Paris 1987, pp. 17 - 25.

Wolf Oschlies

Macedonia

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

In the UN, the Republic of Macedonia had to assume the official name of FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) because of protests from Greece, a name it has never accepted itself. The Republic covers an area of 25,713 square kilometres and has about two million inhabitants (Lukan/Jordan 1998). The titular population makes up 66% of the country's inhabitants, while the rest is divided among twenty-three ethnic minorities. Albanians (23%), Turks (4%), and Roma (2.3%) are the most numerous among them. They therefore include ethnic groups in which either a traditional aversion against educational institutions exists (Roma) or in which girls and women are substantially under-represented in such institutions (Albanians).

At the end of the fifth century, Byzantium named Slavs crossing its borders after the name of the region in which they arrived, hence 'Macedonian Slavs', and integrated them into the structures of the Byzantine Empire. In the course of an eventful history, Macedonians lived under the alternating rule of Bulgarians, Serbs, and Turks, until their settlement area was distributed in 1912-13 among Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. Today's Republic of Macedonia gained its sovereignty in 1991 and consists of the formerly Serbian part of Macedonia.

Language and culture

As early as the fifteenth century, the Macedonian language had found a form of its own, with all the special features distinguishing it from the rest of the Slavonic language family. For some time, however, it existed only as a spoken regional dialect. During the nineteenth century, cautious attempts at establishing Macedonian schools (Kantardziev 1965) were not enough to bring about cultural self-realization. In August 1944, the Anti-Fascist People's Liberation Council of Macedonia (Asnom) decided that 'the Macedonian people's language is the official language of the Republic of Macedonia'. The 'Republic of Macedonia' was to be part of the 'Federative Republic of Yugoslavia', which at the time was no more real than a Macedonian alphabet or Macedonian literature (Kantardziev 2002, p. 542). One has to remember that with regard to its language, this small nation accelerated from zero to full political and cultural competence within a very short period of time. Government agencies issued decrees and publishing houses published written material with the help of a newly adapted Cyrillic alphabet. It then took until the 1950s to firmly establish the Macedonian language with regard to vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. This was an unbelievable situation in which, by means of a type of linguistic test-tube experiment, an archaic idiom was changed into the communication basis of a modern

nation. Textbooks, schools, literacy classes, songs, amateur play groups, books of poetry, novels – all contributed to fortify Macedonia's new-old national culture.

Education and national identity

In order to fully appreciate Macedonia's second cultural achievement, we must remind ourselves that especially the latest crisis of the Kosovo conflict, with its ensuing war, had its starting point in disputes over education and universities. According to the words of Macedonia's current President Gligorov, the country was spared the war only because never in its history has it experienced armed conflicts with or among ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, the Balkans have always been Europe's 'powder keg' when it comes to the education system. Everybody involved was badly hurt because they all ignored important recent developments in this area: on the one side, the State economizes on education and culture because it needs the money elsewhere. On the other, nationalistic teachers, curricula, and text books repeat old 'battles' and prepare their readers for new ones, while universities turn into hotbeds of ideological indoctrination (Sucevic 1997). In this context, it is no minor feat that Macedonians have always made great efforts to find the right answers to questions about educational policies, answers which would satisfy the cultural needs of their minorities and strengthen their identity. This, however, did not always meet with success during the time of the Yugoslav Federation. After the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1990-91, Macedonia put into place a series of educational and cultural policies that accorded with the spirit of interethnic tolerance.

Reforms and innovations

When Macedonia started to build up from scratch a national educational and cultural system after the Second World War, the biggest obstacle did not consist in the lack of an existing written language but first of all in the fact that more than two thirds of the population was illiterate (Jurukova 1990, p. 73). Despite the miniscule number of only 337 teachers, a compulsory education of seven years was introduced after 1944, while the lack of teachers was overcome by 'pragmatic' means (i.e. crash courses). School buildings were lacking as well. Nevertheless, from the beginning Macedonia established, within the borders of the multi-national State of Yugoslavia, schools for ethnic minorities (schools where non-Macedonian languages were spoken in class). In 1948 a 'Federal Framework Curriculum' was issued for the compulsory schools. Together with the primary schools (*osnovno ucilište*), the first senior high schools (*gimnazija*) and junior high schools with vocational training (*sredno strucno ucilište*) were founded. In general, the Macedonian school system suffered from the Yugoslav 'original evils' such as centralization and bureaucracy. It has to be said, however, that Macedonia handled the federal educational system in a comparatively pragmatic way. A number of special features seem to be noteworthy (Kantardziev 2002, p. 553).

Pre-school education had no tradition in Macedonia, since children grew up in the extended family. As late as 1960, less than 3% of all children were registered. It was not until the 1970s that an increased number of institutions offered systematic training for kindergarten teachers.

One of the major objectives of the education system was to provide primary schools all over the country, and especially in the east, in order to fight illiteracy. The most important means was the establishment of teacher training schools (also as branches in secondary or senior high schools). In 1958 the General Law on Schooling introduced a unified eight-year primary school. Even in the 1970s, its curriculum was hardly altered. The situation was complicated by the fact that in parallel to the Macedonian system, schools and curricula in the Albanian language also had to be established.

First of all, however, the number of secondary schools was increased (two- to three-year schools with vocational training, four-year junior high and senior high schools). They were closely connected to businesses (such as school agencies), which led to a certain dependence on their need for personnel. This changed only with the introduction of the Law on Junior High Schools (1970). With the beginning of the 1980s, the senior high schools were phased out. All secondary schools were integrated into the 'united system of goal-oriented education' (*edinstven sistem na nasoceno obrazovanie*). Only after 1945 did Macedonia start to build up an appreciable welfare system for disabled children. It was later systematically enlarged. At the beginning of the 1980s there existed five schools for the disabled with 1482 children (Kantardziev 2002, p. 580).

The core of a state university was laid as early as 1946 in Skopje, with a faculty of philosophy. There were ten faculties by 1974, which were later reassigned to new institutions.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Since 2001, the Macedonian school system has been integrated into a network of highly heterogeneous tasks, requirements, and consequences. The principles on the position and rights of ethnic minorities negotiated in August 2001, the so-called 'Framework Agreement of Ohrid', including the ensuing constitutional changes of 16 November 2001, have guaranteed minorities the 'right to primary and secondary education in their mother tongue'. The practical consequences are a growing separation of schools, students, and classes. This trend is increased by the decentralizing territorial reform: since August 2004 there have been 84 communes (*opštini*), plus the capital Skopje, instead of the 123 communes of 1996. For ethnic groups like the Roma, we can only observe the vicious circle of educational deficits, unemployment, social impoverishment, and socio-cultural marginalization.

In general, Macedonian society has the impression that it possesses a good school system and a relatively high level of culture. In view of a population of not many more than two million inhabitants, the number of schools, universities, research institutes, theatres, museums, and libraries is respectable. This self-assessment is not altogether wrong, but includes a nostalgic reference to those eras of their history when the engagement with their own language, culture, and education (including institutional preparations for their promotion) led to a cultural renaissance of the Macedonian nation.

At the moment, more and more doubts are arising over the country's laudable, European-oriented educational conception, as it seems to be running up against opposite developments within the population. The proportion of children not receiving compulsory education is increasing, with the result that in April 2005 about 15,000 children did not go to school at all. Of those going to school, more and more leave after grade 5, because as of grade 6 pupils get marks for their work, and if a pupil is not good enough, he or she has to repeat the year. Especially Roma children capitulate before such demands, while other ethnic groups with 'traditional' educational abstinence believe that after five years of elementary schooling their children have learned a sufficient amount.

According to a survey carried out by the 'National Expert Group for Educational Development' in 2004, more than 780,000 citizens between fifteen and sixty-five years of age have 'no or only a very low education'. 60,000 of them never went to school, while 170,000 attended four and 549,000 eight years of school. 168,000 citizens completed three and 465,000 four years of secondary school. The number of graduates from a vocational school was 51,000 against 115,000 university graduates. This overall rather low educational level correlates with the situation on the labour market: of the 316,000 unemployed (in 2004) 3700 were illiterate and 17,000 only had an elementary education.

Nikola Gruevski, former Minister of Finance and president of the biggest opposition party, VMRO-DPMNE, said disapprovingly in an interview (*Dnevnik* 29 April 2005) that 'Macedonian society is not as well-educated as it believes'. 53.1% have an elementary education at most (or at least), and 36.9% went to secondary school, while 3.2% received a vocational and 6.53% a university education. Only 0.17% of Macedonians acquired the academic master's degree, and 0.13% a PhD. While on average 46.9% of EU citizens use the Internet, this figure is only 4.9% in Macedonia. In the whole of Europe, only Albania and Bosnia have a lower rate. Furthermore, with regard to buying books, Macedonians do not present a much better picture: in 2003, there were only 0.3 books sold per Macedonian, which worked out at 75 denar (1.20 euro) per head spent on books.

Socio-economic context

But there is more. In 2004 Macedonian experts within the association of the European Centre for Minority Questions recorded methodological, didactic, and structural defects of the Macedonian education system. According to their verdict, the education system 'contributes to the dissociation of the different ethnic groups and to the increase of interethnic tensions' by strengthening 'linguistic and ethnic parallelisms' and an 'ethnocentric orientation' while favouring 'traditional methods'. The ethnic groups' educational competence in their native language means that in the daily practice of Macedonian schools, Albanians, Turks, and Serbs are learning differently in classes organized according to their mother tongue and without any communication among each other. In the humanities, especially in history and literature, an ethnocentric approach that involves 'glorifying one's own people at the cost of others' dominates. If other ethnic groups are mentioned at all, this is often only in the form of 'negative stereotypes and prejudices'. In this sense, school pre-

parens the ground for 'nationalism in its extreme'. The 'traditional methods' that were so severely reprimanded consist of a 'school atmosphere of authoritarianism', 'ex-cathedra teaching', constant memorizing, and a 'complete absence of critical and creative thinking'.

In order to try to overcome this state of affairs, experts recommend, for instance, that each Macedonian child should learn at least one minority language (in regions with compact minority communities, beginning with grade 1), that minority children should learn the Macedonian language 'with much more seriousness', and that, in general, teaching should use 'the most modern [...] teaching methods'. Even a 'bilingual teaching model' was recommended that is said to have already demonstrated its advantage in private schools. Extra-curricular activities should be based on multi-ethnic and multilingual principles, curricula and school books should be purged of all ethno-discriminatory elements, and teaching in general should be turned away from memorizing and toward interactivity and creativity. If such good intentions are to be realized, enormous changes with regard to financing, teaching staff, training, etc. are needed. But first of all, the school administration would have to be de-politicized in order to make sure that it is not shaken to its foundation by each change of power in the country.

One of the most important educational tasks of the new State of Macedonia was to find out the reasons for illiteracy in order to eliminate it all the more effectively. There were numerous difficulties. Due to the economic downturn suffered especially by the socially underprivileged classes, children from these groups were not seen in pre-schools, although, according to the educational conception, pre-schools were meant to help precisely these children most of all. UNICEF allocated financial means in order to help introduce 'compulsory pre-school education', but these funds were mostly spent in vain. Different birth rates between Macedonians (declining) and ethnic minorities (rising) led to discrepancies in the network of primary schools: Albanian and Turkish schools were overcrowded, while Macedonian schools were not used to full capacity. Faults also appeared in the secondary school system. Applications for a two-year apprenticeship on the job and three-year vocational training in schools declined rapidly, while four-year courses leading to the baccalaureate diploma boomed. On the other hand, vocational courses (*kursevi za strucnoto oспособuvanje* = apprenticeship) expanded, as they had to take up all those who were academically less gifted. These courses last from only a few months up to one year and cover ever more jobs and professions. The expansion of the secondary school system resulted in a great rush on the universities. To alleviate the pressure, long-distance courses were revitalized and 'enrolment with a contribution' was introduced. Special efforts are being made with regard to the schools of ethnic minorities. The Pedagogic College offers a four-year course for teachers in their native language (Albanian and Turkish). The Chairs of Albanian and Turkish Language and Literature at Skopje University's Faculty of Philosophy also offer courses in Albanian and Turkish studies.

The illiteracy rate is still estimated at 5-6%, with a rising tendency. The reason seems to be that in recent years means and institutions to fight illiteracy among adults have been cut, while compulsory education of women among the minorities

has not yet been fully implemented. In order to tackle this complex problem, appeals were made to create a broad social 'literacy contract'.

Social position of the teaching profession

The prestige of the teaching profession is no longer as high as it once was, but it is not as low as in other East European countries. Teachers are paid from the state budget and their salaries rise by 0.5% with each completed year of service. Teachers working in small schools or in inaccessible mountainous regions etc. are rewarded with extra pay for difficult working conditions. Qualification requirements for pedagogues are typical, meaning that educators in pre-school institutions and teachers at elementary schools can also acquire their qualification at colleges of higher education, whereas subject teachers and teachers at secondary schools must graduate from an academic institution.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The Macedonian legal system is based on the Constitution of 1991. With regard to schools, it was supplemented and defined by numerous systemic laws for all levels and forms of schools (Gluceva 2001). Everybody has a right to education; eight years of basic schooling are compulsory and free. All educational institutions consider themselves to be service centres for the country's citizens. Each new school policy is implemented after consultation and in close co-operation with UNESCO, the European Council, OECD, UNICEF, the World Bank, and others. The highest authority on education is the Minister of Education and Science (his remit only excludes pre-primary nursing schools for children, which are the concern of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy). A kind of planning committee within the Ministry of Education exists in the Bureau for Educational Development (*Biro za razvoj na obrazovaniето*), which formulates curricula and controls their implementation. It also supervises teachers and their further training. Curricula and text books are controlled by the Pedagogic Service (*pedagoška služba*). The State Education Inspectorate (*državen prosveten inspektorat*) checks whether or not laws and regulations are being followed.

In 1991 and 1995 Macedonia introduced laws on the system of secondary schools. Senior high schools were re-introduced to the population's general approval in 1995. Pupils of fifteen to eighteen or nineteen years of age attend secondary and high schools. The State pays for the schooling of young people, while adults have to pay for themselves if they want to attend such schools (which is easily possible) in order to make up for educational lacks. In 1995, the establishment of private secondary schools was permitted. In order to be accepted into a state secondary school, pupils have to undergo a *konkurs*, a type of application procedure. If there are more applications than free places, pupils are chosen according to their school performance. Applicants who are refused entry can try other schools where there are still available places.

According to the Constitution of 1991 and the University Law of 2000, autonomy is guaranteed for the country's universities. In general, a course of studies takes four years; only medicine, dentistry, electrical engineering, architecture, and a few others take six years. All universities are by law committed to teaching, the training of staff, and scientific research. Students are admitted only as far as they have completed the four-year senior high school. Applicants for the Institutes of Art or Sport have 'to prove their special abilities and talents'. Admission to a course of studies or post-diploma studies is arranged according to the above-mentioned system of *konkurse*, which are a cause of great nervousness each year in March. In principle, university studies are free of charge. However, those who have gained admission to a university other than by the normal means or outside the prescribed quota have to pay a fee (*školarina*). A special feature of university admission consists in the fact that ethnic minorities are granted a fixed quota of places in order to allow their admission even if their school performance is somewhat lower. All schools have committees (*odbori*) with representatives from schools, the community, and parents. In pre-school institutions, these committees follow the Children's Protection Act of 2000.

In order to better solve such and numerous other problems, 'school committees' (*ucilisen odbor*) were established at all primary and secondary schools as of 2002. These committees are composed of representatives of teachers, students, parents, and authorities, who have to shoulder more and more responsibilities concerning the administration, financing, management, and structure of schools. The biggest problem of the Macedonian educational system is, as mentioned several times already, the continuing 'leakage' (*osipivanje*) from schools, which is 1.71% per year for primary schools and almost 4% per year for secondary schools. Furthermore, this tendency is growing: in 1994-95, 34,935 children started school, of whom only 89% finished their primary education in 2001-02. Of the 26,244 secondary pupils in 1998-99, only 80.93% (21,241) completed their education.

Quality control and evaluation

In Macedonian schools, many exams have to be taken and many marks are given, but all this does not say much about real achievements and successes. Macedonian pupils are the object of 'a systematic monitoring of their development' and an 'evaluation of their knowledge and abilities' by means of marks given on a scale of five to one. Teachers are evaluated even more intensively, as schools prepare annual reports with detailed information on 'activities and results' in 'compulsory and voluntary and facultative courses', in 'additional and supplementary studies', in 'free students' activities', and in 'broad educational work'. However, the administration still does not seem to be satisfied with all this information, and has therefore introduced evaluation projects for primary schools in recent years. They are to lead to a more objective evaluation on the basis of 'standardized instruments for external control of individual subjects'. Grades 1 to 3 are submitted to a special programme of a general written evaluation, which was introduced with the help of the Dutch government.

Skopje hopes to bring about a general improvement when Macedonia becomes integrated into the international study PISA PLUS, which helped to increase contacts to all thirty-two OECD members. The same is intended with other memberships and co-operation projects, such as the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Such contacts often include financial support as well. A first tangible result will be the early introduction of a national baccalaureate (*matura*) in accordance with international standards. It has been tested since 1996 in one of the senior high schools.

Since 2002, the whole system of education in Macedonia has been subjected to a complex reform process aimed in three directions: decentralization of the educational policies in agreement with the new local self-administration, improvement of content for a more flexible adaptation to developments in the economy and the labour market, and the democratization and internationalization of teaching. This last objective concerns first of all vocational training. Here, a management and control centre was established in the form of the 'Centre for Vocational Education and Training' (*Centar za strucno obrazovanie i obuka*), while the training of teachers and head teachers was reformed and numerous 'profiles' have been restructured into fourteen occupational fields, with more to follow. In these and similar endeavours, Macedonia enjoys broad international assistance (PHARE, a bilateral agreement with Germany, the Stability Pact Southeast Europe, etc.).

Already in 2000, and more so in 2003, reforms in the area of higher learning were carried out aimed at enlarging the universities' autonomy, improving their financing, regulating the relationship between state and private institutions, improving curricula and examinations, and integrating the whole system of higher learning into the 'unified European area of academic education'. All these projects are co-ordinated by the 'Council for the Development and Financing of the University System' established in November 2003 (*Sovet za razvoj i financiranje na viskoto obrazovanie*), which is seen as the expression of a new 'partnership' between the State and institutions of higher learning.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Since Macedonia became independent, its school system has been submitted to a great number of conceptual changes while at the same time efforts have been made to maintain structural continuity. Now as then, the following elements and levels exist:

- Pre-school education (*preducilišno vospitanie I obrazovanie*) for children between nine months and seven years;
- Eight years of primary schooling (*Bazicno osumgodišno vospitanie I obrazovanie*) which, according to the Constitution and relevant laws, is free of charge and compulsory for all children;
- The secondary school system (*sredno obrazovanie*) comprises junior and senior high schools (of four to five years), four-year art schools, three- to four-year vo-

- ational training schools (plus one-year 'specialist training'), and a one-year vocational apprenticeship (*strucno osposobuvanje*); and
- Higher education (*visoko obrazovanie*): two universities (Skopje, Bitola) with individual departments in other locations acting as universities, and six independent 'polytechnics' (*visoki strucni školi*) offering courses from two to six years.

The laws require primary and secondary schools to offer 'primary and secondary education for adults' (*Osnovno/Sredno obrazovanie na vozrasnite*) in order to help them make good past shortfalls and improve their chances on the labour market. Such teaching programmes are held in Macedonian and Albanian. The number of such schools decreased from 1370 (1996-97), of which 1311 used Macedonian and 59 Albanian as the language of instruction, to 1198 (2002-03), of which 1093 are Macedonian and 105 Albanian. Central elements of adult education were and still are the traditional 'workers' universities' (*rabotnicki univerziteti*), which take the form of adult evening classes. In 2000 these schools offered 572 courses with 9354 participants, and in 2002 187 courses with 10,876 participants. Most popular were foreign languages and computer courses in addition to vocational courses leading to entrance qualifications for secondary schools and universities.

Elementary classes are also held in psychiatric institutions, reformatories (*vospitno-popravni domovi*), and juvenile detention centres (*kazнено-popravni ustanovi*). A new type of school appeared with the 'religious secondary schools' (*sredni verski ucilista*), of which there were a total of 286 in 2002-03, made up of 82 Macedonian Orthodox and 204 Islamic schools.

Pre-primary education

The care and education of children up to seven years of age is carried out within fifty-two organizations (nurseries, kindergartens, and other pre-school establishments) with 187 working units. According to 1997 data, 12% of children aged between nine months and seven years were enrolled in them. Most often, such children are from families whose parents are employed and are Macedonian nationals. These pre-school institutions are financed by the State. Programmes are offered in four languages: Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian. In addition, a bilingual Macedonian-Albanian experiment in three schools with a total of 40 children began in 1997-98. Children stay in these centres for different periods of time each day, but usually at least half a day (*poludneven prestoi*). In 1994-95, the total number of children receiving pre-school education amounted to no more than 14,429; in 1999-2000 the number was 15,599. This relatively small number is most probably the result of the high rate of unemployment in the country (37.7%). Macedonian sources do not discuss this problem. Recently, there has been a notable rise in the number of children enrolled in pre-school establishments. The lowest proportion of children enrolled in pre-school institutions appears in the Turkish population, followed by the Albanian minority. Following an amendment of 2004, the education law now foresees that as of the school year 2005-06, all children will have to attend a compulsory one-year pre-school once they turn six, which means that compulsory primary education has now been prolonged to nine years.

In Macedonia, all schools are under strong reorientation and reform pressures. Pre-schools make great efforts to realize three objectives that are hard to combine: firstly, schools are to nurture children in their sensory, psycho-kinetic, intellectual, social, and emotional development; secondly, they should prepare children for school in a more result-oriented way; and thirdly, they are the means to free working parents from having to take care of their children. This situation affects first of all the time-budget of the schools. The generally co-educative pre-schools open daily for different periods of time, some all day (six to nine hours), and some half day (four to six hours). In bigger settlements they sometimes operate for up to eleven hours. But parents mostly favour a period of two to four hours per day of pre-school for their children, meaning only as long as 'focused educational activities last'. According to Macedonian experts (Guceva 2001), this leads to a possible solution of the three problems: the time for such focused activities coincides with the professional duties of the parents and makes good use of the fact that in many regions the schools exist in close proximity to the primary schools. The short-term objective of pre-school policy is to integrate a greater number of children than in the past in order to facilitate the transition to the nine-year compulsory school system favoured by all stakeholders. Pre-schools unite children in 'homogeneous age groups'. Existing regulations limit the number of children up to three years of age to a maximum of fifteen per group, with a maximum of twenty-five for older children. This is an ideal arrangement for educators (*vospituvac*) and nurses (*negovatelka*).

Primary and lower-secondary education

More than 98% of children of school age are enrolled in primary education. The border age for enrolment is not strictly defined and varies from six to eight. Some detailed analyses indicate that, predominantly among the Roma population, some children have not been enrolled in, or else have dropped out of primary education. Compulsory schooling is divided into two four-year cycles of classes and technical courses (*oddelenska I predmetna nastava*). In the year 2004, 1012 primary schools with a total of 229,564 pupils and 13,791 teachers were operating in Macedonia. Ethnic minorities, however, can also have 'branches' of minority schools in villages and mountain regions. This means that in 2000, in addition to the 342 Macedonian schools, there were 163 'complete regional' schools, 528 'non-complete regional' schools (grades 1 to 4), and 880 undefined 'objects in countryside settlements' (Jankulovska 2000). According to educational data relating to the 1996-97 school year, 99.2% of enrolled children completed primary education. The largest proportion of drop-outs occurs from the fifth grade onwards, especially among Albanian school groups and in rural areas. Partly as a result of this (and according to the Ministry of Education), 5.4% of the total population of Macedonia aged over ten years is illiterate.

According to the legal provisions of 2002, each primary school has to have at least sixteen parallel classes with twenty-five to thirty-four pupils each. The school buildings have to be big enough to provide each pupil with at least 7m². Classes for non-Macedonian children have to be held, as a rule, in their mother tongue. If teacher who speaks their language is not available, classes can also be held in an-

other language. Currently, primary schools continue to be divided into four-plus-four-year classes. In the lower grades one teacher teaches all subjects. Only after these first four years are subjects differentiated, while 'related' (*srodni*) subjects are still taught by the same teacher. Foreign languages are emphasized with the help of additional teachers. The school year starts on 1 September, and summer holidays (*leten raspust*) of eight to nine weeks take place in July and August. Short winter and spring holidays are new to Macedonia. Classes are held from Monday to Friday, and a class is supposed to have no more than thirty-four pupils. One class lasts forty-five minutes, a school year thirty-eight weeks. There have been attempts to have the classes only in the morning, beginning at 7:30 or 8:00 a.m. At the moment, however, there is not enough room for all classes, so that in many schools classes have to be held in two 'shifts' (*smena*). This was true for about 40% of all 105,000 pupils in 2001.

Traditionally, Macedonian schools regulate literally everything: the number of classes, size of the school, heating, student transport, student meals, housing in boarding schools, etc. This was indeed necessary as long as the costs were covered by the state budget. How the situation will evolve in the course of broadening self-administration remains to be seen.

Upper secondary education

According to the Constitution of Macedonia, secondary education is not compulsory. However, it is defined as a right with reference to equal opportunities. The right to enrol in secondary education is exercised particularly by young people from urban areas. In 1997-98, 84.7% of those who finished primary school enrolled in secondary school. Education is free of charge, but pupils do have to meet the costs of textbooks (which are only partly subsidized from the state budget). Internally, secondary education is divided into several types of schools:

1. Grammar schools (*gimnazisko obrazovanie*), which offer a general education, last four years, and end with a final examination called *maturski ispit*. The curriculum includes compulsory and optional subjects, allowing students to choose from three general directions (literature and arts, social sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics).
2. Vocational education (*strucno obrazovanie*), a form of occupational training which lasts two, three, or four years, depending on the specialization and/or the pupil's ability. It includes 260 training profiles from twenty-six professional occupations (eighty of these profiles involve a four-year training programme, ninety three years, fifty two years, and forty a 'specialized training course' (*specijalisticko obrazovanie*) added to the two year training programme.
3. Middle art schools (*sredno umetnicko obrazovanie*); these schools offer courses in the fine arts (six profiles), music (three profiles), and dance (two profiles).
4. 'Secondary education for students with special "educational needs"' (*Sredno obrazovanie za ucenici so posebni obrazovni protrebi*). This is a type of vocational school offering a great number of different possibilities catering to abilities and needs of the disabled.

The Macedonian authorities have plans to structure the secondary school system in a more differentiated way. A first step was the re-introduction of the four-year senior high school (*gimnazija*). In addition, there are three- to four-year technical schools (*strucno obrazovanie*). Here, too, a class is supposed to have no more than thirty-four students. ‘Shift teaching’ is the rule, with the shift changing every two weeks. Periods of time for classes, school year, and holidays are the same as those for primary schools, except for a few special features in some types of school. Adults who enrol in such study courses can undertake a kind of distance learning (*konsultacija*), the results of which are assessed each year in six exams (*ispiten rok*) that take place in February, April, June, August, October, and December. There are special classrooms for science and other specialized subjects. Teachers can define their method of teaching themselves; in recent years pupils are being more and more encouraged to learn how to study and work on their own.

Special education

There are special schools for physically and mentally disabled children (*Specijalno osnovno obrazovanie za učenici so precki vo razvojt*) between six to seventeen or nineteen years of age. In 2003-04 there were forty-four schools with 586 pupils and 239 teachers. Children with disabilities are literally isolated in their families and receive no care for their special needs. Less than 1% of such children have placements in adequate institutions. There are many cases of the abuse of children with disabilities, often by their parents, who use them for begging.

With 3043 college and university students per 100,000 inhabitants, Macedonia belongs to the countries with a relatively low number of university students. The Ministry of Education wants to raise this number to 3500, and hopes for private colleges, international corporations, and student grants in order to increase the mobility of students and teachers.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

As early as the third session of the Presidium of ASNOM (Antifascist Council of the National Liberation of Macedonia), held on 2 to 5 September 1944, one of the items on the agenda was ‘the question of opening a university’. Only two days after the liberation of Skopje, on 15 November 1944, the Commissariat of the People’s Education at the Presidium of ASNOM undertook concrete measures towards this aim. At the beginning of 1945, the concept of a university began to be realized. The official ceremony for the opening of the Faculty of Philosophy, the cornerstone of the SS. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, took place on 29 November 1946. This in effect marked the beginning of the Macedonian state university. The first faculty consisted of the Department of History and Philology and the Department of Mathematics and Natural Science, while the Medical Faculty and the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry were added in 1947.

The development of higher education was characterized by rapid growth. The Technical Faculty with its departments of Architecture and Civil Engineering opened in 1949, and the Faculty of Economics in 1950. One year later, the Law

Department was opened in the Faculty of Economics, which as a result developed into the Faculty of Law and Economics, and then divided in 1956 into two separate faculties: the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics. In 1960 the University consisted of the following faculties: Philosophy, Medicine, Agriculture and Forestry, Technology, Economics, Law, and Mathematics and Natural Sciences. In 1979 the Regional University Association of south-western Macedonia was transformed into the second university in the Republic, the present-day St. Clement of Ohrid University with its seat in Bitola. In 1990 the University in Skopje consisted of twenty faculties and three advanced schools.

Parallel to the teaching and educational activities in the existing faculties, scholarly research was also undertaken. Its development began with the founding of the University, and it took place in the newly established independent institutes. Thus, in 1948 the Institute of National History was founded; in the next year the Institute of Folklore; in 1952 the Institute of Economics; then the Institute for the Macedonian Language; the Institute of Research in Sociology, Politics, and Law; the Institute of Earthquake and Engineering Seismology; and the Institute of Agriculture, among others. At present, the University in Skopje consists of a family of twenty-four faculties, eleven institutes, and other centres.

In the academic year 1946-47, fifty-eight students began their studies; in the next year this number grew to 907, of whom 153 students attended the newly founded Faculty of Medicine. In the past, the number of students has varied according to the personnel available, the material situation, the criteria and conditions of registration, and the wishes and demands of the candidates. This variability resulted from the development of the network of university institutions and the registration policy of the university. In 1978-79, the University had 42,521 students, of whom 30,128 were full-time and 12,393 part-time. This was the climax of the long increase in the number of new students. Subsequently there was a gradual decrease, which was due to the establishment of the University of Bitola and a new registration policy which strictly determined the number of new students and introduced entrance exams. In its jubilee year of 1998-99, the University of Skopje had 22,100 full-time students (of whom 602 were foreign students) and 5,592 part-times ones.

The teaching and educational activity of the University is characterized by a permanent updating of the curricula, an immediate application of the achievements of scholars and researchers, an expansion of the types and degrees of professional qualifications, student guidance, development and advancement of the faculty and institute staff, an improvement in the format of studying, and development of the forms of in-service teacher training. The system of postgraduate studies, as a part of educational and research activities, is of particular importance in that it is a significant prerequisite for the advanced training of the next generation of scholars, an important group for both the University and the country's economic, social, and cultural development. The Faculty of Economics was the first to introduce postgraduate studies, in 1961-62. This was an important contribution to the creation of a developed system at this academic level. Today, almost all the faculties and institutes offer postgraduate courses for specialists, and master's and doctoral degrees. In recent years, new interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary forms of organization have

been applied that provide the academic education and advanced training of scholars through international co-operation (Ančevski 1999).

In 2005 there were four universities in Macedonia: the University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, the University of St Clement of Ohrid in Bitola, the University of the Southeast of Europe in Tetovo, and the State University in Tetovo (as of October 2004). The two last-named universities can hardly be called academic institutions, because they are in fact foundations of Albanian nationalists wanting to establish 'ethnically pure universities'. Only after international efforts and Macedonian compromises did they receive a form of official status. Roughly 27% of all the graduates of four-year secondary school want to attend university, for which they have to fulfil a number of conditions and criteria 'proposed' by the universities themselves. This is, in practice, an 'entrance examination' (*kvalifikacionen ispit*) whose results are used to establish a 'ranking' that is necessitated by 'the limited number of places for first-year students'.

Current discussions and perspectives for development

Macedonia still suffers from numerous structural weaknesses that characterized the old Yugoslavia under Tito, but is endeavouring to become a modern European state. One of the steps taken toward this goal is a consistent effort to work out the 'design of a new educational system'. The following principles are generally accepted:

- A streamlining of curricula, first of all with regard to disencumbering their contents;
- Greater autonomy for educational institutions, especially with regard to 'the choice of subjects, material, and methods';
- Improved adjustment of objectives, methods, and contents in accordance with pupils' and students' development;
- A definition of attainable goals when combining theory and practice;
- Greater emphasis on education outside school; and
- Better integration of schools into the socio-political environment.

These general principles have already led to the following concrete projects for individual segments of the educational system.

Pre-schools

Contents and methods have become more concrete, and children's developments are better observed. Activities are more differentiated while free playing is supposed to improve relaxation. Apart from compulsory contents, children's additional needs are to be taken into account. More attention is paid to teaching aids and materials, and active forms of learning are emphasized.

Primary schools

New curricula have been designed and implemented in accordance with the country's totally different political framework conditions. The scope and content of general education and how it is acquired are being standardized. Disabled children are

to be integrated. New subjects are to be included (such as the basics of information technology). Curricula are divided into compulsory, voluntary, and facultative subjects. Supplementary classes (*dopolnitelna nastava*) for children with 'temporary' learning problems are to be provided, and additional classes (*dodatna nastava*) for the highly gifted are to be offered.

Secondary school system

The PHARE-programme with ten specialized profiles as carried out in twenty pilot schools since 1998 is to be intensified, while more attention has to be paid to the needs of the job market, the professional profiles with respect to international standards, the availability of future employees, and an emphasis on the same basics being taught for 'related' professions.

The weakest point of the school system is considered to be the evaluation of performance. Deviations, like attempts at bribing teachers in primary schools, result in a plethora of high marks which do not mirror true achievement. Institutions abroad (the World Bank and the Dutch government) have helped to establish an evaluation department within the Ministry. 'National' curricula, including minority schools, are to improve quality, or so it is hoped. Ethnic cultural characteristics are to be limited to at most 20% of the curriculum. Another area where things have to change is the traditional ex-cathedra teaching method, which has to be replaced by modern 'interactive' learning. Projects in this context are also financed by UNICEF.

The seemingly harmonious system of minority schools has come under criticism, too. A complex problem seems to be the implementation of compulsory education within the minorities (especially with regard to Albanian girls who are often married before completing compulsory school). Privileges for minorities (first of all in order to produce educated women) were meant to reverse these old habits. Results so far have not been encouraging. There has been a creeping exodus of Albanians from the Macedonian educational system, partly as a consequence of the lack of Albanian-speaking subject teachers. Roma children have yet another problem. The Roma-language is not yet codified (attempts at creating a written language have not been successful so far) and therefore these children have to go to Macedonian schools which thereby produce children who speak two languages incorrectly. There appears to be no satisfactory solution in sight.

The computerization of Macedonia's school system is still in its infancy. In the school year 2002-03 there were no more than 4126 computers and 255 printers in all primary schools; that means fifty-seven pupils for each computer and 920 for one printer. In secondary schools there were 3689 computers (one for 25.4 students). Only one secondary school in six has access to the Internet.

A means to reach the goal of an 'European orientation' is seen in better teaching of foreign languages (mainly English and German), which has been neglected in the past. To start teaching the first foreign language in grade 4 and the second in grade 6 (for all pupils) is considered the correct response to globalization. This leads, however, to another problem, namely that there are many teachers of Russian (which is no longer popular), but not enough teachers of Western languages. In short, the Macedonian school system has another difficult problem to solve.

References

- Althammer, W. (Ed.): Makedonien – Probleme und Perspektiven eines jungen Staates (Macedonia – Problems and Perspectives of a Young State) In: Südosteuropa-Forschung 10 (1999). München 1999.
- Ančevski, A. (Ed.): Univerzitet ‘Sv. Kiril i Metodij’ Skopje – Ss. Cyrill and Methodius University Skopje. Skopje 1999.
- Gučeva, S. (Ed.): National Report: Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia. Skopje 2001.
- Hristov, A. T.: Sozdavanje na federalna Makedonija vo jugoslovenskata federacija 1941-1945 (The Creation of Federal Macedonia within the Yugoslav Federation). Skopje 1965.
- Jankulovska, S.: Analitički izveštaj na proektot UNICEF – TRANSMONEE 2000. Obrazovanie – Mladite i nivnata blagosostojba (Analytical Report of the Unicef-Project, Education, the Youth and Their Welfare). Skopje 2000.
- Jurukova, N.: Osnovnoto vospitanie i obrazovanie vo Makedonija 1944-1950 (Elementary Education and Schooling in Macedonia). Skopje 1990.
- Kantardžiev, R.: Makedonskoto prerodbensko učilište (The Macedonian school in the period of national rebirth). Skopje 1965.
- Kantardžiev, R.: Istorija na obrazovaniето i prosvetata vo Makedonija (History of Education and Enlightenment in Macedonia). Skopje 2002.
- Lukan, W./Jordan, P. (Eds): Makedonien – Geographie, Ethnische Struktur, Sprache und Kultur, Politik, Wirtschaft, Recht (Macedonia – Geography, Ethnic structure, Language and Culture, Politics, Economy, Law. In: Österreichische Osthefte (1998) 1-2.
- Ortakovski, V.: Minorities in the Balkans – Malcinstvata na Balkanot. Skopje 1998.
- Oschlies, W.: Makedonien 2001 – 2004. Kriegstagebuch aus einem friedlichen Land. Berlin 2004.
- Scherrer, P. (Ed.): Special Issue ‘Republic of Macedonia’. In: South East Europe Review. Baden-Baden; Mrach 2002.
- Sučević, Đ.: Studenti i ideologizacija društva (Students and the Ideologization of Society). In: Erasmus (1997) 21, pp. 55-59.
- <http://www.sei.gov.mk/download/Prasalnik/3-18%20-%20Obrazovanie,%20obuka-%20i%20mladi.pdf> – a detailed report of over 100 pages on all problems of the education system established in 2005 by the Macedonian Government under the title ‘Obrazovanie, obuka i mladi’ (Education, Classes and Youth) as an answer to a EU questionnaire.

Macedonia		Grade	Age		
Postsecondary & tertiary education	University (Univerzitet)	sredno umetnicko obrazovanje	17	23	
			16	22	
Secondary education	Four year senior highschool (Gimnazija)	Middle arts schools	13	19	
			12	18	
	Vocational school (Učilište za zanimanja)	Vocational apprenticeship (strucno osposobuvanje)	11	17	
			10	16	
	Primary education	Primary school Bazicno osumgodisno vospitatie/ obrazovanie	Secondary education	9	15
				8	14
		Special schools	Compulsory education	7	13
				6	12
		Preparatory class	Primary education	5	11
				4	10
3				9	
2				8	
Preprimary education	Pre-school education preducilišno vospitatie I obrazovanie	1	7		
		7	7		
		6	6		
		5	5		
		4	4		

Moldova

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

Socio-political changes have influenced the development of education and pedagogical thinking in Moldova. Moldova did not exist as an independent political entity within its present boundaries until 1991 (the Proclamation of Independence). From the middle of the fourteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century there was an independent Moldovan principality, whose territory consisted of a part of present-day Romania and the eastern part of the territory between the Prut and the Nistru rivers, called Basarabia. The first schools in Moldova in the Middle Ages functioned under the protection of the church, as in other European countries. Their goal was to train personnel for the needs of the royal court. Some specific socio-cultural phenomena, characteristic of the historical period at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, such as the transition from the Slavonic language to the Romanian language and Latin script, and the introduction of print in Moldova (1641), contributed to the appearance in big cities and regional centres of a new type of school: state schools in which the instruction was in the Romanian language. Specific national features were gradually introduced into the education system, but the events of 1812, when the eastern part of Moldova (Basarabia) was annexed to the Russian Empire, impeded the development of the school system's national character.

The period 1812 to 1918 was characterized by the introduction of the Russian educational model and by the process of Russification of the population. The positive aspect of this period was the fight against illiteracy; the negative one was estrangement from the national culture.

Between the years 1918 and 1940, education in Basarabia (as part of Romania) was influenced by the educational reform in Romania and was oriented towards national values.

The Soviet period (Moldova as part of the USSR) is a specific period in the development of education in Moldova. Education in this period was strictly centralized and oriented towards the shaping of a new type of 'human being', who would hold a Marxist-Leninist conception of the world, which would be characteristic of the communist society. It had a very ideological and indoctrinatory character. The communist system offered only one form of pre-university education, namely the secondary school with a period of studies of ten years. Instruction in schools was carried out according to curricula, syllabuses, and textbooks elaborated in a very centralized manner for the whole Soviet Union.

The policy of bilingualism promoted in the republics of the Soviet Union had a unilateral character. The tendency was towards a 'unique community', a 'Soviet peo-

ple', which in fact led to the disappearance of national cultures. The process of Russification had a broad character. In the academic year 1985-86 in Chisinau (the capital of Moldova) there were six schools with instruction in the Romanian language, twenty-seven schools with instruction in the Russian language, and twenty-three mixed schools, i.e. Moldavo-Russian schools. Moldavo-Russian schools were also typical for regional centres. In the towns on the right bank of the river Nistru¹ there were no schools with instruction in the Romanian language. The language of instruction of the national minorities (Ukrainians, Gagauz, and Bulgarians) was Russian.

The epoch of 'restructuring' (*perestroika*) began in 1985 and ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Crises in all spheres of society appeared in this period. Soviet society was in a deadlock. The plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU of April 1985 set out the principal directions of reform. The education system, which did not meet contemporary needs, was revised in the official documents issued at that time, and new objectives were set.

Education in Moldova was regulated by the Fundamental Legislation of the Soviet Union on Public Education (1985) and by the Law on Public Education of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova (1986). Educational policy, the ideal of education, and educational objectives were dictated from the centre. The republics dealt with didactic aspects, the training of personnel, and day-to-day management. The all-union congress of teachers, which took place in Moscow in December 1988, had a special significance, as this was the first time that the idea of national education at school level was accepted. Based on the Soviet concept of 1988, in 1989 the national educational concept, which supported the new ideas of educational liberalization, of introducing topics on national culture into school programmes, etc., was for the first time accepted in Moldova. The period of *perestroika* (the second half of the 1980s) was a period of national awakening, of reflection on the principles and the functions of education, and of an awareness of the beginning of the crisis in education and the need for the reforms which were to take place in the nineties.

Reforms and innovations

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of the sovereign and independent state of Moldova (1991) led to social, economic, and cultural transformations in the country. Given the fact that the democratization of society and the development of free and creative citizens capable of responding to contemporary demands were impossible without the restructuring of education, it became imperative in the nineties to reform the system of education inherited from the Soviet Union,

¹ The territory in the eastern part of Moldova, called Transnistria, separated unilaterally at the beginning of the 1990s and still claims a separate status.

and to construct a new one based on national and general human values. The fall of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of independence were among the primary factors that led to the launching of the reform of the education system in Moldova.

The first stage of reorientation and restructuring of the education system covers the period 1991 to 1997. In this period, official documents at state level of major importance were elaborated, such as the Constitution (1994), the Law on Education (1995), and the Concept for Education in Moldova (1994). They established educational policy and regulated the organization and functions of education. Furthermore, various reform plans were drawn up and many other partial changes were undertaken. The government elaborated a strategy that foresaw two forms of restructuring, namely the reform of the structure of the education system and the reform of the contents of education. The directives of the government in the period 1990 to 1993 were an important step in restructuring the education system, and contributed to the creation of lyceums. Although the National Programme for the Development of Education in Moldova for the period 1995 to 2005 was put together in 1993-94, it was only approved by the Government in 1999.

The immediate achievements of the reform at the level of compulsory education were:

- The restructuring of the education system. A compulsory system of nine years and one preparatory year was introduced. The compulsory period consists of four years primary school and five years at the gymnasium level.
- The development and implementation of the new national curriculum.
- The composition and publication of new textbooks.
- Reform in the area of training and professional development of personnel.
- The introduction of new standards in education and of a system of evaluation.

The Project for the Reform of General Education in Moldova was launched in the year 1997. It was supported by the World Bank and its implementation officially started on 8 August 1998.

The second stage of restructuring has been underway since August 1998; it may be considered the implementation stage of the reform. In the years 1998 to 2000 the curricula for all school disciplines were drawn up, approved, and implemented for the primary and gymnasium levels. The implementation of the new curriculum is proceeding simultaneously to the publication of new textbooks. Teachers and the pupils of the third and fourth grades are already working with the new textbooks. The publication of all textbooks for all grades of the compulsory education system is foreseen for the 2003-04 school year. A new parallel mechanism for the republication of textbooks has been introduced. A scheme for renting textbooks has been elaborated, whereby pupils rent textbooks for an established fee. In this way, a source of money will accumulate for the self-financing of textbooks in two to three years. Alternative textbooks have also been suggested in order to improve the quality of instruction. University teachers, school teachers, and publishers from both Moldova and other countries participated in a competition for the writing and publication of school textbooks. Twenty-three publishers from different countries, including Moldova, Romania, Russia, and Bulgaria participated in the pre-qualifying

competition. The monopoly on the composition and publication of textbooks is gradually being eliminated by the creation of a new market.

Various events for the professional development of teachers, oriented towards the new curriculum, the new textbooks, and new educational technologies, were organized at the same time as the implementation of the new curriculum. A new model for the training of teachers, based on the principles of decentralization and openness to curricular innovations, has been proposed.

The priorities of the educational reform in the Republic of Moldova are: ensuring the quality of educational standards, decentralization of the education system, elaboration of the new curriculum, elaboration of a concept of evaluation and of a new system of assessment at national level compatible with European and international systems, elimination of the monopoly on the composition and publication of school textbooks, reform of the general vocational education system, improvement of the training system for personnel, and reform of higher education. So far, the reform has acquired a systematic, coherent, and global character.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general functions of school

Every state is interested in the education of its own citizens according to its political ideals and depending on the political, economic, and social situation. With the proclamation of Moldova's independence, the need arose to revise the educational model and the role of school. The new political, economic, and social realities, along with access to national and international values gave rise to a new vision of education and personal development. The major educational objective is stipulated in the Law on Education of 1995 (Article 5) as follows: the free and harmonious development of the person and the formation of a creative personality able to adapt to the changing conditions of life. This objective is reinforced in strategic documents recently drawn up: the Concept for Educational Development in the Republic of Moldova and the State Programme on its implementation. These envision a system that educates the citizens of the country to be able to positively react to the challenges of life in the twenty-first century in the complex context of Europe and the rest of the world. The function of school is thus to educate the child for integration into social, economic, and cultural life, and to prepare the child for the permanently changing conditions of society. School should emphasize the development of the child's personality, and his or her individual abilities and spiritual and physical skills, thus contributing to the education of a citizen who is free within the limits of the law, who is creative and able to produce material and spiritual values, who possesses a solid basic training, and who is able to adapt to the changes and challenges of the contemporary world.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cultivation of national values and the formation of national identity became a new educational objective. Before the proclamation of independence, the emphasis in school was on the accumulation of knowledge; priority is now given to abilities and skills that enable the learner to apply what he or she has learnt. Following the progress of democratization in Moldova, the need arose to transmit and cultivate democratic values. For this reason,

civic education has been introduced from the fifth year for one hour a week as a compulsory discipline until the ninth grade.

Socio-economic context

A number of ethnic groups live in the territory of the Republic of Moldova. According to the last census (1998) the population of Moldova consists of 64.5% Moldovans, 14% Ukrainians, 13% Russians, 3.5% Gagauz, 1.5% Jews, and 1.6% other nationalities.

The national minorities were disadvantaged in the Soviet period. The Russians were an exception; they were taught in Russian schools according to programmes and textbooks which were and continue to be published in Russia. The Russian school system has thus preserved its national identity. The instruction, however, of Ukrainians, Gagauz, and Bulgarians differed. They were deprived of the right to study their mother tongue and the history and culture of their people. Instruction was in the Russian language and according to the contents determined by the Russian school system.

After the proclamation of the independence of the Republic, the issue of the minorities was raised to a national level. In its national and national minorities policy, the government showed openness and flexibility towards the national minorities, and supported instruction in their mother tongues. According to the Constitution (1994) and Articles 18, 19, and 20 of the Law on Language (the law on the status of the languages spoken in the territory of the Republic of Moldova) each citizen has the right to education in his or her mother tongue.

In recent years, the children of ethnic minorities have been provided with the conditions for the study of their mother tongue in kindergartens and in schools. Presidential Decree No. 64, On the Development of the National Ukrainian Culture, was issued in 1991. In order to execute this decree, the Ministry of Education and Science drew up a new programme of transition within a period of ten years to the teaching of all disciplines in the Ukrainian language for the Ukrainian population of Moldova. Presidential decrees and governmental resolutions on the development of Russian, Gagauz, and Bulgarian culture were also drawn up.

The Gagauz population is concentrated in the South of Moldova. The Gagauz (Orthodox Christians of Anatolian-Turkish origin) were the most disadvantaged minority in the Soviet period. It was only in 1957 that a Cyrillic alphabet for the Gagauz language was elaborated and schools for instruction in the Gagauz language were opened. Furthermore, these were closed in 1960 and instruction was resumed in Russian (in 1993 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a resolution on the introduction of the Latin script for the Gagauz alphabet). In 1994 Gagauz-Yeri became an 'autonomous national territorial unity', a component part of the Republic of Moldova. The school system is based on the regulations and laws of the Republic of Moldova and is subordinated to the Ministry of Education of Moldova. 135 educational institutions at all levels, among them two universities and three vocational schools, operate in Gagauz-Yeri.

The situation regarding the rights of the minorities to study in their mother tongue is different in Transnistria. In this separatist territory, instruction in pre-university

institutions and vocational schools is carried out in the Moldovan language using the Cyrillic script. It is under the control of the separatist authorities and follows old programmes and textbooks that do not correspond to the new educational standards. A small number of educational institutions (seven) carry out instruction in the Romanian language with the Latin script in very difficult conditions. They are constantly under intimidatory pressure to study the Moldovan language with the Cyrillic script.

Moldova's multi-ethnic character has been taken into consideration in the course of the development of educational reform. Thus, in 1999 a new curriculum was designed for the second to twelfth grades, and new textbooks for the first to fourth grades were published in the Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, and Bulgarian languages. According to the data of the Ministry of Education, in 1999-2000 the Ukrainian language was taught in seventy-two schools and four lyceums; Gagauz in thirty-six schools and sixteen lyceums, and Bulgarian in twenty-six schools and three lyceums. Collaboration agreements with other countries (Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Bulgaria, etc.) were signed for the publication of textbooks, the training of teachers, the provision of didactic resources, etc. A concept for the education of the minorities in the Republic of Moldova does not yet exist. The next strategic step in the implementation of the national minorities policy and in the educational policy for the ethnic minorities will thus be the elaboration of such a concept.

Social position of the teaching profession

The personnel in the education system consist of teachers, educators, researchers, psychologists, speech therapists (for pre-school and primary school institutions), methodologists, and technical personnel. The training and professional development of school personnel is a priority of the State. The legal framework is stipulated in the Concept for the Development of the Educational System (1994) and the Law on Education (1995). According to the Law on Education (Article 54, Part 2) the training of personnel is to take place at the highest level. The normal schools (at the secondary level) that were training teachers for the primary schools were closed in 1995. Enrolment in pedagogical universities takes place on a competitive basis. The period of studies is of four years for lyceum graduates and five years for those who have completed eleven years of secondary school. The training includes: academic disciplines (40% to 50%), general disciplines (philosophy, logic, economics, etc. - about 20%), educational disciplines (pedagogy, didactics, child psychology - about 20%), and pedagogical practice in schools. The pedagogical practice starts in the second year of studies and lasts for one or two weeks, during which time students only observe classes; in the third year of studies students teach on their own.

The didactic load of a full-time teacher is stipulated as eighteen hours of classes a week. The real average is, however, thirty hours a week.

A system of categories (degrees) is in place and functions in the sphere of professional development of teachers. According to this system any teacher, after three years of teaching experience, can submit an application to obtain a didactic degree, which enables him or her to acquire a superior qualification, a promotion, and an increase in salary of 30%, 40%, or 50%, depending on the category. The teacher is

free to choose the level of assessment: category II, category I, or the superior category. There is, however, a prerequisite for the superior category, which is that in order to submit an application for this category the teacher should be a textbook author or have publications. Teachers who do not wish to apply for a didactic category are evaluated every five years.

According to the Law on Education (Article 54, Part 8) compulsory professional development of teachers takes place every five years. The professional development course is co-ordinated with the Institute of Educational Science and usually lasts for two weeks. Besides compulsory professional development, inspectors and methodologists organize optional professional development courses locally. In the educational reform period, professional development courses are centered on current issues, the new curriculum, and new methodologies. Universities organize continuing professional development courses for vice-directors, inspectors, and methodologists, upon completion of which the participants receive school manager certificates.

The teaching profession is a noble one that needs to be highly appreciated by every society. Because of the precarious economic situation, the current status of this profession in the Republic of Moldova is not what it should be. Teachers' salaries are the lowest in the country, which does not make the profession attractive to young people. Another problem is the constant delays in the payment of salaries. These two negative aspects contributed to the fact that a great number of teachers left the education system in search of better-paid jobs, while a great number of graduates do not practise their chosen profession. According to the data of the Ministry of Education, 66% of graduates do not take up their appointed positions. This all leads to increased teaching loads (one and a half or even more times the norm) and to an undesirable increase in the average age of personnel. In the difficult economic conditions that Moldova currently faces, it is hard to put essential improvements into practice, although efforts are being made to ameliorate the situation.

School and the role of the family

School has very extensive cultural, social, developmental, and educational functions. Children are at school half of the day, which has a significant influence on their lifestyle, and contributes considerably to their intellectual, affective, and moral development. However, school cannot assume full responsibility for the education of children. In Moldova, this takes place in the family environment until the age of three.

The optimal realization of the educational ideal depends to a great extent on the relationship between school and the family. The training of parents for the role of educators is provided by various informational events about current school reforms, and by involving them in school life. At school level, there are parents' committees, which actively participate in vital school issues on both a financial and organizational (cultural events) level. At the class level, all parents are invited to parents' meetings, during which the class teacher informs them about their child's development and proficiency level; parents can also request consultations on specific educational issues.

In recent years a negative phenomenon has been observed which affects the structure of the family and consequently the education of children in the family. The difficult economic situation is forcing parents to go abroad in order to look for a job, leaving their children under the supervision of relatives or neighbours. According to a survey carried out by the Ministry of Education, approximately 25,000 children no longer live with their parents. These official data do not reflect, however, the real situation; the actual number of such children is much greater. Given these conditions, schools are forced to take over an essential part of the family's functions by offering children new forms of extra-curricular education.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The new Law on Education, which determines educational policy and stipulates the functions and the organizational structure of education, was adopted in 1995. The State establishes policy and the strategies for the development of education at the level of curricula, educational standards, and the training of personnel. The educational policy of the Republic of Moldova is based on the principles stated in the Concept for the Development of Education in the Republic of Moldova (1994) and the Law on Education (1995, Article 4), namely democratization, humanization, humanitarization, accessibility and adjustment, creativity, and diversity. Education is open, flexible, formative, and developmental, and is based on national and international cultural values. The education system in Moldova is still very centralized, although some steps towards decentralization have been taken since the 1990s, especially with regard to the financing and assessment of education.

The Ministry of Education is the central state organ for the organization of public education in Moldova. It designs educational strategies, the structure of the curricula, and the contents for all educational levels; determines educational standards; and executes state educational policy. Departments of education function at the regional level. They are responsible for the implementation of the educational process and the curriculum, the methodological planning of lessons, the co-ordination of exams, and the organization of professional development courses for personnel at the district level. Within each Department of Education there exists a school inspectorate. In each district there also exists a pedagogical and psychological sub-department subordinated to the Department of Education. The following administrative and consultative bodies are found within the education system:

- a. At state level: the Council of the Ministry of Education headed by the Minister of Education; the members of the Council are appointed by the government.
- b. At regional level: the Administrative and Consultative Council of the District General Department of Education.
- c. At school level: the Teachers' Council and the Administrative Council headed by the Director of the school.

The school is responsible for implementing educational plans, for organizing and evaluating the teaching/learning process, and for employing personnel. The imple-

mentation of the new national curriculum offers teachers more autonomy in the implementation of plans governing the teaching/learning process.

Financing

The economic and financial crisis of 1994 has substantially reduced public resources, while the costs of education have, on the contrary, increased. The budget is the main source of finance for the education system. According to the Law on Education (Article 6, Paragraph 2) 7% of the gross domestic product is foreseen for education. Since 1998, a tendency to reduce the public financing of education can be observed, which points to a change in the priorities of the government. In 2003 spending on education was 5.2% of GDP, which represents 50% of spending in 1996 (10.25% of GDP). Some attempts have been made to reduce the costs of education, for example a reduction in the school year from 210 to 175 days. This measure might produce some savings, but could also have an impact on the quality of education. The distribution of the education budget according to levels is as follows: 17.5% pre-school level, 61.4% secondary level, 10.4% tertiary level, and 10.7% other.

Although in the past spending was strictly centralized, at present, following the introduction of the Law on Local Public Finances, which has been in force since 1 January 2002, public resources are partially decentralized. Thus, districts have complete financial responsibility for the educational institutions in their region (kindergartens, primary schools, and basic general schools). Decentralization of the financial structure of education was the first step in the decentralization of education as a whole. There was also an administrative advantage arising from the decentralization of educational finances: the district centres were directly confronted with local educational issues.

District finances are drawn from taxes and the state budget. District budgets are approved by district councils and are used to fund lyceums, secondary boarding schools, and art and vocational schools, while municipalities are responsible for pre-school institutions, primary schools, secondary schools, and gymnasiums, and for sporting and cultural events. Education absorbs 40% of local budgetary resources (65% of the expenses for education, health, and public buildings are covered by local budgets). The decentralization of financial resources is laborious and accompanied by difficulties. The mechanism for the transfer of finances from the State to the district and vice versa is very complicated. Furthermore, district centres have no motivation to take measures to increase the efficiency of either the distribution of resources or the collection of taxes. This is primarily because financial surpluses must be returned, which means that recalculations will be made for the following year that will decrease the amount of funding allocated from the central budget. Schools do not have control over their own budget, with the exception of funds acquired independently by renting out spaces or offering services, etc.

General standards of the school education system

The elaboration, approval, and introduction of the educational standards on which the education system is based are a state priority. The standards establish the minimum obligatory requirements of the different levels and stages of education.

One of the important achievements of the educational reform is the reform of the curriculum, namely the elaboration and implementation of the new national curriculum. The National Council on Curricula (NCC), which is responsible for the elaboration of documents and curriculum policy, was created in 1997. The Council includes working groups based on educational fields and curriculum disciplines, and is made up of teachers and subject experts. The Council elaborates the curriculum project and the provisions for its implementation, organizes debates at national level, and finalizes and revises curricula according to the feedback coming from professors, parents, and pupils.

For the first time in Moldova, a new system for structuring the curriculum was elaborated, namely the basic curriculum (minimum number of disciplines and obligatory hours for all pupils) and the discretionary curriculum (maximum number of disciplines and hours). The new curriculum thus offers optional disciplines to be taught at the discretion of schools. Schools thereby receive some freedom in the implementation of the framework plan (educational plan). Unlike former educational programmes, the new national curriculum has an innovative character. The emphasis is not just on knowledge, but on objectives, not on the reproduction of knowledge, but on the acquisition of creative skills and abilities, on techniques to develop intellectual work, and on decision-making abilities. The content is distributed over the curricular areas of language and communication, mathematics and science, socio-humanistic education, arts, technologies, and sports.

Each area comprises specific disciplines. The structure of the curriculum for each school discipline is as follows: introduction, concept of the discipline, objectives, contents, methodological suggestions, evaluation, and bibliography. A foreign language is taught from the second grade. The study of a second modern language is compulsory from the second secondary stage. Civic education has been taught from the fifth to ninth grades since 2000; it includes topics that deal with children's rights, tolerance, cross-cultural issues, overcoming prejudices, etc.

Curricula for the primary and gymnasium levels were drawn up, approved, and implemented in the period 1998 to 2002. Textbooks were published at the same time as the elaboration and implementation of the curricula. The textbooks are written both in the state language and in the languages of the national minorities.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The majority of educational institutions in Moldova are state institutions. State education is free of charge. Private education appeared as an alternative to state education in the nineties. Although private education initially covered only the higher (university) level, it has recently been extended to pre-school and pre-university levels as well. At present, private institutions are attended by 0.4% of pupils. Ac-

According to the last census (1989) the level of literacy of the population is 96.4%. Instruction is organized on levels according to the following structure:

- I. Pre-primary education: age three to six, one preparatory year for primary school (ISCED 0).
- II. Primary education: four years, age seven to ten (ISCED 1).
- III. Secondary education:
 - Secondary general education:
 - a) Secondary education I: gymnasium - five years, age ten to fifteen (ISCED2).
 - b) Secondary education II in two forms: lyceum of three or four years and general secondary school of three years (ISCED 3A).
 - Vocational education:
 - c) Secondary vocational school (ISCED 3C) or polyvalent technical vocational school, levels I and II (ISCED 3C).
 - d) Commercial school (ISCED 4B) or polyvalent technical vocational school, level III (ISCED 4B).
- IV. Higher education:
 - University (four to six years) (ISCED 5A).
 - College (two to three years) (ISCED 5B).
 - Post-graduate studies (doctoral and post-doctoral) (ISCED 6).

The education system includes other forms of education such as special education, extra-curricular education, continuous studies, and adult education. General compulsory education lasts nine years (four years of primary school and five years of gymnasium), to which is added an obligatory preparatory year for primary school. Teaching and learning is carried out in the state language (Romanian) and in the languages of the national minorities (Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, and Bulgarian).

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education constitutes the first stage of the education system and is carried out in various state and private institutions. The family is responsible for the education of the child in the first three years of life. From the age of three, the State takes over the formal education of the child. Public pre-primary education was and is free of charge; parents cover the expenses of the child's nourishment (50% of the real cost of food). Public pre-primary education is not compulsory.

In the Soviet period, special emphasis was put on the early development of the child. The State covered all the expenses, which resulted in qualitative and quantitative progress. In 1945-46 there were twenty-five institutions in Moldova attended by 976 children, by the end of 1976 the number of pre-school institutions had increased to 1786 (188,000 children), and in 1990 there were 2322 pre-school institutions attended by 336,500 children aged one to seven (according to the statistical data of the Ministry of Education of 1991).

The year 1995 is remarkable for pre-primary education because of the elaboration and implementation of the Concept for the Development of the Education Sys-

tem in Moldova and of the Curriculum for Children's Education in Pre-primary Institutions of Different Types. In 1999 a new curriculum was developed for the pre-primary sector. The defining characteristic of pre-primary education, according to these documents, is its child-centredness, which means the creation of conditions for natural development, along with differentiated and individualized approaches towards the child's education in an inter- and intradisciplinary context.

Children benefit from the educational services of personnel specially trained in colleges and pedagogical universities (four years). Each educator has an average of fourteen children under his or her supervision. In pre-primary institutions children are grouped according to age: three to four years old – the small group; four to five years old – the middle group; and five to six years old – the preparatory group.

The transition stage from pre-primary to primary education is the preparatory year, which is obligatory for all children. According to the Law on Education of 1995 (Article 17) children who have reached the age of five to six are obliged to attend the preparatory year in a pre-school institution, the so-called 0-class, at the end of which the child must be able to read and write. Thus, the essentials of reading and writing are already acquired in the pre-primary stage. The preparatory classes are conducted in either pre-school institutions or primary schools. In the future, these classes will be integrated into primary school institutions.

There have been changes in the pre-primary education system in recent years. The financial difficulties confronted by the country in the transition period had a negative impact on pre-primary education. The number of pre-primary institutions and the number of children attending them radically decreased, the quality of the education has worsened, and the didactic and material base is pedagogically and physically old.

From 1995 to 2001, the number of pre-school institutions decreased from 1774 to 1135, which means a reduction of 36% in only six years. This tendency is explained by the low birth rate on the one hand, and by non-attendance at pre-school institutions, especially in rural areas, on the other. This leads to a differentiation of children coming from urban or rural areas and an erosion of the principle of access to education for all.

Primary education

At the age of six or seven children enter primary education, which is compulsory and free of charge. Starting at the age of seven, attendance at primary school is obligatory. The basic objective of this cycle is the formation of a free and creative personality, and the development of good reading, writing, mathematical, and communication skills.

Primary education is organized, as a rule, according to the place of residence of the child, with the exception of small localities that do not have an educational institution. Primary education lasts four years (first to fourth grades) and takes place within a general educational institution as part of a lyceum, gymnasium, or an autonomous institution. Primary education is organized in classes of twenty-five to thirty children taught by one primary school teacher. The number of class hours is

twenty per week in the first grade and twenty-four per week in the fourth grade. The teaching/learning process is carried out in the children's mother tongue.

The educational process is developing according to the new curriculum for the first to fourth grades (starting with the 1996-97 academic year), which is part of the general structure of the national curriculum. The primary school curriculum provided the first experience of designing new programmes centred on objectives. The new contents are oriented to the formation of cognitive, affective, and psychomotoric skills in children, and towards the development of creativity.

The framework for primary education includes the following disciplines: Romanian language and literature, modern language, mathematics, science, Romanian history, music, arts, technological training, and physical education. In 1999 the Ministry of Education elaborated the objectives for external evaluation in mathematics and Romanian language at the end of the primary cycle, which were aimed at the assessment and analysis of the quality of education. This assessment took place in the academic year 1999-2000.

Primary school teachers are trained in pedagogical universities and schools. The duration of studies is four years. At present 55.1% of the practising teachers have university training. As part of the reform process, professional development courses are organized for teachers in the context of the new curriculum, technologies, and contents.

Lower secondary education

The first stage of secondary education is the gymnasium. The gymnasium is obligatory for all children who finish primary school and covers the fifth to ninth grades. Access to gymnasium is free of charge and without entry tests. The objectives of this school stage are to form and develop intellectual abilities to a sufficient level in terms of personality, professional orientation, and preparation for lyceum or vocational training. The school year is divided into two terms. The gymnasium ends with final exams. The certificate of gymnasium studies enables access to the second stage of secondary education.

The curriculum for the gymnasium level has already been elaborated and implemented in schools (2000-01 in the fifth grade, 2001-02 in the sixth grade, 2002-03 in the seventh grade, and 2003-04 in the eighth and ninth grades). The number of hours per week varies from twenty-two hours (minimum) in the fifth grade to twenty-six hours (minimum) in the ninth grade. According to the basic curriculum, four additional hours can be added to this minimum at the school's discretion. The textbooks for the gymnasium used to be published in Romania, but have now begun to be produced in Moldova.

Schools provide extra-curricular activities such as choir, orchestras, school theatres, applied decorative arts, design, handicrafts, painting, graphics, groups for various disciplines, etc. Such groups are formed of fifteen pupils from the same or different grades on the basis of the pupils' interests. The work in groups is carried out once a week or once every two weeks.

The problems confronted by the gymnasium are varied in nature. Professional orientation, which is in fact one of the basic objectives, is not implemented as de-

sired. The synchronization of the elaboration of the curriculum and the publication of textbooks is not optimal. Thus, the new curricula for primary and gymnasium education were published in 1997 to 2000, but the teachers, who were already well-trained in the subject matter of the curriculum, had to wait for the new textbooks to appear. The situation was critical in the seventh to ninth grades of the gymnasium. The textbooks for the seventh grade appeared in 2002-03, while the textbooks for the eighth and ninth grades were planned for a year later. Another problem is the insufficient number of teachers.

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education has the task of ensuring fundamental theoretical training and providing the general education necessary for the continuation of studies in higher educational institutions. In the Republic of Moldova there are two forms of upper secondary education: the lyceum (tenth to twelfth grades) and the general secondary school (tenth to eleventh grades). As it has been demonstrated that the quality of training is better at lyceum level than in general secondary schools, the latter will gradually be transformed into lyceums. This transition process will last till 2005. Lyceum level education is carried out in general theoretical lyceums, in lyceums with one or more specializations, in lyceum classes within the general school, and in polyvalent vocational schools. Lyceums are created and dissolved by the decision of the government at the request of the Ministry of Education in agreement with local authorities, teachers, and parents. After graduating from the gymnasium, pupils are admitted to the lyceum on the basis of entrance exams. At the end of the lyceum pupils take the baccalaureate exams; if they pass, they obtain a baccalaureate diploma, which gives them the right to continue their studies at a higher education institution. For specially gifted pupils, lyceums can be set up that are administered by universities. For children with musical abilities or abilities in arts, ballet, theatre, and sport, there are lyceums with intensive study from the first to the twelfth grade or from the fourth to the twelfth grade. Admission to such lyceums is on a competitive basis. Curricula for lyceum education are designed depending on the characteristics of the individual programmes.

Secondary vocational education takes place in craft schools and in polyvalent vocational schools. The State guarantees professional training for all graduates of the secondary level who have reached the age of sixteen and do not continue their studies in lyceums or general secondary schools. The government, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and the Ministry of Education, approves the nomenclature of the professions in whose fields vocational training takes place. The Ministry of Education is responsible for strategic development, financing, the issue of licences and accreditation, the elaboration of standards, quality assessment, and the training and professional development of personnel. The Ministry of Economics establishes the list of professions. The Ministry of Labour co-ordinates the continuing vocational training process and training of the unemployed.

The Law on Education (1995) established a new basic structure for technical vocational education in Moldova, whose implementation started in 1997 by govern-

ment resolution. Craft schools train pupils for a craft or related crafts. The training of qualified workers lasts from half a year up to one and a half years, and concludes with the issue of a certificate which enables the graduates to practise the craft for which they have trained.

The Concept for Vocational Education elaborated in 1992 to 1995 was oriented to the restructuring of the former technical vocational schools into polyvalent vocational schools. This new form of vocational school offers professional training and training for the baccalaureate exams. Admission to polyvalent vocational school is on a competitive basis for all graduates from a gymnasium, a general secondary school, or a lyceum, with or without a baccalaureate diploma. The course of studies is of five years' duration for gymnasium graduates and three years for lyceum and general secondary school graduates. The polyvalent optional schools are divided into three levels of training. Level I lasts two years and trains qualified workers for the job market. Level II also lasts two years and offers vocational training towards the qualification of master or lyceum training of an applied nature (technical, technological, or agricultural), with the right to continue studies at a higher institution. Level III lasts one year and continues post-secondary educational training towards the qualification of technician (technologist). General lyceum training is undertaken at the same time. There are currently fifty-two state polyvalent schools in Moldova.

Vocational training is confronted with many problems. There is a discrepancy between the vocational training and the job market. The qualifications offered by the vocational secondary educational institutions do not correspond to the demands of the job market. According to the data for 2001 provided by the Institute of Public Policy, 28% of qualifications are oriented to the production industry, 16% to the catering industry, 12% to construction, 10% to services, 9% to transport and telecommunication, and 8 % to agriculture. The reality of the job market is, however, quite different. Only one in five graduates finds a job corresponding to his or her qualification. The majority of secondary vocational educational institutions offer similar qualifications. The vocational educational reform is reflected not only in the structure, but also in contents and the evaluation of the system. New standards and new curricula for vocational education have been elaborated. This restructuring process is continuing. Educational standards have been elaborated for twenty-five of approximately 100 specializations. In 2000 new curricula for eight crafts were elaborated and implemented. Old Soviet programmes are still being used to teach the other crafts. The vocational secondary sector of the education system is relatively expensive. The financing of this sector is difficult because of the economic crisis which Moldova is undergoing. In 1999 only 25% of the planned expenses for vocational education were covered.

Special education schools

The training of children with mental, physical, sensory, speech, socio-affective, and behavioural disabilities takes place in special training-educational institutions of the boarding school type or in an extended programme. The goal of special education is the education, instruction, rehabilitation, and social integration of children with various kinds of disabilities. The duration of obligatory special education depends

on the type and on the degree of the handicap; it is eight years for children with mental disabilities and ten to twelve years for children with physical and sensory disabilities.

The organization and fostering of special education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, which elaborates programmes, strategies, and practices. At present the needs of 12,500 disabled children in the Republic of Moldova are met in sixty-three special schools and in twelve pre-school institutions.

A new tendency in the development of special education is the integration of children with slight mental or physical disabilities into the general system of education. But there has always been resistance to this idea; the desire to maintain the existing institutional system prevails.

However, at the international conference 'Inclusive Education in the Context of Education for All', which took place in Chisinau from 12 to 14 May 2003, the issue of inclusive education within the basic educational context was raised. In order to implement inclusive education, the following measures are foreseen: the elaboration and implementation of legislation, the elaboration of the concept of inclusive schools, the adoption of a flexible curriculum, the creation of a psycho-pedagogical assistance network within the general education system, the creation of rehabilitation groups within standard kindergartens, the training of didactic and medical personnel, and the education of the family within the context of special education.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Higher education in Moldova is implemented in higher education institutions: colleges (two to three years) and universities (four to six years). The goal of higher education is stipulated in the Law on Education (Article 25) as the formation of a many-sided and creative personality, and the qualification and re-qualification at a high level of specialists and researchers in various domains. At present there are forty-nine university level educational institutions (fourteen of which are state ones) and sixty-one colleges (forty-three state ones) of tertiary education. In addition to state higher education institutions, there are thirty-five private universities and eighteen colleges. The private sector in education developed rapidly after 1991, as the law in force provides a relatively simple mechanism for the creation of higher state or private institutions. A great number of so-called private universities were established which are in fact unofficial institutions created within state universities. However, there are some private universities that are professionally run and offer a high standard of instruction and excellent conditions for study.

The democratization and restructuring process which took place in Moldova after the proclamation of independence (1991) enhanced the higher education sector as well. Educational programmes have been changed, updated, and freed of ideological dogma. A flexible system of studies at university level was adopted. A new type of short-term higher education was introduced: the colleges. In order to ensure study programmes of a high quality, a new system of accreditation of the higher education institutions was introduced, as well as a new system of university degrees, which corresponds to the internationally accepted standards: BA (BS), MA (MS), and PhD.

The Law on Education (1995) regulates the functioning of higher education. According to the Law, the Ministry of Education decides on the number of students to study at different departments in the state higher institutions each year. Such a 'state order' can lead, however, to inexact planning in times of rapid changes in the job market. The Ministry of Education co-ordinates the elaboration of the policy for higher education.

The Law on Education stipulates the autonomy of higher educational institutions with regard to the final approval of curricula and timetables in accordance with state standards. The insufficient level of financing for higher education institutions and the autonomy stipulated in the legislation prompted higher education institutions to take various measures to create their own budgets; for example, about 80% of the annual budget of Moldova State University (the largest institution in the country) comes from its own income. This led to a diminishing role for state administration and a considerable increase in the role of university administration. In conditions where the State cannot meet the basic financial needs of the institutions, the autonomy of the universities is a positive phenomenon which ensures the functioning and development of the higher education system.

The government has the right to control the higher education sector as stipulated by the Law. The Ministry of Education has the right to open or close higher education institutions. The Accreditation Council, subordinated to the Ministry of Education, offers institutional accreditation to state universities. Enrolment in higher education institutions is on a competitive basis and requires the possession of a *bac* laureate diploma.

Higher education, being in the process of transformation, is confronted, like the whole education system in Moldova, with a number of factors that have a negative impact on its development. These factors are of a financial, legal, and conceptual nature. Financing has been reduced in recent years. The legal framework does not ensure the stability of the higher education sector. The massive privatization of the higher education sector and the consequent introduction of tuition fees has led to a lower quality of education in some areas, to a lack of balance between the demands of the job market and the training of specialists, and to social inequality. The numbers of students in humanities departments has increased. For example, in the year 2000 alone the number of graduates from law departments was 6000, which bears no correlation to the demands of the job market. In such conditions, the quality of professional training suffers. At the same time, the number of students in technical departments has decreased. Because of high tuition fees, access to higher education is becoming impossible for students from poor families. Finally, the lack of financing has reduced research activities in higher education institutions.

The government and Parliament are working on a new law for the improvement of the legal basis which is aimed at providing quality and accreditation to the higher education system. A group of experts at the level of the Ministry of Education is working on the 2004 nomenclature project, which is a new catalogue of qualifications of higher education. The perspectives for the restructuring and the development of the system of higher education are: continuing democratization; the elaboration and implementation of standards for initial professional formation at univer-

sity level; the elaboration and implementation of the basic university curriculum; the elaboration of an evaluation system; the ensuring of high quality training through transparent, flexible, competitive, and comparable programmes; and the involvement of private resources in research projects.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The political, economic, and social transformations undergone by the Republic of Moldova since the proclamation of its independence (1991) gave rise to the introduction of democratic reforms in the education system as well. The first stages of reform were determined by the pressing demands of society: the abolition of political doctrines, excessive centralism, and paramilitary education. The creation of a national modern and democratic education system, based on national and international values, and compatible with the European educational system was not possible without a reform of a global character including all spheres of education. Thus, the reform embraced all of the important domains of education: educational management, educational funding, curricula, textbooks, and the evaluation system. The structure of the education system has been modernized: gymnasiums, lyceums, polyvalent technical schools, and colleges have been created. Great progress has been made in the reform of general secondary education: new national curricula based on formative education and on national and international values have been elaborated and implemented, a new series of textbooks has been compiled, a national system of assessment of school results is being developed, and the majority of academic personnel have received professional development courses in the context of the new curricula and new didactic technologies.

The transition process in Moldova proved more difficult than expected. In the nineties the economic situation in the country worsened, with a negative impact on education. The problems confronted by the education system in Moldova are primarily of an economic nature. Impediments to the development of education are the deterioration of the economic situation, the pauperization of the population, and political instability.

The following negative phenomena can be observed in the education system after 1990:

- The schooling ratio decreased: until 1990 100% of children aged seven attended school, but in recent years an increased number of children of the same age do not attend school. In the year 2001-02, 3980 (0.73%) pupils received no schooling.
- The reduction in the number of pupils as a result of the demographic decline of the population. The number of pupils in the first grade between 1994 and 2002 decreased from 71,021 to 47,609, which constitutes a drop of 67%.
- The phenomenon of school abandonment, especially in rural areas, caused by the migration of the population in search of jobs and by the difficult economic situation in rural areas.
- Many teachers quit teaching for better-paid jobs.

- There is a perceived discrepancy in access to education in favour of children from urban areas over children from rural areas.

In order to combat these negative phenomena, which are mostly the result of economic crises, and to provide a sustainable development of society, in 2002 the government adopted the Preliminary Strategy for Poverty Reduction, which foresees concrete actions for the reduction of poverty in the period 2004 to 2006. Taking into consideration the up-to-date situation of the education system in Moldova, in 2003 the national strategy Education for Everybody (2004 to 2015) was elaborated and adopted. Its aim is to ensure access to high quality basic education for all children, and especially those living in difficult conditions. The national strategy establishes three areas of priority: early education, universal access to high quality basic education, and non-formal education.

In the last ten years, on the initiative of international organizations such as the Soros Foundation, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, the Centre for Information and Documentation on Children's Rights, etc., a number of educational programmes devoted to children at different levels of education have been implemented. Such programmes were aimed at the improvement of the quality of education and support of the educational reforms.

At present, the main strategies in the development of education in the Republic of Moldova are oriented towards:

- Unremitting implementation of the educational reforms;
- Modernization of the training and professional development of teachers;
- Reform of the system of evaluation and examination, and the elaboration of a national system of evaluation and of new educational standards;
- Restructuring technical vocational education, eliminating narrow specializations, and meeting the requirements of the present and future needs of the job market;
- The reform of the higher education system, the elaboration of educational standards in the context of modern demands, and the amendment of the Law on Education with regard to higher education;
- The formation of a mechanism of evaluation and accreditation of educational institutions in the public and private sectors;
- Decentralization of the managerial, financial, and administrative mechanisms of educational institutions;
- The development and diversification of the sources of educational funding; and
- Integration within the European educational system.

The Republic of Moldova has committed itself to a systematic reform of a global character in the sphere of education in order to meet the needs arising from the modern development of society. This reform is aimed at creating a new national system of education, a modern and a democratic system that is based on international and national values, and that ensures quality in education and access to education for everybody.

References

- Conceptia Învățămîntului în Moldova. In: Baltag, I./Bucun, N./Bîcu, V./Cojocaru, V./Constandoglo, I./Pâslaru, Vl./Paniko, V.: Valențele reformei învățămîntului, Partea I. Chișinău, IȘPP al MȘÎ 1992.
- Constituția Republicii Moldova. Adoptată la 29 iulie 1994. The Constitution of Republic of Moldova.
- Guvernul Republicii Moldova: Strategia Națională „Educație pentru toți” 2004-2015. Chișinău 2003.
- Departamentul Statisticii al Republicii Moldova: Republica Moldova în cifre. Chișinău 1998.
- Legea Învățămîntului, Nr. 547 din 21.07.95, Monitorul Oficial al R. Moldova nr. 62-63/692 din 09.11.1995.
- Ministerul Educației și Științei al Republicii Moldova: National Report on the Follow-up to the World Summit for Children. Chișinău 2001.
- Ministerul Educației și Științei al Republicii Moldova: National Report, Education for All – 2000. Chișinău 1999.
- Ministerul Educației și Științei al Republicii Moldova: Organizarea și dirijarea procesului educațional în învățămîntul preșcolar, primar, gimnazial și liceal: anul de studii 2003-2004. Chișinău, Știința 2003.
- Ministerul Educației și Științei al Republicii Moldova: Planul cadru pentru învățămîntul primar, gimnazial, liceal în anul școlar 2001-2002. 2002-2003.
- Ministerul Învățămîntului, Institutul de științe Pedagogice: Programul Național de dezvoltarea a Învățămîntului în Republica Moldova 1995-2005, (Compendiu). Chișinău.
- Negură, I.: The Educational System of Republic of Moldova. Human Development National Report-1997. Chișinău 1998.
- Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD): Statistical data for background purposes of OECD review, country: Moldova. 2001.
- Planul național „Educație pentru toți”, Educația incluzivă în contextul educației de bază. Materialele Conferinței internaționale „Educația incluzivă în contextul Educației pentru Toți”. 12-15 mai, Chișinău/Republica Moldova 2003.
- Programul „Educație pentru toți”, relații, opțiuni și perspective. 3-5 decembrie, Chișinău/Republica Moldova 2001.
- UNICEF: Moldova, Studiul multilateral al indicatorilor. 2000.

Moldova

						Grade	Age
Postsecondary & tertiary education	University (Univeritate)	Colleges (Colegiu)	Polyvalent technical vocational school III*	Polyvalent technical vocational school II*		17	23
						16	22
						15	21
						14	20
						13	19
Upper secondary education	Lyceum (Liceu)	General secondary school (Școala medie generală)	Secondary vocational school (Școala de meserii)	Polyvalent technical vocational school I*		12	18
						11	17
						10	16
						9	15
Lower secondary education	Gymnasium (Gimnaziu)					8	14
						7	13
						6	12
						5	11
						4	10
						3	9
Primary education	Primary school (Școala primară)					2	8
						1	7
						6	6
						5	5
Preprimary education	Preparatory year obligatory (an de pregătire preșcolară)	Kindergarten (Grădiniță de copii)				3	3
						4	4
						5	5

*Școala profesională polivalentă I, II, III

© DIPF 2005

Wendelin Sroka

Monaco

With an area of just 1.95 square kilometres, the Principality of Monaco (French: *Principauté de Monaco*; Monegasque: *Principatu de Munegu*) is the second-smallest independent state in the world, after the Vatican City. The principality is stretched between France and the Mediterranean Sea along the *Côte d'Azur*. While the independence of the principality dates back to 1297, it has been a constitutional monarchy since 1911. French is used as the official language and as the medium of instruction at school, but the local language, Monegasque, is still in use. The constitution declares Roman Catholicism to be the state religion.

Home to some 32,000 people, the principality is the most densely populated country in the world. Another particular feature of the principality is that the native Monegasques only make up some 16% of the population. The majority of residents is composed of French nationals (47%), Italian nationals (16%), and more than 100 other nationalities. The school population of the principality comprises, in addition to pupils of Monegasque and French nationality, some 30% of foreign pupils.

The principality maintains close links with France in the areas of politics, the economy, and culture, including education. Thus, the structure of the Monegasque school system is similar to that of the French system. Instruction generally follows the French curriculum and diplomas are based upon the French model. The Education Act of 14 August 1967 is the legal basis of schooling in the principality. It declares school attendance to be compulsory for all children and young people between the age of six and sixteen. The education system is governed by the Department of National Education, Youth, and Sport (*Direction de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports*), part of the Home Ministry. The government receives advice on all issues concerning the school system from the National Education Committee. Children of compulsory school age of Monegasque nationality as well as children with a residence permit for the principality are entitled to receive education in the public school system free of charge. In addition to the public system, there is also a sector of private, publicly funded Catholic schools (*enseignement catholique de Monaco*) working under state contract. In the 2003-04 school year, around 5900 pupils were taught in Monegasque schools, 76% of them in schools of the public system and 24% in Catholic schools.

The levels of schooling are organized in the principality as follows: The *école préscolaire et primaire* provides both pre-school education (for three - to five-year-olds) and primary education, which comprises five grades. At secondary level, schooling is divided between lower secondary education (four grades) at the *collège* and upper secondary education at the *lycée*. The two public *lycées* – *Lycée Albert 1^{er}* and *Lycée Technique de Monte-Carlo* as well as the *lycée* of the Catholic school centre *François d'Assise Nicolas Barré* offer study programmes with general and vocational profiles. Most programmes prepare the pupils for the corresponding *bac*-

calauréat (*baccalauréat général*, *baccalauréat technologique*, and *baccalauréat professionnel*). Teaching and examinations at this level are supervised by the Academy of Nice (France). While the programmes leading to the *baccalauréat général* and to the *baccalauréat technologique* last for three years, the *lycées* also offer vocational education programmes lasting two years. These programmes prepare for qualifications in the service and industry sectors, documented by the *Certificat d'Aptitude professionnelle (CAP)* or the *Brevet d'Etudes professionnelles (BEP)*. Successful pupils may choose to continue their education at the *lycée* for two more years in order to gain the *baccalauréat professionnel*. Today, around 90% of all graduates of the Monegasque school system receive the *baccalauréat*.

Monegasque schooling has a number of specific features. By tradition, Catholic religious education is provided in public schools (today as an optional subject). Instruction in the Monegasque language is a compulsory subject at primary school level and an optional subject at secondary school level. Furthermore, history and civic studies classes pay special attention to studies on Monegasque issues. The peculiarities of pupils' future careers in a country the size of Monaco have made it necessary to develop a professional system of educational and career counselling. Therefore, counselling services for pupils are provided by careers officers employed in all secondary schools and, at national level, by the *Centre d'Information de l'Education Nationale (CIEN)*. Lastly, measures to promote foreign language learning from pre-school age and the organization of 'European classes' reflect both the international composition of the school population and the intention of the authorities to implement intercultural education and prepare pupils to live and work in an international environment.

With few exceptions in the areas of vocational training in technology, business, hotel management, and secretarial work, pupils graduating from Monegasque *lycées* proceed to higher education programmes in France, as agreed by the Principality of Monaco and the Republic of France in the Convention on Good-Neighbourliness signed in 1963. To cover part of the costs incurred by students pursuing an education abroad, the government has developed a special scholarship scheme. Furthermore, there are four providers of post-secondary (non-tertiary) education in Monaco: the nursing school at the Princess Grace Hospital, the Rainier III Academy of Music, the Princess Grace Academy of Classical Dance, and the Municipal School of Plastic Arts. The International University of Monaco (IUM), an independent institution of higher education, founded in 1986 and accredited by the US-based Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, offers English-language undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in business administration, e-commerce, and financial engineering for international business students.

References

- International University of Monaco: Student Handbook and Catalogue, 2004-2005. Monaco 2004.
- Principauté de Monaco – Département de l'Intérieur, Direction de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports. (2005). Website: <http://www.gouv.mc/Educ/EducMc.nsf/> [2005-03-07]
- The Prince's Palace of Monaco: Education and Sport. (2005). Website: <http://www.palais.mc> [consulted 2005-03-02]
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: Convention on the Rights of the Child - Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention. Monaco; Geneva 2000.

Montenegro

Historical and social context of the current school system

Montenegro is a small country with approximately 620,000 inhabitants (as of 2003) covering an area of just under 14,000 square kilometres, which roughly corresponds to the area of Northern Ireland. In former Yugoslavia, Montenegro was one of the six member states. After the demise of the Federation, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Montenegro, was re-constituted in 1992. Since 2003, the Republic of Montenegro has been part of the loose alliance of Serbia and Montenegro. This alliance was established in 2002-03 under pressure from the European Union against the background of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Serbia and Montenegro do not constitute a federation; their union is characterized by the independence of both republics. Thus, the cultural and educational autonomy of both states has been retained. However, since the transformation processes in the Balkan States have not yet been concluded, serious movements towards a break-up of the alliance surface time and again.

The situation in the Balkans at the beginning of the twenty-first century has been characterized by permanent change. The ethnic conflicts of the 1990s both weakened and isolated the region economically, culturally, and socially. However, the end of the Milosevic era in the year 2000 and the resumption of international relations gave fresh impetus to the development of the region. Although the education system has also suffered under the ten years of isolation, it functions reasonably well, despite its limited resources.

The Montenegrin population comprises a multiplicity of nationalities. According to the last census, taken in 2003, the structure of the population is as follows: Montenegrins, 40.6%; Serbs, 30%; Bosnians, 9.4%; Albanians, 7.1%; Muslims, 4.3%; Roma, 1.2%; and Croats, 1.1%.

Montenegrin, Serbs, Bosnians, and Muslims, who together constitute more than 80% of the population, are educated on the basis of the central Montenegrin-language curriculum, as their respective languages are similar. There are a few elementary schools that provide lessons in the Albanian language, mostly in primary education. As a result, most pupils have to study in normal schools following the Montenegrin curriculum; a mere 3% are able attend Albanian lessons.

The Montenegrin government rates education very highly. In 2003, 22% of the total budget was spent on education (the average for OECD states is 12%). The population also perceives education to be very important. A substantial part of Montenegrin society is reported to have received higher education, although at present only 15% of the age group between 19 and 23 years attend university.

In 1991, 5.95% of the population were illiterate. This figure can be broken down according to age brackets: 10 to 34 years, below 1%; 35 to 64 years, about 5.4%;

and older than 65 years, about 33%. Newer data from the last census in 2003 is not yet available. The illiteracy rate among the Roma population is an alarming 76%.

During the Kosovo crisis, numerous refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons) migrated into the area of present Montenegro. After the return of most Kosovo-Albanians, a second wave of IDPs moved from Kosovo to Montenegro. The majority of the approximately 30,000 people in 2000 were Montenegrins and Serbs (67%); in addition, there were also large numbers of Roma (20%) and Muslims (13%). Whereas the admission of Serbian, Montenegrin, and Muslim refugees into the school system poses relatively few problems as a result of the shared language, the integration of children of Roma and Albanian background is a greater challenge. Many children of these minorities are not enrolled in schools at all; more detailed information is not available at present. Reasons for their lack of interest in education can on the one hand be found in their traditions. On the other hand, there are language barriers which are difficult to surmount. In an effort to further integration, the government offers free language lessons; attendance rates, however, have remained relatively low. The Ministry of Education and Science has also initiated several activities to increase the number of Roma children attending school. These measures include the provision of free textbooks for the first grade, free additional language courses, and support with homework. In addition, several NGOs are trying to provide assistance for the instruction of Roma children in the classroom.

Organizational context and governance of the school system

At present, the Montenegrin school system is in the process of modernization. As in other Balkan states, Montenegro has to go through three simultaneous transformational processes with respect to the education system:

- The restructuring of the school system, from the centralized Yugoslav system to a democratic system;
- The reconstruction of the education system after the end of the armed conflicts of the 1990s; and
- The preparation of the school system to meet the challenges of an increasingly global and technological world.

In 1999-2000, the Montenegrin government initiated a comprehensive reform of the entire education system. In a wide public debate on the state of education in Montenegro, proposed changes were collected and reflected in the 'Book of Changes'. This paper, officially adopted by the Montenegrin Government and published both in Montenegrin and English in 2001, gives an overview on the one hand of how the new system is going to work, and on the other how this objective is to be achieved.

The school reform of Slovenia, also a former member State of the Yugoslav Federation, has been taken as a model. This reform is not only regarded as very successful, but is also considered to be applicable to the Montenegrin situation. Numerous international partners support the development of the Montenegrin education system. In addition to UNICEF, which runs projects on continuing training measures for teachers, the OECD, and the World Bank, these supporters include the

European Union, the USA, and several further countries as well as NGOs such as the Open Society Institute.

The Montenegrin reform project aims at a thorough modernization of the education system. The general objective of the reform is to provide education that promotes development, supports inclusiveness and participation, meets individual needs, provides individuals with the opportunities for freedom of thought, and builds a basis for the development of youths and adults who respect human rights, the constitutional state, democracy, and tolerance. The education system that the reform intends to establish is to include, for the first time, opportunities for further adult education and is to offer equal educational opportunities for all citizens.

The abovementioned objectives are to be achieved by means of a new legal framework which aims at a fundamental decentralization of the education system. The laws concern all levels of education from pre-school up to higher education. These laws have laid the foundation for the modernization of the education system. For the first time, a General Law on Education provides a comprehensive framework for all educational activities in a perspective of lifelong learning. It outlines the basic features of the system from pre-primary to tertiary education.

The reform process, furthermore, includes a restructuring of the elementary school sector. Before 2004-05, elementary school lasted eight years. In an effort to improve education in Montenegro and to adapt it to international standards, the elementary school phase has been extended to nine years. The age at which children start school was lowered from seven to six years; however, they still finish elementary school at the age of fourteen or fifteen years. Eight-year elementary school used to consist of four years of primary and four years of lower secondary education. After the reorganization, the primary stage is to comprise two cycles of three years' duration each, and lower secondary education is to be reduced to three years. In other words, the reform establishes a system of three three-year cycles, each of which is concluded and assessed by means of an external examination. The new nine-year elementary school is to be introduced gradually. In the school year 2004-05, twenty schools have commenced the implementation; in 2005-06, twenty-seven further schools will do the same. The reform is to be completed by 2008-09.

The quality of education offered by Montenegrin schools is assessed continually. At the end of the first cycle, pupils are examined in their mother tongue as well as in mathematics. The exam after the second cycle includes a foreign language; the third cycle is concluded by an examination in the mother tongue, mathematics, and an optional subject. Both the first and the second exam are organized by the Examination Centre of the newly established Bureau of Education Services in co-operation with schools. The final, central exam, in contrast, is carried out under the auspices of the Examination Centre exclusively. The reform measures include the introduction of a system of quality control. Montenegro will participate in the PISA survey in 2006 for the first time.

The design of new curricula is a further component of the present school reform. In 2002, the government has set up the National Curriculum Council, which was entrusted with the task of developing new curricula for all levels of education in co-operation with several commissions. Two years later, the Council presented curric-

ula that reflect the principles and objectives of the new education system, such as a stronger emphasis on the pupil, an orientation towards new standards, etc. The new curricula focus on competencies; in other words, instead of an outline of teaching contents, they provide a list of skills and competencies that are to be acquired by the pupils. In addition, the reformed school system offers numerous opportunities to choose from the subjects offered, especially in the higher grades.

Similar to the situation in other former member states of the Yugoslav Federation, the Montenegrin education system was heavily centralized. The Ministry of Education and Science was responsible not only for the political and strategic orientation of the school system, but also for its funding, the curricula, school supervision, and further training measures for teachers, among other areas. This situation is to be changed in the reform process. There is, however, a general lack of motivation for development efforts at the local level.

The desired decentralization is to be achieved both structurally and financially. In order to further the process of structural decentralization, several councils have been set up: the Council for General Education, the Council for Vocational Education, and the Council for Adult Education.

Their tasks include the accreditation of teaching contents, teaching standards, and requirements for examinations; the establishment of the curricula; the approval of textbooks; and the publication of recommendations on teachers' qualifications. The Bureau for Education Services, founded in 2004, further supports the implementation of the reforms. It provides assistance for teachers, parents, and head teachers, and prepares the introduction of quality control mechanisms. The Centre for Vocational Education, established in co-operation with both employers' and employees' associations, offers support for the vocational education sector. A further important step towards decentralization was the staff reductions in the Ministry of Education and Science; some of the redundant personnel have been employed, for instance, in the Bureau for Education Services.

Whereas educational policies have remained subject to the Ministry, the control over professional aspects and teaching contents as well as their implementation has moved to the above-mentioned councils and bodies. It is expected that this system will facilitate a gradual shift of responsibilities towards schools and municipalities. This decentralization is, above all, boosted by means of the establishment of School Boards, which locally manage individual schools. Depending on the school type, they comprise representatives of teachers, pupils, parents, the municipality, the Ministry, and business and industry. These committees deliberate on all decisions that are significant for their respective schools, and prepare and control the annual budgetary plans. In the new system, head teachers fulfil two functions: they manage the operation of their schools, and they supervise their pedagogical functioning. They are appointed in an open procedure.

Teacher training is a further aspect of the school reform. According to official figures of the year 2000, 90% of all school teachers had concluded a teacher training programme. Teachers in pre-school and primary school are required to have completed a university course of two years' duration; upper and lower secondary school teachers have to attend four-year university programmes. 9% of all teachers were

looking for a permanent post; only 1% did not have the required qualifications, i.e. a university degree. According to other estimates, however, 70% of primary school teachers and 96% of secondary school teachers hold degrees from tertiary institutions. These sources also report significant differences in teachers' qualifications between urban and rural regions (OECD 2002, 25). Despite the relatively high qualifications of Montenegrin teachers, the system of teacher training is in dire need of reform. The training programmes have until now usually concentrated on competence in the fields of individual subjects. Short courses on general concepts and on theories of pedagogy and psychology have merely supplemented this subject-based approach. Teacher training, as it is internationally understood, has not existed. Most young teachers have entered school without practical training, and without any knowledge of either the school environment or teaching as a profession. In addition, there have been hardly any opportunities for further training.

Against the background of the reform process, teacher training at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niksic has been modernized. The degree course now takes four years; the students receive general training during the first three years, and can specialize in their final year. Teaching practice is also to be integrated into the programmes. The implementation of this innovation has already begun. In addition, further training measures for teachers have been initiated. Within the framework of special programmes (often organized by international organizations such as UNICEF or the Open Society Institute), teachers receive in-service training in order to improve their professional competencies. These schemes, however, are not sufficient. There is still a lack of comprehensive programmes on school and team development as well as systematic further education programmes for teachers of all school types. Currently, there is not sufficient expertise to offer modern teaching methodology in most curriculum subjects. The Bureau for Educational Services is responsible for the development and implementation of further training measures for teachers. Within the context of the introduction of new curricula in 2004, a pilot scheme of special training for first-grade teachers was carried out at twenty elementary schools; at the same time, continuing education courses for head teachers have been established. The reform process is a difficult one, however, and what makes it even more difficult is the fact that the current system does not encourage teachers to continue and expand their education.

The working conditions for Montenegrin teachers are far from ideal: they have to cope with poorly funded and equipped schools, for example with few and outdated textbooks, substandard sanitary facilities and heating systems, or small classrooms; cluttered curricula; and overcrowded classes, especially in towns. The poor condition and small number of school buildings in urban areas have made it necessary for many schools to operate in several shifts. Although, for instance, the population of the capital Podgorica has increased by 20,000 over the last ten years, only one new elementary school has been constructed. In rural regions, in contrast, there is a lack of children. Despite the low number of pupils, school buildings have to be maintained.

Even though the salaries of Montenegrin teachers are higher than those in other countries in the Balkans, they are hardly sufficient to pay the bills. Montenegrin

teachers earn 240 euros per month on average and university teachers 350 euros. Due to the low wages, the status of the teaching profession is not very high; it is thus difficult to attract qualified pupils from secondary schools to become teachers. Salaries are equally low for all teachers, except for very few experienced teachers who also work as special advisors. A differentiated wage system is yet to be designed and introduced.

Nonetheless, most teachers are open to reform measures. The opening of the Montenegrin school system to alternative and modern pedagogical practices, and its development towards a system that stresses learning instead of teaching are regarded as necessary. As mentioned above, the school reform is not yet complete. It remains to be seen to what extent, and when, its ambitious objectives will be achieved.

The current school system

General structure

Montenegro has a nine-year comprehensive school (primary and lower secondary education) followed by a differentiated upper secondary level, where academic and vocational tracks can be chosen.

Pre-primary education

Pre-school in Montenegro has not been part of the compulsory education system controlled by the State. There are both nursery schools for children up to three years of age and kindergartens for those between the ages of three and seven. In 2004 a total of 11,524 children attended these institutions; this figure corresponds to about 22% of the children in this age bracket. The low percentage is caused by the fact that there are not enough institutions that cater for children interested in attending pre-school. There is a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:12.9. The teaching staff at pre-school level is almost exclusively female; a mere 1.2% of the teachers are men.

According to the new legislation, pre-schools are an integral part of the education system. The objectives of these institutions are to enable and to encourage children to develop their skills and their personality, and to have valuable experiences. Furthermore, pre-school aims to foster children's capability to understand themselves and others, to promote their ability to live together in a community, and to develop their perception and expression of feelings, their language skills, and their physical abilities. Finally, topics such as independence, health, and the environment are part of the contents of pre-school education.

Primary and lower secondary education

Children between six and fifteen years of age are legally required to attend school. In the year 2004, approximately 96.9% of this age cohort went to elementary school. Enrolment rates are lower among refugees, IDPs, and Roma. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:15.8; about 70% of all teachers are female. In Montenegro, there are 161 primary schools with 322 branch schools (as of 2004).

As mentioned above, the restructuring of the education system has resulted in a new kind of nine-year obligatory school with three cycles of three years' duration each. Whereas in the first cycle, pupils are instructed by class teachers, the second cycle is characterized by instruction from subject teachers. In the third and final cycle, instruction is exclusively subject teacher-based. A further innovation has been the introduction of descriptive forms of assessment in the first cycle. In grades 1 to 3, the following subjects are taught: mother tongue and literature, maths, fine arts, music, nature and society, and physical education. The first foreign language (usually English) is introduced in grade 4, the second in grade 7.

The new curricula provide for several new subjects; among these are civic education in grades 6 and 7, technology and computer studies in grades 5 to 7, and further optional subjects in grades 7 to 9. Pupils have to choose a total of five additional hours per week from a variety of elective subjects. These subjects are taught between one and three hours per week, and include further foreign languages, dance, mathematics, and the social sciences.

The new subjects are intended on the one hand to adapt educational contents to the needs and interests of pupils by means of electives, and on the other to meet the requirements of modern society through civic education and the scientific subjects.

Secondary education

According to official figures of 2004, 32,215 pupils were enrolled in institutions of upper secondary education, i.e. 96.9% of the age group. In the year 2000, 71.4% of pupils in secondary education attended vocational schools. The teacher-pupil ratio was 1:15.6, and just under 60% of the teachers were women. Depending on the school type, secondary education lasts between two and four years. In Montenegro, there are ten general secondary schools, twenty-six vocational schools, and eleven combined schools (as of 2004). General upper secondary school takes four years and prepares pupils for the final examination, which leads to university entrance qualifications. Pupils are thereby able to pursue their education at tertiary level and to develop in the spirit of humanistic progress. The syllabus comprises up to thirty lessons per week; of these, nineteen are obligatory and eight elective courses. As some upper secondary schools specialize in languages or mathematics, the proportion of the relevant subjects are higher in these institutions (for detailed information see International Bureau for Education (2001), p. 20). The following subjects are taught in general secondary school: Serbian language and literature, the first and second foreign language, Latin, logic, sociology and philosophy, history, music, arts, physical education, mathematics, information technology, geography, physics (between two and five lessons), chemistry and biology, the constitution and civil rights, and psychology.

Most adolescents attend vocational schools that offer between two and four years of practical education. With the 'Book of Changes', the system of vocational education has been completely restructured. Vocational education is to be adapted towards the standards of the job market and the market economy as well as towards technical and technological progress. For the first time, both sides of industry were involved

in drafting and implementing new projects. A new structure for vocational education was introduced:

- Lower vocational education with a duration of two years;
- Middle vocational education, lasting three or four years; and
- Upper vocational education (two years) as a continuation of middle vocational education.

These different types of education prepare pupils for more or less complex occupations. They are concluded with different exams.

As the lack of practical training was one of the main weaknesses of the previous system, a new concept of vocational 'training centres' has been introduced. These training centres are located in secondary vocational schools and offer practical training opportunities for pupils. The facilities are also used for training programmes for adults in periods in which there are no pupils in training. Technical and art schools offer four years of specialized education as well as an academic curriculum. Pupils conclude these schools with a final set of examinations in compulsory and optional subjects which provides entry to institutions of tertiary education.

Special education

The education of children with special needs is subject to the control of the Ministry of Education and Sciences and the Ministry of Labour and Welfare. Apart from the social exclusion of children with special needs, especially in rural areas, the Montenegrin system of special education is characterized by a number of problems. There is no well-established and organized system of registration. Information differs between institutions, and many children have never been categorized or registered. There is no exact data about either the number or the social and educational situation of these children. According to estimates made by the Ministry of Education and Science, only 4% of children with special needs attend school at all. The inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools is an important objective of the school reform. In order to provide equal opportunities to all children, integration and inclusion models for children with special needs have been recently implemented in pre-schools and primary schools. In September 2004, 111 children with special needs began grade 1 of elementary school, and sixty-seven children continued to attend inclusive education programmes. An additional 137 children with diverse developmental difficulties started school in twenty reform schools. In most places, however, inclusive education is non-existent.

A further seventeen schools offer groups for children with special needs. In addition, there are about 300 children receiving education in four special schools. In Podgorica, there is a specialized institution for mentally challenged pupils, a school for the physically disabled and those with both mental and physical disabilities, and an institution for behavioural and developmental problems. In Kotor, a school specializes in children with hearing and speech difficulties.

Adult education

Adult education is a recently added sector of the education system of Montenegro. It is regulated by the new Law on Adult Education as part of the uniform education system. The main objectives are the provision of functional literacy and education of people over thirty-five years of age, free elementary education, and lifelong-learning opportunities like retraining and further training of working skills and vocational competencies.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The Montenegrin tertiary sector is very small. Only 15% of the tertiary age bracket (nineteen to twenty-three years) participates in post-secondary education. The University of Montenegro is the only institution that provides tertiary programmes. It consists of fourteen different faculties and, in addition, a college for physiotherapy. The different units are dispersed over Podgorica, Cetinje, Kotor, Nikšić, and Herceg Novi. Founded in 1974, the University was named *Veljko Vlahović* between 1975 and 1992, and since then *Univerzitet Crne Gore* [University of Montenegro]. In the academic year 2004-05, a total of 10,645 students were enrolled, and the academic staff comprised 1273 persons. Courses are offered in the Montenegrin language; instruction in Albanian is not available. The courses of studies are set by the faculties.

References

- Book on the Changes in the Education System of the Republic of Montenegro. 2001. <http://www.vlada.cg.yu/eng/minprosv/vijesti.php?akcija=vijesti&id=353>
- International Bureau for Education (ed. Ministry of Education and Science of the Government of Montenegro): Development of Education. National Report for Montenegro (1990-2000). [Razvoj obrazovanja. Nacionalni izvještaj –Crna Gora (1990-2000)]. Podgorica 2001. http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/nac_izvestaj-yug-mon-enl-t01.pdf
- Ministry of Education and Science: The Development of Education. National Report. Presented at the 47th session of the International Conference on Education, 8-11 Sept. 2004. http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE47/english/Natreps/reports/montenegro_part_1.pdf
- Ministry of Education and Science & Education Institute: Information Bulletin on Nine-Year Elementary School. Podgorica 2004. <http://www.vlada.cg.yu/eng/minprosv/vijesti.php?akcija=vijesti&id=4403>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Montenegro & Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland: Finland's support to the development of education sector in Montenegro. Programme Document. 2005. http://global.finland.fi/english/procurement/mon_edu/pd_mon_edu.pdf
- OECD: Montenegro. In: Reviews of National Policies for Education. South Eastern Europe 2 (2003), pp. 195-264. http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/thematic-review-mon-yug-enl-t05.pdf

Further Internet sources

www.monstat.cg.yu/EngMeniGodisnjiPodaci.htm (statistics)

www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_monte.htm (South East Europe Education Co-operation Network)

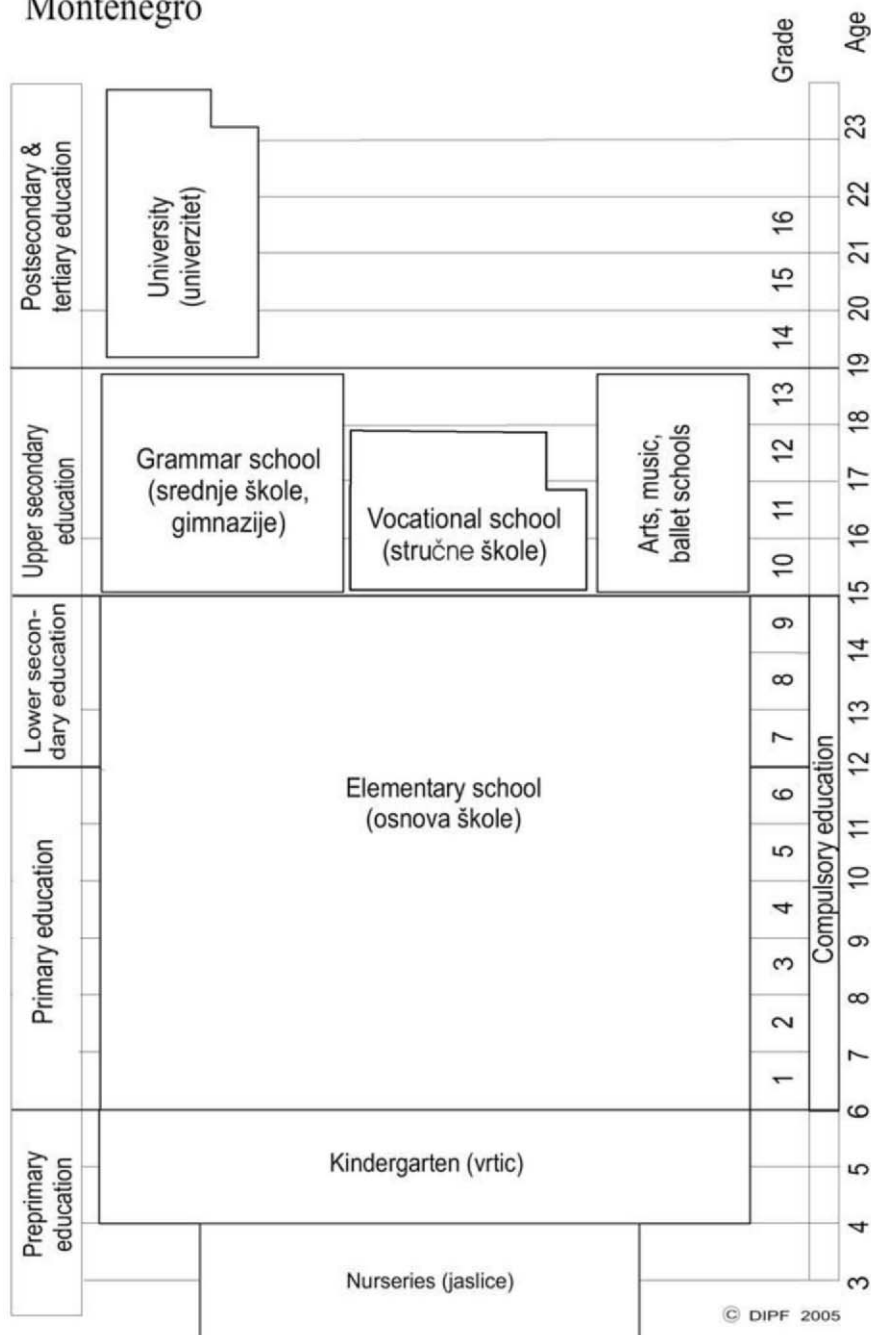
www.ibe.unesco.org (world data on education)

www.osim.cg.yu (Foundation Open Society Institute)

<http://www.gom.cg.yu/eng/minprosv/> (Ministry of Education and Science)

<http://www.gom.cg.yu/eng/minprosv/vijesti.php?akcija=rubrika&rubrika=34> (legislation)

Montenegro



Bob van de Ven

Netherlands

History of the school system

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, following the occupation by the French army, the Netherlands became a sovereign state. The Hague was made the centre of national government, from where changes to the school system were and continue to be controlled. In 1801 the first Primary Education Act was passed; since then both state schools and private schools have existed in the Netherlands. The state schools at the time were municipal and village schools, French schools, and Latin schools. Private schools were founded by the churches, foundations, and private individuals. With the establishment of state and private schools, a long-lasting struggle developed concerning equal treatment and financing. This struggle, which became known as the school funding controversy, was only brought to an end with the 1917 Schools Act and the so-called educational specification. Since that time, education in both state and private schools has been state-financed. In 1900 general compulsory school attendance was introduced. By that time, approximately 90% of children were already attending primary school. There was little interest in secondary education at the time: in the period around 1900, more than 92% of pupils did not attend secondary education after leaving primary school. It was believed that people had received sufficient education once they had completed primary school.

This situation changed after the Second World War. More and more pupils attended secondary school, and greater value was attached to a school leaving certificate, since it opened the way to many interesting jobs. In 1950 45.2% and in 1990 85.4% of pupils aged between twelve and eighteen attended one of the various forms of secondary education. This steady increase in participation in secondary education, in part brought about by a general trend towards democratization, led in the 1960s to the start of the reform of secondary education and of the relevant Acts. 1968 was the year of the *Wet op het Voorgezet Onderwijs* (Secondary Education Act). Because this act brought about changes to the entire education system, it also became known as the Mammoth Act. Several educational structures were introduced, namely *HAVO*, *MAVO*, and *VWO*. Each of these 'school types' prepared its pupils in a specific manner for further education: *MAVO* (duration: four years – junior general secondary education) above all for further vocational education, *HAVO* (duration: five years – senior secondary general education) above all for higher professional education, and *VWO* (duration: 6 years – pre-university education) above all for university studies. One essential feature was that pupils could study further at a higher level, i.e. having completed *MAVO*, they could continue studying in class 4 of *HAVO*, and having completed *HAVO*, in class 5 of *VWO*. Another new feature was that in the final two years of each school form, six or for *VWO* seven subjects could be (more or less) freely selected. Only Dutch and one foreign language were

compulsory. Not until 1993 was the lower school in *MAVO*, *HAVO*, and *VWO* altered (basic education). In 1998 the system in the upper school was also revised, with the introduction of a profile structure of specialist subjects together with developments which went by the name 'Study House'.

Cultural parameters

If we look at the Dutch education system, what is immediately striking is the autonomy of the schools and the freedom to establish schools for oneself. In the Constitution, the freedom to establish schools is clearly specified. The relationship between freedom and responsibility, and the reduction of central control to the minimum necessary, so characteristic of today's Dutch education system, are rooted in the history of Dutch educational development, and in the nature of the Dutch people. In education we still see evidence of the four sections of society, also known as 'Pillars', namely Protestant, Catholic, a neutral pillar (Dalton schools, Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, etc.), and public schools. The State no longer has any schools of its own.

Organization of the current school system

Statutory basis

In Article 8 of the *Wet op het Basisonderwijs (WBO)* (Basic Education Act) dating from 1985 it is stated that the objective of teaching in primary schools is the broad education of pupils. In other words, teaching should be concentrated on the emotional and intellectual development of pupils, the development of creativity, and the acquisition of necessary social, cultural, and physical skills. In Article 9 of the *WBO*, it is stated that 'attainment targets' should be developed, all of which should serve a broad-based education. The 'attainment targets' are pursued by the schools as those objectives which pupils must achieve by the end of primary education. Section 3 deals with these attainment targets in more detail. The *Wet op het Basisonderwijs* saw the introduction of a uniform 'primary school' for children between the ages of four and twelve, lasting eight years. At the same time, an end was brought to the individual forms of nursery schools which had been defined in the 1920 Primary Education Act. Today, the starting age for school is specified as follows: compulsory school attendance starts at the age of five. On the first school day after the child's fifth birthday, the child is required to attend school. However, children can attend primary school from the age of four. For special schools, another Act was introduced, *Interimwet speciaal onderwijs en voortgezet speciaal onderwijs (ISOVSO – Special Education Interim Act)*. Teaching at these schools caters to children who due to physical or mental handicaps require greater assistance in education and learning than other children attending primary school.

The Primary Education Act *Wet op het primair onderwijs (WPO)*, introduced in 1988 regulates primary education, including special education for the primary sector. The intention was to promote collaboration between 'normal' schools and special schools, in the form of joint ventures between the various responsible bodies, with simultaneous responsibility for the relevant combined structure.

The Secondary Education Act *Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs (WVO)* dates from 1963, but first became effective on 1 August 1968. Since then, a great deal has changed: above all, over the last few years major innovations have been anchored in the law. In 1963, 'basic education' (*basisvorming*) was introduced. From 1998 onwards, or on request from 1999, schools were required to introduce the profile structure of specific subjects for the senior classes in *HAVO* and *VWO* under the implementation of the 'Study House' concept. On 1 August 1988, the Act of 25 May 1998 became effective, according to which the structuring of *MAVO* and *VBO* (pre-vocational education) was fundamentally altered. Today, the term used is *VMBO* (pre-vocational secondary education), in which four learning pathways (*Leerwegen*) are included: a theoretical learning pathway, a combined learning pathway, a job-oriented learning pathway, and a practical pathway. In the theoretical pathway, the possibility remains of continuing studies in *HAVO* education.

Responsible bodies

The government controls education through legislation, based on the stipulations of the Constitution. The most important tasks of the government are the structuring, quality assurance, and financing of education. Its responsibility also extends to the public education institutions (in the municipalities), the Education Inspectorate, evaluation, and the financing of students. A separate authority is responsible for school administration. In public schools this is the municipal authority. Private schools have their own authority. In the past, it was often the church, but today the authority is often a foundation or association. Since 1997, as with public schools, it has also been possible for the Municipal Council to be the authority, without the private school's becoming a public legal entity within the framework of the Municipalities Act. The municipalities also have certain competences in respect of private schools. These include the administration of the school buildings and the distribution of funds for pupils who have fallen behind in their development. As a consequence, the current opinion is that the municipalities should no longer be directly involved as the authority responsible for public schools.

The structure of the general education school system

The Dutch education system is structured as follows:

- Primary education (for children between the ages of four and twelve).
- Special schools (both primary and secondary education).
- Secondary education (from twelve to nineteen years): here a distinction is made between *VMBO* (pre-vocational secondary education, four years), *HAVO* (senior secondary general education, five years), and *VWO* (pre-university education, six years).
- Vocational and adult education.
- Higher education (professional university, university, open university).

Outline structure of the vocational education system

Regional Training Centres (ROC)

On 1 January 1996, the Adult and Vocational Education Act (*WEB – Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs*) came into force. With its introduction, the acts on adult education and vocational education were brought together in a single statutory framework, in order to establish closer coherence between these forms of education. In 1998, training at *ROCs* (Regional Training Centres) was further developed. All schools for vocational education and adult education in a single region were merged under the responsibility of a single authority. These centres now offer a full range of courses in adult education and vocational education. The centres encompass the general qualification structures for adult and vocational education. Private institutions can also participate in the national qualification structure.

VMBO

Pre-vocational secondary education (*VMBO*) lasts four years and has a structure that includes both basic education and preparation for vocational education. *VMBO* is intended for pupils between the ages of twelve and sixteen. They can choose between four different programmes or ‘learning pathways’: the theoretical pathway, the combined pathway, the vocational pathway (with preparation at the *ROC*) and the practical pathway.

Universities and universities of professional education

In the Netherlands, a distinction is made between universities of professional education (*HBO – higher professional education*) and universities. The *HAVO* certificate grants admission to a professional university. In order to study at an academic university, the *VWO* certificate is required. For both universities and professional universities, a course of studies lasts on average four years. For some courses, however, the duration is five years. A degree in medicine lasts even longer. At present, work is underway on the introduction of the bachelor’s-master’s structure. In this process, the difference in orientation between universities and universities of professional education will remain in place. At universities, the continuous structure will be dropped, and two phases will emerge: the bachelor’s phase and the master’s phase. For universities of professional education, current courses of study will be recognized as a bachelor’s degree. Beyond this, it will be possible to offer *HBO* master’s courses.

Final examinations and entitlements

After four years of *VMBO*, five years of *HAVO*, and six years of *VWO*, pupils sit one of the following examinations:

The *VMBO* examination, which consists of the school examination and the central examination. Examinations are organized differently for individual subjects. The examination for a subject may consist of a school examination, or a school examination in combination with a central examination. The vocational learning pathway and the practical learning pathway also include a practical examination. Pupils sit-

ting an examination in the theoretical or combined learning pathway are in addition required to complete a 'sector project'. The sector refers to the course selected by the pupil, with his or her subjects (e.g. sectors for agriculture, technology, and sciences).

The *HAVO* and *VWO* examination: On 1 August 1998, a new examination programme for *HAVO* and *VWO* was introduced which ties in with the profile structure of the second phase. Here too, as with *VMBO*, there is a central examination and a school examination. For a number of subjects, there is only a school examination, which takes the form of an 'examination file'. The examination file contains all the results of pupils' school examinations, all marks achieved and work produced; this also applies to 'profile work' and other results from practical assignments. The pupil receives the examination file upon leaving school. On the basis of the file, pupils are able to demonstrate how they prepared for their examination. The school examination starts as early as class 2 of *VWO* and *HAVO*. The central examination is sat in the final year. All pupils in the Netherlands are set the same examination exercises at the same time. The standards are also centrally determined. The *CITO* organization plays an important role in this respect. Central examinations are sat by pupils in the subjects Dutch and English, and in all subjects in the selected profile. The subjects chosen in the 'free section' usually conclude with a school examination. All pupils who have passed the examination receive a certificate with a list of all grades achieved. The certificate also states whether it was awarded for *MAVO*, *HAVO*, or *VWO*; those subjects decisive in calculating the final examination result are also assigned a mark.

With a *VMBO* certificate, pupils can transfer to senior secondary vocational education. With a *MAVO* certificate (the theoretical learning pathway), access is also possible to *HAVO*. The *HAVO* certificate is required for universities of professional education and the *VWO* certificate for academic study. With a *HAVO* certificate it is also possible to complete *VWO* studies.

State governance and quality control

Decentralization

Over the last fifteen years, the trend towards decentralization has also been clearly felt in education. The Ministry of Education has imposed ever fewer regulations, and schools bear ever more responsibility for their own work. The schools receive a fixed budget ('lump sum financing') which they are free to spend as they see fit. The responsibility of the State for the quality of the education system of course remains. In this connection, the tasks of the Education Inspectorate have also changed.

Evaluation and inspection

Since around 1980, Dutch school policy has above all been focused on improving the quality of schools. At the same time, responsibility for that quality has been increasingly placed with the schools and institutions themselves. Alongside such internal quality assurance, there is also a system of evaluation at national level, in particular by the Dutch Education Inspectorate. The primary tasks of the Education Inspectorate are as follows:

- Monitoring whether schools and other educational institutions meet the quality requirements;
- Gathering information continuously on the situation in education, for example through regular visits to educational institutions; and
- Promoting innovations and new developments in education, for example by disseminating details of experiences within schools and regions amongst local authorities.

Since 1998, the 'Education Inspectorate (semi-independent status) regulations' have been in place. These regulations update the independent status of the Education Inspectorate, which had been initiated several years before. The Education Inspectorate monitors and promotes the quality of education in Dutch schools and institutions. The Inspectorate reports on this situation to both schools and the Ministry and Parliament.

Each school is required to inform parents of the existence of a complaints scheme within the school. All parents and anyone employed within the school have the possibility of addressing their objections to the relevant committee.

School plan

Once every four years, the school authority is required to draw up a so-called school plan in the form of a report on results and performance. The plan outlines how work has been carried out on improving quality, and the results achieved. Each school is required to regularly evaluate its own quality. The results must be published in the school plan, and form the basis for work within the school over the next four years. The co-administration committee at each school is required to approve the school plan. For the school authorities, the school plan forms the basis of information in respect of the developments in the school and in particular in respect of quality.

Quality charter

For every school, the Education Inspectorate produces a quality charter each year. This charter contains essential information about each individual school. The quality charter is published and available via the Internet. In this charter, examination results are published, together with the learning results of the pupils in the other classes. Information is contained about how many pupils have transferred to higher classes, how many pupils have repeated a year or have left school without a certificate, and how many pupils have proceeded to further education at a lower level. As a result, parents and of course the general public are provided with an impression of the performance of each school. To prevent schools from having a poorer overall result compared with schools with an entirely different school population, for example in the case of schools with a high multi-cultural makeup within the pupil base, an attempt is made to only compare similar schools.

Qualification of teaching staff and head teachers

Teacher training

In the Netherlands, there are various ways in which to qualify for the profession of teacher. Primary school teachers are trained at primary school teacher training col-

leges. A primary school teacher training college can be attended with a *HAVO* certificate. The course of studies lasts four years and prepares students directly for employment in a primary school. For secondary education, there are two levels of training: training for the first phase (which leads to a certificate of the second degree) and training for the second phase (*HAVO* and *VWO*), leading to a certificate of the first degree. For the certificate of the second degree (the first two years of secondary education), students attend teacher training courses at a university of professional education, studying *a single* subject (formerly two subjects). Alongside specific subject knowledge, students above all study didactics, teaching methods, and educational theory. For a certificate of the first degree, students first study a subject at university, remaining one year longer for the so-called 'teaching variant'. At present, teacher training is undergoing a process of change. This relates on the one hand to the fact that ever fewer students are becoming teachers, and on the other to new understanding and insights into the nature of teaching practice and the consequences for teacher training. For example, a practice-based dual variant is currently under development, and partnerships are being sought with schools; characteristic for this variant is shared responsibility for the training of future teachers.

Training for head teachers

The situation at present is that, in the majority of cases, individuals who become head teachers have an established career within the school, and have in practice qualified for the position of head teacher. The possibility now exists, and is increasingly being exploited, to prepare for a position as head teacher via a special training programme. This training is, however, not yet a guarantee for appointment as a head teacher. Since September 2001, additional resources have been set aside by the Ministry for head teacher qualification. The tasks and responsibilities of the head teacher have changed tremendously over the last few years, above all due to the fact that the autonomy of schools is constantly growing and, with the introduction of 'lump sum financing', tasks have become much more business- administrative in nature. The Association of Head Teachers (*VVO*), together with the Employers' Association, has developed a training programme for head teachers aimed at increasing their professionalism. The programme is known as *ISIS* (Integrated Training in School Management, see www.schoolmanager.info).

Schools of general education

Pre-school training and education

Primary schools are intended for children between the ages of four and twelve. Since 1985 (Primary Education Act), nursery schools have no longer existed; children now directly attend an integrated school. In the first two years (group one and group two), there still remains a considerable play element, but there is also a learning element that depends on the individual character of each child.

Pre-school education is anchored in social legislation and as such is the responsibility of the municipal authorities. The municipalities are responsible for the qual-

ity and financing of pre-school education. At present, municipalities are attempting to considerably increase capacity. The pre-school sector is divided as follows:

- Child day care centres for children from the ages of six weeks to four years old. Centres are also available for out-of-school care for children from four to twelve years old. These are open after school hours and during school holidays.
- Nurseries for children from two to four years old. These were not originally conceived as regular child day care centres; the children are intended to attend only once or twice a week, in order to learn social skills and have an opportunity to play with other children.

There is a special scheme for introduction to compulsory school attendance: when children reach the age of three years and ten months, they are already permitted to attend school for several days. This enables them to become more used to education. On the day on which they reach the age of four years, they are able to attend school. Compulsory school attendance only starts from the first school day of the month after they reach the age of five years. When a child is five years old, the parents are required to send that child to school. Compulsory school attendance lasts at least twelve academic years. In addition, compulsory school attendance applies to all pupils up to the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of sixteen. When compulsory school attendance ends, partial compulsory learning continues to exist. This lasts one year, and during this year the pupil in question is required, in addition to completing school work, to follow a training programme for a further two days. If parents violate the compulsory school attendance legislation, a heavy fine can be levied, and indeed even more stringent punishments may be imposed. The municipal authorities have the task of ensuring that all children regularly attend school. The municipality is required to check that all children are registered at school. This also applies for private schools. Since 1995, the municipal authorities have also been allocated a central role in regional reporting and monitoring. This in turn means that they have a major task in registering early school leavers.

Primary school

Private and public schools

There are approximately 7000 primary schools in the Netherlands, all of which receive state subsidies. Approximately 30% of these are public schools, and 70% are private schools. The public schools are administered by the municipal authorities, or by a municipal committee. If they are administered by a committee, they are more independent of the municipal authorities. For a municipal school, the Municipal Council is the school authority, which decides upon the appointment of the head teacher and other teaching staff at the school. Approximately two thirds of all children attend a private school. These take numerous forms. The majority are Catholic or Protestant schools, but there are also Jewish, Muslim, and humanistic schools. In addition, there are Waldorf schools and private schools established on the basis of a pedagogical theory, rather than a specific religion, for example Montessori schools, Jena Plan schools, Dalton schools, and Freinet schools. Private schools are administered by a foundation or an association. In most cases, parents or parents' represen-

tatives are the most important stakeholders on the Governing Board of such foundations or associations.

Aims of primary education

In primary education, the foundations are laid for the personal and intellectual development of all children. Within a specified framework (the attainment targets), schools are able to structure their teaching according to their own ideas. In the *WPO* (Primary Education Act), the requirements to be imposed in this respect on schools and the 'attainment targets' to be achieved are laid down. The Act contains a precise description of the minimum curriculum content that must be taught. Pupils at primary school must already receive teaching in scientific subjects, but above all in Dutch language and mathematics. Another important stipulation relates to the qualification of teaching staff. The Education Inspectorate monitors this very precisely, to ensure that schools remain within the boundaries of legislation.

Educational provision

The law does not describe in detail how teaching should be provided in primary schools. The way in which teaching is provided, as well as its underlying principles with respect to educational theory and didactic structures, is a matter for the school and the teachers themselves. Generally speaking, pupils are split into eight different groups, according to age and academic level. Each child starts at the age of four in group one (the term 'group' is now employed instead of 'class'), and then progresses each year until group eight is reached. Groups one and two have a nursery school programme, although the term nursery school is no longer used. The child now attends 'primary school' and not nursery school. It is also possible for this group structure to be altered, whereby pupils are classified according to learning levels. Even in traditional schools, however, increasing focus is being placed on the differences between individual pupils; teaching is becoming ever more individualized. Children usually remain at primary school for eight years.

Even in groups seven and eight, pupils receive little teaching from specialist subject teachers. The majority of classes are taught by the group teacher. To facilitate the transition from primary school to the first year of secondary school, there are now secondary schools that in the first year work with a core team, in other words, a group of teachers who provide teaching in different subjects. This phenomenon is not common, however, in the Netherlands, because the majority of teachers are only trained in one subject. The results in schools using this model are positive. The problem lies with the teachers, because they are required to prepare instruction for other subjects.

Attainment targets

In 1998 attainment targets for primary schools were defined by the government. The attainment targets describe what pupils must learn in terms of knowledge, insight, and skills. These attainment targets are supposed to have been achieved upon leaving primary school. Two types of attainment target are identified:

- Cross-curriculum attainment targets. These are attainment targets which relate to the development and promotion of general skills, and can therefore not be attributed to a special area of learning. They relate to the entire range of teaching provided at primary school. The following theme areas are identified: 1. attitude to work, 2. working according to a plan, 3. use of varied study strategies, 4. self-image, 5. social skills, and 6. new media.
- Curriculum-based attainment targets. These attainment targets relate to a specific domain. The following targets are identified: 1. Dutch language, 2. English language, 3. arithmetic/mathematics, 4. introduction to humankind and the world, 5. sport, and 6. introduction to art. In introduction to humankind and the world, the following subjects are to be found: geography, history, social studies, technology, environmental studies, health and life skills, and nature education.

Transition between school types

From primary to secondary education

Following primary school, generally speaking at the age of twelve, children transfer to secondary education. The receiving school decides whether a child will be admitted. In group seven, a start is made on preparing the pupils for their choice of school. The first question posed, generally by the parents, is of course: which form of school is suitable for the child? This is not an easy question, because the choice is considerable. Although the child will be receiving basic education, there is a considerable difference if the child attends a school with *MAVO/HAVO/VWO*, a school with only *HAVO/VWO*, a ‘gymnasium’ (separate grammar school), a ‘broad-based school’ with *VMBO/HAVO/VWO*, or perhaps even a separate school specifically for *MAVO* education. There are few of this latter group, but they do exist. Teaching in primary school is very individualistic. In group eight, all pupils in the Netherlands are tested using the so-called *CITO* test – *Centraal Instituut voor Testontwikkeling* (Central Institute for Test Development in the Netherlands). The result is a specific level which in turn is mapped to the various school types available in the secondary sector. The *CITO* tests mathematical skills and linguistic knowledge. The majority of schools also operate a second form of testing which encompasses more personality characteristics across a broader spectrum (for example, whether a pupil is able to concentrate well, whether a pupil has sufficient social skills, etc.). The recommendation of the head teacher at the primary school and of the class teacher are also very important. In other words, there are three criteria used to decide on the school type to which a pupil will be admitted. In order to generate interest amongst primary school pupils for a particular secondary school (after all, there is considerable competition amongst the schools for pupils), ‘open days’ are organized. During these open days, pupils and parents are able to visit secondary schools to gain an impression of the school and the teaching staff. Many secondary schools also offer the possibility for pupils at primary school to attend lessons in secondary school for a day or part of a day. Considerable attention is focused on organizing the transition from primary school to secondary school in the most pupil-friendly way possible.

Because pupils still receive basic education during the first few years at secondary school, it is possible to switch to a different teaching programme (school type)

after the first year. This is often possible within a single school, but it may also be necessary to find a different school. Because this is the most unfavourable option, however, for the pupil in question, considerable care is taken in the choice of school.

The CITO test

As previously stated, the majority of pupils take the *CITO* test. This test of learning progress is scheduled for the end of the school year in group eight. The test provides information about both pupil performance and school performance. In 2001 84% of schools, with a total of 150,000 pupils, took part in the test. The test is not an examination. The primary objective of the test is to predict as accurately as possible the future scholastic success of a pupil in secondary education. Based on results to date, the test is a successful predictor. The result of the test not only indicates what type of school is suitable for the pupil, but also provides a statement about the quality of a school in relation to other schools.

The test for pupils in group six is the so-called entrance test. In this test, exercises are set in Dutch language, mathematics, and information science. Pupils sit sixteen tests, each with twenty-five to thirty questions. Each exercise lasts between thirty and forty-five minutes, so that at least four morning sessions are required for these tests. When a school has completed the test, the documents are submitted to the *CITO* organization, where they are processed, and the assessment of the results is returned to the school. The results of each pupil are thereby compared with those of other pupils at the school, with pupils in the region, and also with the average national results. At the end of group seven, a repeat test is taken. In this way, the learning progress in a given school year is determined. At the same time, pupils are gradually prepared for the final test in group eight, and parents and teachers receive a continuous indication of the child's educational development. The receiving secondary school, on the other hand, is only given the results of the final test in group eight. The results for each individual pupil appear on a report, which indicates the performance of the pupil in comparison to that of the other participants. The standard result is a value between 501 and 550. Based on this standard result, it is possible to predict whether a child will be amongst the stronger or weaker pupils in a given school type.

Selection of school type following 'basic education'

One of the aims of basic education (the first two or three years of secondary education) is to provide a more precise assessment of the performance of each individual pupil. The study results of the first years of basic education offer a starting point for a report issued by the school concerning future learning success. Each individual school is to a greater or lesser extent free to determine the way in which this assessment is organized. In all cases, preparation for this selection process is a fixed part of the curriculum. For pupils, it is a process of gradually increasing awareness of what they want to study, what their aspirations are, and possibly what career they wish to pursue.

The *MAVO/HAVO/VWO* system always leaves open the option of switching after completing *MAVO* to *HAVO*, and after *HAVO* to *VWO*. The reverse is also not un-

common, whereby a pupil switches from *VWO* to *HAVO*, from *HAVO* to *MAVO*, or from *MAVO* to vocational education (vocational learning pathway, etc.). In this way, pupils are prevented from entering an educational cul-de-sac. Because the majority of schools are 'broad schools', and sometimes even 'very broad schools' (with the full school range from *VMBO* education through to separate grammar school), pupils often need not even switch to a different school, which in psychological terms is also far more favourable.

School types in secondary education

The first phase of the secondary level

The majority of schools form school communities offering *VMBO/HAVO/VWO* education. *MAVO* and *VBO* (pre-vocational education), as already described, were combined in 1999 to form *VMBO* (pre-vocational secondary education). *VMBO* still offers the theoretical learning pathway previously known as *MAVO*. The first phase of the secondary level encompasses the four years of *VMBO* education and the first three years of *HAVO* (five years) and *VWO* (six years). This first phase is known as 'basic education' (not to be confused with *basisschool*, the Dutch term for primary school). Basic education defines the teaching programme for the first years in all school types. The focus is placed on the application of knowledge and skills, with considerable value being attached to common elements in the curriculum. The other intention of introducing basic education was to postpone the definitive choice of *MAVO*, *HAVO*, or *VWO* education, whilst offering greater opportunities to promote the capacities of individual pupils during this educational phase.

The introduction of basic education in 1993 can be viewed as something of a compromise between the proponents of the comprehensive school idea (in Dutch: *middenschool*) and those who were opposed to the idea of pupils receiving combined education after primary school. The result is the development of broadly varied school types. There are secondary schools which in class one have completely heterogeneous classes, containing pupils suitable for grammar school education together with pupils capable only of achieving the lowest learning pathway, *VMBO*. There are, however, other secondary schools in which even in class one the pupils are streamed according to different levels. In between there are numerous variants. The school is free to choose whether basic education should last two, three, or four years. Initially, the Ministry wanted to test the attainment targets that were to be achieved. However, because putting this test into practice would have required enormous time and effort, and because the differences between the schools, each of which could select a different structure, were very considerable, this plan was dropped. Given the evaluations that have been completed of the first years of basic education, the unfortunate conclusion that must be drawn is that the system has not generated the expected results. The majority of schools have not succeeded in establishing a system that lives up to the principles of basic education, namely not only to provide pupils with knowledge, but also to teach them skills and to establish a degree of coherence in what the school has to offer. The Ministry is therefore currently considering the future development of basic education.

In the basic education period, every pupil receives teaching in at least fifteen subjects. Attainment targets have been laid down for the various subjects, which contain a description of what pupils must acquire in respect of insight, knowledge, and skills. At the end of basic education, the school is expected to have reached at least these minimum attainment targets.

In the first three years, pupils are expected to have received 1000 periods of teaching, each of fifty minutes, in compliance with the core curriculum. In addition, a further 870 hours are available to the school to be freely deployed. This time is to be used by the school for other activities and other teaching periods. In each school year, pupils must receive at least 1280 teaching periods, each of fifty minutes. New subjects brought in with the introduction of basic education were technology, information sciences, and 'life skills'. The subject of life skills includes such subjects as 'learning to cook', 'personal care', 'healthy eating' and similar themes. Many teachers had to be retrained, and building work had to be carried out in schools for life skills and technology in order for these subjects to be correctly taught.

The second phase of secondary education has been developing according to the 'Study House' concept over the last two to three years. This concept demands that pupils work more independently, that their skills are tested, and that the teacher is more of a supervisor in the learning process of the individual pupil. An understanding is currently emerging of how important it is in this respect that pupils are gradually prepared during the first phase for independent work. It is now probable that within the schools an initiative will be implemented in this direction, as a result of which teaching in the first phase will become more innovative.

The second phase in secondary education

The targets formulated for the introduction of the 'new second phase' were: broad-based general education and sound preparation for a further educational career. After 1968 ('Mammoth Act'), education in the secondary sector did not change fundamentally. The introduction of basic education represented the start of further innovations. Above all at the universities and universities of professional education, it was realized that the link between secondary education and further education was becoming increasingly problematic. Pupils were not used to working independently, and their knowledge and skills were in part insufficient. They had been too 'narrowly' educated as a consequence of the system of subject selection in the years immediately prior to the final examination (*HAVO* six subjects, *VWO* seven subjects). In 1998, the first schools began the introduction of the 'new second phase', and since 1999 this system has been applied to all schools. So what is new about the 'new second phase'? In the new concept, there is no longer a specified number of teaching hours for pupils. The point of departure is now the 'student workload', in other words, the time a pupil should spend on his or her studies. In calculating the student workload, the average time required by a pupil to independently acquire a specified proportion of the study material serves as the basis. The assumption is thereby made that the total student workload per year is 1600 hours, namely forty weeks of forty hours.

The curriculum is structured as follows: All pupils have a common component in their studies. In this common component they are taught Dutch, English, a second foreign language, general sciences, history and social studies, cultural education, and sport. In addition, they can select from one of four 'profiles' or subject combinations:

- Nature and technology,
- Nature and health,
- Science and society, and
- Culture and society.

Finally, a number of hours remain which the pupils can select freely. For the teaching programme (curriculum, methods, and teaching aids), no further regulations are specified. The school plan provides a description and justification of the selection of the curriculum and the didactic methods employed. The school selects the teaching methods and the parents purchase the books for their children.

A fundamental feature is that pupils are offered more subjects and are required to work more independently using multiple skills. Pupils are, for example, required to produce a 'profile project'. This is a project in which they independently demonstrate the coherence between the subjects they have selected. Because they have more subjects, and fewer hours are available for each of those subjects than in the old system, pupils are required to process the material more independently. At the same time, the role of the teacher is more to supervise the learning process than to stand in front of the class. Many schools have introduced 'independent hours'. For example, for the third teaching period in the study timetable, the pupils are allowed to select the teacher whose class they wish to attend. In that period, supervised by the teacher they have selected, they are able to study and if necessary ask questions. This new didactic method is known as the 'Study House'.

Special schools and mixed ability schools

Children with learning disabilities or with pronounced behavioural problems are generally not taught in normal schools, but in special schools. Generally speaking, however, an attempt is made wherever possible to encourage pupils to attend 'normal' schools, under the credo 'back to school together'. In other words, only in cases where it is truly impossible for the child to attend a normal school are special schools considered. The parents also prefer to have their child attend a normal school if this is at all possible. It is also important that the child be able to attend a school close to home, where he or she will meet other children from the neighbourhood. A recent innovation is that children who were in the past eligible for special education today receive a personal budget from the Ministry which can be spent in the school they attend. Using this budget, the receiving school is able to organize special-needs teaching and special pedagogical supervision. Together with this additional budget, the support previously provided to special schools is gradually being transferred to the other schools.

Dealing with special 'problem areas'

Since 1 August 1998, the municipal authorities have also been responsible for educational policy aimed at pupils with learning deficits. For both public and private schools, they are required to draw up a plan to tackle these deficits with regard to certain risk groups in the municipality. This applies to both primary and secondary education. In addition, the possibility was also created to offer teaching in foreign languages for immigrant groups. The objective is for these pupils to better master their mother tongue, and thus maintain contact with their own culture. The hope is that as a consequence they will become more self-aware and will thereby integrate more easily into and participate more actively in Dutch society. Lessons in a foreign language are voluntary, but are offered at school.

Current discussions and development perspectives

Back to school together

Under this working title, all primary schools are required to teach as many pupils as possible who would previously have attended a special school. According to the latest report from the Education Inspectorate, schools are steadily improving in the way in which they deal with differences between pupils.

Quality of teaching

The results of different schools are increasingly entering the public domain. Schools are having to learn to deal with this fact, and to implement an active 'policy' as a result. All schools aim to evaluate their teaching and their results, to take all necessary measures in response, and to publish information about those efforts.

School and society

School has increasingly become part of the society around it. Developments heading towards schools which are open from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon, with a broad range of extra-curricular activities, are more than simply a trend. Such schools already exist in the major cities. School is also increasingly becoming part of municipal politics. The municipality receives funding from central government to offer additional learning assistance to children with learning deficits. Educational policy is shifting increasingly from central to local government, in line with the decentralization of government policy in many other areas.

Demographic developments and teacher shortages

One major demographic development is the increase in the average age of teachers. At present, the average age in the secondary sector is already forty-five years, as a result of which the desirable balance between older and younger teachers no longer exists. In the coming years, many teachers will leave the profession upon reaching pensionable age. In addition, very few young people are opting for the teaching profession, because interest in this profession has fallen considerably. If no funda-

mental measures are taken, there will be an enormous teacher shortage within the foreseeable future.

Financial independence

Since 1993 in adult and vocational education, and since 1996 in general education (secondary sector), 'lump sum financing' has been in force. This means that each school receives a fixed lump sum each year to cover all staffing and material costs. The amount depends on the number of pupils attending the school in the previous year. This clearly becomes a problem if pupil numbers start to fall. It is also a problem, however, if pupil numbers significantly rise. In this situation, the additional teaching hours must be covered from (available) reserves or – in the worst case – by creating larger classes. Lump sum financing above all allows the Education Ministry better to plan education costs, but it also grants schools greater freedom. Although each school receives an amount for staff costs and another amount for material costs, each budget can be used to cover shortfalls in the other. In other words, computers instead of teachers is a definite possibility. On the other hand, this lump sum financing method has had major consequences for schools and their authorities. A trend, for example, has emerged whereby the authorities governing private schools have sought greater collaboration with one another. Over the last few years, numerous authorities have merged, enabling them to more clearly and more independently operate their 'own school policy'. This route has also been sought as a measure to provide a form of financial backup, since under the lump sum financing method it is no longer inconceivable that a school could in fact become financially bankrupt.

School management in modern schools

Ons Middelbaar Onderwijs is an organization of private authorities with more than fifty (!) schools. As described above, the introduction of lump sum financing and the decentralization of educational policy have had major consequences for school administration. Whereas in the past many authorities administered only a single school, today, thanks to the many mergers, most authorities govern several schools. In the province of Brabant, for example, there is an *Ons Middelbaar Onderwijs* association that brings together some fifty secondary schools. Although this is an exception, the trend towards larger-scale mergers is clearly present. This of course means that the authorities must be made more professional, which can be achieved by granting head teachers more administrative authority. If several schools work together with a single governing body, a governing board is sometimes established with a chair who takes on considerable administrative tasks for the community of schools. As a consequence, the authorities become further distanced from the schools, and function more like a board of directors in the world of business. Another not uncommon model exists, whereby head teachers of the collaborating schools form an 'intra-school management team'. In this model, the autonomy of the individual schools is better guaranteed than in the model with a school board, but it does impose considerable demands on the collaboration between the individual head teachers.

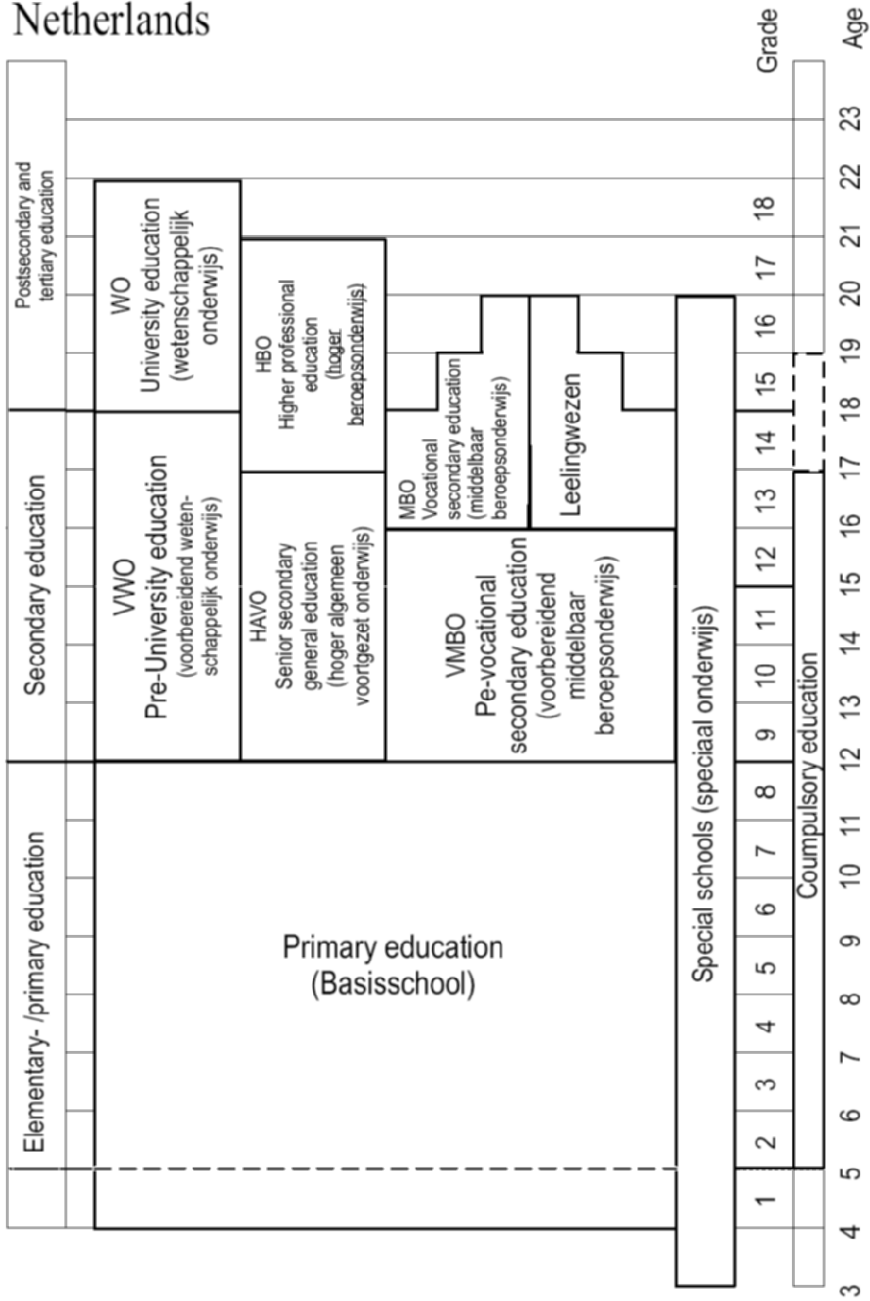
New tasks for head teachers

Clearly, as a consequence of these developments, the role of the head teacher is changing fundamentally. The head teacher must carry out tasks that in the past were the responsibility of the authorities, and as a consequence has ever less time for teaching. As a result, new management models are emerging in schools, whereby the deputy head teacher increasingly takes over the traditional role of the head teacher. A new layer of management is thus developing within schools, namely 'middle management'. Because school authorities are autonomous in organizing the school in the way they see fit, Dutch schools are able to aim for greater professionalism in this respect, and to further develop an effective organizational structure.

References

- Dodde, N.L.: "... tot der kinderen selfs profijt ...". Een geschiedenis van het onderwijs in Rotterdam. The Hague 1991.
- Droog, M.G.A. (ed. Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen): Informatiedossier over de onderwijssystemen in de Europese Unie 2000. Zoetermeer 2001.
- Inspectie van het Onderwijs, Schooltoezicht VO 2001-2002. Informatiebrochure voor scholen voor voortgezet onderwijs en speciaal voortgezet onderwijs. Utrecht 2001.
- Knippenberg, H./van der Ham, W.: Een bron van aanhoudende zorg, 75 jaar Ministerie van Onderwijs (Kunsten) en Wetenschappen. Assen 1993.
- Mares, A. (ed. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek): Jaarboek onderwijs in cijfers 2001. Voorburg 2001.
- Meysen, J.H.: Lager Onderwijs in de spiegel der geschiedenis 1908-1996. Staatsuitgeverij. The Hague 1976.
- OCENW: Het voortgezet onderwijs, gids voor ouders, verzorgers en leerlingen. Zoetermeer 2001.
- OCENW: Onderwijs in stelling. SDU Uitgeverij. The Hague 2000.
- Salimova, L./Dodde, N. L. (Eds.): International Handbook on history of education. Moskow 200.
- STAATSBLAD van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden: Besluit van 2 juni 1998, houdende vaststelling van nieuwe kerndoelen voor het basisonderwijs. Staatsuitgeverij 1998.

Netherlands



Tobias Werler and Kirsten Sivesind

Norway

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

If you are visiting Norway, you will probably make a stop at the Viking ship museum. It is dedicated to the cultural history of the period of Viking raids into Europe between 800 and 1050. The earliest burial site remains, including ships and beautiful handcrafted furnishings, were excavated more than 100 years ago and reflect, among many other public ventures, the search for a national identity. Many would see this as highly problematic, since the Norsemen consisted of three peoples: Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians, or what one would today consider Scandinavians. However, they have always been closely connected.

After King Olav Trygvasson embarked on his voyage around the Norwegian coast in 995 and introduced Christianity to the Norwegian population, piracy became rare, and was replaced by fishing, forestry, and farming as the most common means of making a livelihood. Thereafter, the Norwegian kingdom became strongly dependent on its neighbours. In 1380 the country was absorbed into a commonwealth with Denmark. The Union of Kalmar (1389), which also integrated Sweden for some periods, lasted for more than four centuries.

Whereas Sweden became independent in 1523, Norway remained under Danish rule. During the following period, national structures were replaced by Danish ones. After the Napoleonic wars, Denmark had to relinquish its rule over Norway to Sweden (1814). The Swedish-Norwegian union was dissolved in 1905 by referendum. Accordingly, in 2005 Norwegians are celebrating the centenary of the parliamentary Kingdom of Norway as a sovereign state.

The only interruption of this independence took place from 1940 to 1945, when German forces occupied the country. As in other parts of Europe, a policy of Nazification and oppression was followed. After World War II, however, economic recovery was supported by the Marshall Plan. Since then, the total population has increased from 3.1 million to 4.5 million (2001). Norway joined NATO in 1949 and lost its neutral status. After initial oil exploration in the 1970s, the prospering oil industry gained enormous economic importance and caused a rapid growth in the Gross National Product (GNP). Two referendums (in 1972 and in 1994) on the question of Norway's proposed membership of the European Union produced a negative vote, probably because Norwegians wanted to keep their sovereignty after having been oppressed by other nations throughout different periods of their history – and because they can afford it.

Norway's topography is defined by a complex mountain system, and its coast is characterized by wild fjords. Norway's surface area measures 323,800 square kilometres, and its length from south to north is 2500 kilometres. One third of the total

landmass is located above the polar circle. The majority of the population lives in towns such as Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, and Tromsø, which have between 50,000 and more than 500,000 inhabitants. One might characterize the country as sparsely populated, since its population density measures fourteen inhabitants per square kilometre. Agriculture is concentrated on the southern coast and in the central and eastern parts of the country. Together with forestry and fishing, it employs only 4% of the working population. Traditionally, the fishing industry, shipbuilding, pulp and paper products, and chemicals and metals have been the main elements of the secondary sector in Norway. Manufacturing is currently declining, but off-shore oil production is expanding in terms of its contribution to GNP. In total, the secondary sector employs 22% of the working population, while almost 74% of all Norwegian employees work in the tertiary sector. In August 2004, the unemployment rate was 4.5% and inflation was 1.4%. Thanks to oil revenues, the national budget retains a surplus. This fact makes generous public welfare programmes possible.

The Norwegian State can be characterized as a Welfare State, since one of its most important aims is to set up legally guaranteed social benefits that are unaffected by market forces. These benefits are extended to the whole population. A number of basic laws guarantee the Welfare State: the right to a minimum wage and to both free education and further academic studies. The compensation of wage differences through the tax system, and the support of social mobility for all is part of the Norwegian government's policy, and the educational system allows for this kind of mobility.

Reforms and innovations

Over the last few years, the Norwegian school system has been the object of numerous reforms. The government's aim was both to create a flexible education system and prepare pupils for a continuously changing society.

The history of comprehensive school goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Tensions between the towns and the rural areas were added to conflicts between the social classes. These differences were expressed in differences in school attendance. The interests of the higher schools (*børgerskole*, *latinskole*, and *gymnas*) stood in contrast to the interests of the elementary school (*folkeskole*). To reduce these contrasts, the Norwegian Parliament pursued a policy of equality. The solution was to create a public school for all pupils. As early as 1896, it was decided by law that all pupils had to attend elementary school from grades 1 to 5.

Through school laws passed in 1935 and 1959, a seven-year comprehensive school (*grunnskole*) for all school-age children was created. The enactment of this law put Norway at the forefront of European school development. Since the early 1960s, the granting of equal opportunities regardless of sex, place of residence, and economic, social, and cultural background has been the aim of Norwegian educational policies. All pupils are thereby provided with an individual education which corresponds to their capabilities. In 1969 the Norwegian *Storting* (National Assembly) adopted a new Education Act which extended compulsory schooling (*grunnskole*) from seven to nine years.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the secondary school structure was changed. The *realskole* was an integral part of lower secondary school, and the *gymnas* was part of upper secondary school, which provided both a general education and vocational education.

The structural reforms of the upper secondary school (1994) and of the primary and lower secondary school (1997) resulted in ten years of compulsory schooling, starting at the age of six instead of seven. Moreover, completing the compulsory level entitled graduates by law to enter the upper secondary level. Reforms of teacher education (1999 and 2003) and adult education (2002) were carried out with regard to unity and the perspective of lifelong learning. Key objectives of the reforms were to increase knowledge and to improve competence levels for learners at all levels of education.

Socio-cultural context and governance of the current school system

The primary aims of Norwegian education policy are guided by the ideals of equality and community. 'Equality' means the creation of the same access to what education offers, that is teaching and learning. 'Community' means the creation of educational institutions that are capable of guaranteeing social justice in the school environment, including the rights of each individual. According to the law, all school owners are obliged to ensure the provision of satisfactory and equal educational facilities in compliance with laws and regulations (section 14.1).

The policy of institutionalized individualism was launched in Norway in the middle of the 1950s. Pupils were proclaimed to be at the heart of schooling and education. Because of this declaration, it is possible for all pupils to choose their educational course regardless of the financial situation of their parents. Current educational policies show, in comparison to Central European education systems, that Norwegian education policy has managed to integrate ideological, cultural, and national values in school lessons. A strong emphasis on academic aims in the curriculum is prevented by this policy. Furthermore, the increased acquisition of knowledge and capabilities is in the foreground of current school development. Modern educational policies emphasize both the content and quality of schooling.

Although Norwegians are very homogeneous with regard to both income and levels of education, they belong to different cultures and backgrounds. At present (2005), immigrants of more than 200 nationalities amount to 7.6% of the total population. Many immigrants live in cities such as Oslo, where 21.8% of the inhabitants have a foreign background. Sami and Finnish minorities, which live mainly in the northern provinces of Troms and Finnmark, belong to the traditional population of the country. They are small minority groups, amounting to roughly 20,000 people, and they have their own language and culture. Since they are part of the native population, they have special rights according to Norwegian law and their own Parliament, which was established in 1987.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Norway is a parliamentary monarchy and belongs to the consensus democracies (Rotholz 1986, p. 125). The State has been guided by centralism with regard to the content and organization of schooling, although municipal bodies have a great impact on the interpretation and the enforcement of central decisions. Important institutions of the Norwegian democracy include the Norwegian Parliament/National Assembly (*Storting*), governmental administration, communities of interest, 19 counties (*fylke*), and 433 municipalities (*kommune*).

The National Assembly passes all legislative resolutions. The Education Act relating to primary and secondary education is the legal basis for the comprehensive school system. Both the parliament and the government develop national educational aims in addition to the budgetary framework. The Ministry of Education and Research (*Utdannings- og forskningsdepartement* - UFD) is the most senior administrative organ for the school and all other educational sectors. It is responsible for designing and implementing national education policy. To guarantee national coordination according to the Educational Act and political priorities established by the government, ordinances and curricula are passed.

Furthermore, the Ministry has the overall responsibility for the supervision of education, which is discussed and enacted by regional Education Offices. These bodies changed their name from National Education Offices to Education Offices in 2003, when they were integrated into the Office of County Governors. Their mandate is to link decisions made by the Ministry of Education and Research to what is organized in counties and municipalities through administration, guidance, and inspection.

A third agency at the national level is the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education, which replaced the National Board of Education in June 2004. There are overlapping areas of responsibility between the Directorate and the Ministry, and there are thus a number of cross-connections when it comes to tasks such as developing and implementing the national quality assessment system and producing national curricula. The Directorate also advises the Education Offices, counties, municipalities, and independent schools, and offers additional teaching material, periodicals, Internet-based databases, discussion forums, and guidelines for school evaluations. It also organizes national exams for secondary schooling.

Counties and municipalities are treated as equal administrative levels and differ according to areas of decision-making. The municipal council is the most senior committee of the municipality, while the county finds its equivalent in its assembly. Representatives are elected for both authorities every four years. The State is responsible for universities, infrastructure, social affairs, hospitals, and courts and police, while the counties handle matters such as upper secondary schools and local roads. Municipalities are responsible, among other things, for compulsory education (primary and lower secondary schools) and social security.

All municipalities manage compulsory education, pre-primary provision, and social work programmes. Every municipality decides, according to the local educational authority, on the employment of teachers. It is also the responsibility of all

municipalities to organize in-service training and to adapt the national curriculum according to local needs.

Every school is managed in all administrative and pedagogical respects by the head teacher. The co-ordinating committee for the primary and lower secondary school is comprised of two members from the teaching staff, one from the other employees, two from the parents' council, two from the pupils, and two from the municipality. The head teacher usually takes part in the committee and represents the municipality. Although the head teacher has the final say, the committee has the right to express its views on all matters relating to the school. Moreover, at every school a class council (*klasseråd*), parent council (*foreldreråd*), and student council (*elevråd*) may be created. Upper secondary education has a similar organizational structure, except for the formal involvement of parents.

At all levels, teachers are free to prepare and organize teaching and learning in accordance with their professional knowledge. Limitations are set by the national curriculum framework, which at the same time is regarded as a resource for development. There are no governmental, regional, or local school supervisory authorities in Norway.

All public education is free of charge. This also applies to school materials for the compulsory level (primary and lower secondary school). 85% of the costs in privately-run schools are covered by the government. In order to maintain the principles of decentralization, autonomy, and efficiency, educational bodies receive a non-earmarked lump sum to finance individual schools according to the local situation. The subsidy systems also take regional differences into account.

According to the Education Act, private primary and lower secondary schools must be approved by the Ministry. They are primarily considered to be supplementary institutions and are not supposed to compete with public instruction. Until September 1993, when a new act was adopted, private schools were approved on the condition that they were established on religious or ethical grounds or based on alternative pedagogical ideas (e.g. Steiner and Montessori). The small number of independent schools follow these principles, but an increasing number of newly established schools are, following the new act, approved on other grounds.

Between 1985-86 and 2000-2001, the number of independent schools at the primary and lower secondary levels rose from 0.8% to 2.7%. Given the increasing number of proposals for establishing independent schools, this number will probably further increase in 2005, although it is expected to remain lower than in Sweden and Denmark.

The reforms in the 1990s of the Norwegian education system are currently under debate and will be further re-structured by means of a new curriculum reform that will be adopted in 2006. In this situation, it is interesting to look back and ask whether the new reforms reflect a new political direction compared to the earlier ones. In order to establish a national education policy in a sparsely populated country, the decision-making powers of individual schools were decreased during the 1990s. The Ministry formulated national school aims and objectives to prevent uncontrolled developments. This kind of governance is considered highly centralized, but in this area the requirement for local adaptations is included. Without a system

of accountability based on standards and results, it might be said that each school determines its own path to success. The National Assembly and the government have created the general conditions for this situation. According to the educational tradition in Norway, each school decides on methods and the use of resources (finances, rooms, materials, and teachers). All teaching-related problems, such as the technical and educational organization of the lessons, are assigned to the teacher, who is also responsible for the realization of the curriculum guideline. In order for the schools to find qualified and suitable staff, they are allowed to employ teachers as they deem necessary.

The general curriculum framework from 1993 combined central ideas for primary school, secondary school, and adult education. It replaced the first chapter of the curriculum for primary and lower secondary school from 1987 and created a new foundation for upper secondary schooling. A commissioned report on higher education (*Med viten og vilje* – NOU 1988:28), which pointed out the unsatisfactory quality of the Norwegian school system, provided the background for the reforms and the new curriculum. The new curriculum guidelines from the 1990s broke with old traditions in a certain sense.

One change was that the development of the individual and his teachability moved into the foreground of education. The most essential characteristic is that only one general curriculum framework was developed, which described the common aims and modes of operation for both primary and secondary schools. However, this curriculum reform did not change either the social aims of schooling or objectives related to education policy. The curriculum emphasizes in particular the following: by stressing culture and cultural heritage, the pupils' identification with and feelings for their community should be strengthened. Education must also respond to changing technological conditions, and knowledge about new technology must be imparted to pupils. Another essential reference point is the integration of ecological topics into the classroom. The primary objective of the reform phases, namely the creation of equality, remained unchanged. The crucial problems of individualized teaching, such as pupils' independent work, co-operation between teachers and pupils, and the adaptation of school processes to local conditions, remained as they were or were even strengthened.

Some terms were replaced in the curriculum: the expression 'general knowledge' (*allmennkunnskap*) was replaced by the concept of 'general cultivation' (*allmenndannelse*). Besides the emphasis on knowledge, the existing educational concept was supplemented by ideas on language, tradition, and educative learning (*lærdom*). They all emphasize the importance of local community (*lokalsamfunn*), and they create both national identity and solidarity. The integration of the individual is seen in the confrontation between reality and personality. It is the task of the individual 'to realize oneself in a way which is also useful to society', as the curriculum expresses it.

The current school system

Education of the individual is assigned considerable importance in Norway. In 2000 approximately 900,000 people took some form of training. In 2004-05 primary and lower secondary school was attended by 618,300 pupils. More than 170,000 pupils attended upper secondary school in 2004. About 95% of the pupils leaving the compulsory level continue with upper secondary education and training. In addition, approximately one million people attend one form of organized adult education at any given time.

Analysing the numbers may show that overall educational levels have risen in the past few years: nearly 20% of the population over sixteen years of age have only completed the compulsory school level, 56% have successfully completed the secondary level, and more than 23% hold a university degree. Expenditure on public education amounts to 6% of GNP.

School education in Norway has to cope with the existence of two official standard languages: Norwegian (*bokmål*) and New Norwegian (*nynorsk*). Both languages have to be taught in school, but every municipality decides which shall be the primary form for written tuition and for written work. Pupils can decide for themselves in the eighth grade. While New Norwegian reflects regional dialects, Norwegian is modelled on Danish. In fact, both standard languages were created in the nineteenth century. All in all, New Norwegian is less widespread than Norwegian. This is one of the reasons why some decrees have tried to strengthen the position of New Norwegian. Nevertheless, more than 85% of all Norwegians use Norwegian as their standard language. Children of the Sami minority have the right to lessons in the Sami language. This right is being increasingly exercised in Sami-speaking areas.

General structure: overview

Education in Norway is essentially a single-track system. The core of this system is the comprehensive idea of including all pupils from age six to age sixteen. Moreover, all pupils have a legal right to continue with secondary education for three years after completing the compulsory level. Almost all pupils attend public schools (97.3%).

With the structural reforms of the 1990s, compulsory schooling was divided into three levels:

- Primary and lower secondary school (*Grunnskole*), ages six to sixteen:
 - Primary stage (*Barnetrinnet*), ages six to nine;
 - Intermediate stage (*Mellomtrinnet*), ages ten to twelve; and
 - Lower secondary stage (*Ungdomstrinnet*), ages thirteen to sixteen.

Upper secondary education comprises both general theoretical education and vocational education:

- Upper secondary school (*Videregående skole*), ages sixteen to nineteen:
 - General education: foundation course, advanced course I, and advanced course II; and

- Vocational training: foundation course, advanced course I, and advanced course II or a two-year apprenticeship or one year of general studies.

‘A school for all’ means that all children have the right to attend a public school. Pupils with learning disabilities or physical disabilities are therefore integrated into lessons in normal schools as much as possible. Consequently, there is a small number of special schools for disabled children or children with special needs.

More equality of opportunity was the core idea of two reform cycles in 1994 and 1997 and will continue as an overall aim in the planned reform of 2006. The educational target is to raise the general educational level of future generations. At the beginning of the school year 1997-98, Reform 1997 was adopted. A new curriculum was put into practice, and the duration of schooling was extended to ten years. Already in 1994, secondary education had been re-designed. A new curriculum reform will be adopted in the next few years.

Pre-primary education

At pre-school age, institutionalized education is provided by early childhood institutions (*barnehage*). However, they are not formally part of the education system, as they are governed by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, not the Ministry of Education and Research. Children up to five years of age may attend these day-care institutions. Attendance is voluntary and children need not meet any entrance requirements. The municipalities are responsible for pre-primary provision. Because of this, the care offered and available places vary. Parents have to pay fees which are determined according to regulations of the Norwegian Government and parents’ income. All institutions, both public and private, receive financial support from the State, and even from municipalities. In 2004 day-care centres had an attendance rate of 72% of all young children (aged one to six). Approximately 90% of all five-year olds attend these institutions, which means that the percentage for the youngest children is below the average. This is the reason why state grants have been increased, with the aim of enabling full access by 2006.

Primary and lower secondary education

All children must begin school within the calendar year they turn six years old. The ten-year primary and lower secondary school is compulsory. Formerly, the school was subdivided into classes (age groups), with a maximum of twenty-eight pupils in each class. This situation was changed, however, by a newly adopted paragraph in the Education Act. Pupils are going to be organized in pedagogically suitable groups. Differentiation according to the level of ability in a specific subject, or according to gender or ethnic affiliation is not allowed permanently or for a long period of time. It is up to the school to judge what constitutes a suitable class size.

In fact, the composition of the heterogeneous and coeducational classes is normally kept stable between grade 1 and grade 7 and from grade 8 to grade 10, sometimes for both periods. The low population density of Norway means that pupils of different ages to frequently taught in the same classroom (*fådelte skoler*). In 2000-01 38% of all schools were affected by this situation. About 11% of the total number of

pupils went to these schools. Frequently, different levels are combined when neither subjects, performance, nor abilities of the pupils constitute factors for differentiation. The classes merely change their options during the last three years of school. Classes are not repeated. Advancement to the next grade occurs automatically at the end of the school year. Attendance at public schools is free of charge; the county finances transport to the school if the distance is more than four kilometres or a boat has to be used.

The school year consists of 190 days and lasts from mid-August to late June. The number of lessons increases with the age of the pupils, from twenty (sixteen hours) in the first grade to up to thirty during the last school years. There are state regulations which stipulate an annual minimum of hours to be taught. In 2005 six- to nine-year-olds are taught a minimum of 789 hours a year, whereas ten- to twelve-year-olds are taught 1026 hours a year, and fifteen- to eighteen-year-olds receive 1140 hours of teaching a year, although some municipalities offer more hours. The school day usually starts between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. and ends between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m., depending on the age of the pupils and decisions made by the school administration. School days and vacation/holiday periods are defined by the municipality.

Moreover, every municipality is obliged to offer day-care facilities before and after school hours for pupils attending the primary stages (ages six to ten). After-school programmes were established in 1999. Because of their voluntary nature, pupils are able to take part in after-school activities, play, and cultural life according to their age and interest.

The teacher is responsible for the preparation and provision of lessons in school in accordance with the national curriculum framework. In 1997 the school structure was changed, and a new curriculum was also introduced. It comprises three parts:

- 1) A general framework that legitimates the values of schooling,
- 2) Principles and guidelines for compulsory education, and
- 3) Subject syllabi.

One characteristic aim of the general part is that the individual is made aware of, and encouraged to take part in, learn about, and contribute to education. It was formulated in line with the Education Act, which states in section 1.2 that the object of primary and secondary education shall be, in agreement and co-operation with the pupil's home, to help give pupils a Christian and moral upbringing, to develop their mental and physical abilities, and to give them a good general knowledge so that they may become useful and independent human beings at home and in society.

Cultural heritage is considered to establish a framework of reference that offers future generations the possibility of exploiting their opportunities and realizing their aspirations. Additionally, the general part contains the objectives of maintaining and developing quality, diversity, and local adjustments to curriculum contents. The clear aim of school education is to enable every pupil to develop his or her potential. All school activities are to be subordinated to these principles, in order to achieve equality between the sexes and the regions.

The principle part focuses on encouraging pupils to be active, industrious, and independent. Pupils should learn by exploring and experimenting in order to acquire new knowledge and understanding. One fundamental aspect of the curriculum lies in the

participation of pupils in the planning process. Responsibility for planning their own education is progressively given to pupils. Structuring content thematically is an important didactic principle of daily lessons. For this reason, pupils may develop topics project-work or carry out strategic and organizational tasks to connect theory with practice. The teacher's task is largely restricted to the role of a leader and mentor. Through this principle of empowerment, pupils are given the right to have a say and learn to take responsibility in a democratic society.

The subject syllabi contain the content matter of subjects such as Christian knowledge and religious and ethical education, Norwegian, mathematics, social studies, arts and crafts, science and the environment, English, music, home economics, physical education, and compulsory additional subjects, such as foreign languages.

Although there was a separate curriculum for the Sami minority in the 1997 reform, it can be stated that both the construction and the structure of the primary and lower secondary school is identical country-wide. The intention of the reform of 1997 was for pupils to follow the same school courses and encounter the same subjects wherever they go to school. Although the National Evaluation Report of the Reform of 1997 stated that the curriculum guidelines were too regulative, local and individual adjustments to the curriculum did not exclude a strong emphasis on common subjects. All in all, need-oriented adjustment is an essential characteristic of compulsory schooling in Norway.

At the primary stages, that is, grades 1 to 4 (ages six to ten), there is room for free activities and project-work. Contents, methods, and the duration of classes correspond to the special qualities of the development of the age group. This first level is based on the tradition of pre-primary provision. Learning of basic cultural techniques through play and thematic projects in mixed age-groups is emphasized. At the intermediate stage, grades 5 to 7 (ages ten to thirteen), practical and theoretical elements are accentuated. Thematic projects and teamwork not only safeguard interdisciplinary instruction, but also provide practice in permanent learning and planning. The distinguishing characteristics of the lower secondary stage, grades 8 to 10 (ages thirteen to sixteen), such as taking more advanced subjects, prepare pupils for their future education.

Lessons are usually given by a classroom teacher. A change of classroom teacher is frequently made between the three levels. Most teachers at the primary and lower secondary level have a general teacher education from a university college, which enables them to teach subjects at the compulsory school level. Subject teachers, who are educated at universities or through specialized programmes at university colleges, are mostly found at the upper level. If pupils require special educational support, additional teachers or support staff may be consulted during the school day.

General teacher education for the compulsory school level (primary, intermediate, and lower secondary levels) takes place at university colleges. Study programmes last four years and entitle graduates to teach at the two lower levels in all subjects. University studies (five years) include a university degree with an extra course in educational theory and practice. The specialized degree entitles the graduate to teach subject lessons at the upper secondary school as well. Norwegian edu-

education requires that teachers attend in-service training workshops or development projects at school for at least five days per year.

Upper secondary education

During the zenith of the Norwegian welfare state in the 1970s and 1980s, extensive secondary school reforms were carried out. One of the central aims was the fusion of secondary school with vocational training. Theoretical and practical education thus obtained the same status. This aim was enlarged at the end of the twentieth century. An increase in the competence levels of the population as a whole, as well as the professional specialization of the individual became more prominent in public discourse.

Attendance at upper secondary school is optional. Every pupil between the ages of sixteen and nineteen who possesses a school leaving certificate from a compulsory school has the right to attend an upper secondary school for three years. The present structure was established as a result of the so-called Reform 1994. The school law abolished the principle of selecting pupils on the basis of their school performance. To attend the upper secondary level, pupils only need to have completed the compulsory level.

The reduction in number of the former vocational training courses from 109 to thirteen basic courses was another important result of the reform. Together with the general courses, there are now fifteen programmes of general or vocational study. The core subjects include Norwegian, religion, foreign languages, social studies, geography, history, the sciences, mathematics, and physical education. A course in vocational education is taken in school during the first two years. A period of practical training of one year follows in the corresponding trade.

Moreover, the considerable professional element of the new subjects finds its basis in economic logic and the increased need for individual flexibility. General education is expected to guarantee that a person is capable of mastering a complex situation. By diminishing and amalgamating individual subjects, an enriching education was made possible.

The structure of upper secondary school is characterized by three general educational and learning areas that lead to overall competence in academic studies. All other courses lead to a double qualification which prepares for broad vocational training. Pupils thus acquire a special vocational competency and a limited matriculation standard, which clearly shows that Reform 1994 is committed to the idea of a truly comprehensive system. Every possible form of education is open to everybody.

Each county is responsible for assuring that their pupils are able to exercise their right to a secondary education. An advisory board (*oppfølgingstjeneste*) looks after those pupils who do not exercise their right and make no effort to do so.

At present about 45% of all pupils decide to attend upper secondary school. Pupils who take general academic courses prepare for university studies. The other courses focus more strongly on professional and working life. As mentioned above, there is the possibility to attend a university course (related to the field of study) if pupils acquire additional qualifications. All courses of study are based on one- or two-year elementary courses, followed by differentiated programmes of one to two

years' duration. Shorter periods are also possible. The class arrangement found in compulsory school is replaced by subject units. After two years of study, pupils may opt to attend courses that are part of other programmes, since the first two years are very similar. The vocational courses also offer the possibility of specialization. The school year consists of thirty-eight weeks; weekly instruction amounts to between thirty and thirty-five hours.

Access to upper secondary school is, in principle, open. In cases of restricted capacity, the school decides on the basis of the compulsory school certificate whether admission is possible or not. Progression between stages depends on performance. The examination results at the end of the school year are also utilized as selection criteria if there is a shortage of places in the subject of specialization.

In 1999 upper secondary schools were attended by 96.1% of compulsory school leavers. However, clear regional differences are present. The possibility of attending upper secondary education is taken advantage of to a lesser degree in traditionally agriculturally orientated or peripheral regions.

Vocational education may take place in schools, including practical training. A second model combines school-based vocational education (for the first two years) with training at the work place (third year). The educational purpose of this model is to combine education with added value. Therefore, all forms of instruction are entitled to state subsidies. The county is obliged to offer the course if there are insufficient places provided.

Curriculum guidelines determine the main contents and aims of secondary education as well as the competence levels which the pupils (apprentices) are expected to attain. The central aim of all syllabi is to develop extensive knowledge, practical abilities, ethical values, and personal qualities like creativity, competence in self-directed activities, communication skills, and co-operation. They also treat internationalization, information technology, and environmental education. All present syllabi for each subject consist of units. A single unit is either a subject or a part of it. This creates an opportunity for those enrolled in adult education. To obtain a recognized certificate, adult learners can combine courses of studies.

According to the timetable for general, administrative, and business courses, the weekly number of periods is twenty-eight hours during the first year. There are some indicators that the missing specialization is a consequence of general education. The lower number of hours in the second and third school years offers the possibility for specialization. In addition to their first foreign language (English), all pupils have to learn a second foreign language (chosen from whatever is offered by the school). If a pupil has already learned a second foreign language at lower secondary school, he or she may continue with it or start a third language.

All teachers at this level are subject specialists. They have been educated at universities and have completed a one-year course in educational theory and practice in addition to their four- to six-year degree. Alternatively, they have received vocational training combined with a teacher qualification. Normally their teaching corresponds to their university education (up to six years). Teachers at upper secondary school are employed by the county. They have the right to take at least five days a

year off work for in-service training workshops and local development work at schools.

Educational qualifications

Grading at the lower secondary level is undertaken as a way of helping and supporting pupils in their learning process. If a pupil leaves school after she or he has finished the tenth grade and passed the national exams, a school leaving certificate (*vitnemål*) is awarded. This certificate shows the average mark attained at the end of the tenth grade in every subject. In addition, the results of certain examinations of optional subjects may be shown. In addition to the normal marks, marks are given for 'behaviour' and 'work attitude'. A certificate might also be awarded if no general marks are given (for pupils with special needs). Examinations take place under the supervision of the state exam authority, which is represented by the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Schools. At least one written exam must be taken in Norwegian, mathematics, or English.

No marks are given at the primary and intermediate level. A parents' evening is held twice a year; once a year the child is also involved. The observations made by the teacher serve as a basis for this meeting, but parents and pupils are also expected to initiate discussions. Pupils at the lower secondary levels are marked before Christmas and at the end of the school year. These marks are based on classroom assessment and on participation in lessons.

At the upper secondary level there is continuous assessment throughout the school year. All courses are marked on the basis of practical work, project and group work, co-operation, and tests. The marks are equivalent to a certain number of credits. These credits are used as admission criteria and for grading. Annual (central) exams are organized by the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Schools. The exams are carried out as written and oral examinations and correspond to the various components of the course system. In principle, the classroom teacher is the examiner, and the marking is done by an external examiner. The County Examination Board accredits vocational qualifications.

The structural changes made by Reform 1994 created new forms of certificates. There is the possibility of obtaining: (1) qualifications as a skilled worker (*fag-/sveinebrev*), (2) professional competence (*yrkeskompetanse*), and (3) university admission entitlement (*studiekompetanse*).

Certificates at upper secondary schools are awarded if attendance of at least ninety weekly working hours throughout the three school years has been recorded (thirty each year). To assess this, a special credit system was introduced. Each pupil receives a certain number of credits for a completed part of a course (this is required to obtain a university admission entitlement).

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Successful completion of upper secondary school or five years of work experience, education, and training entitles a pupil to study at universities or university colleges

(*høgskole*). For all applicants there are minimum requirements in Norwegian, English, history, social studies, mathematics, and the natural sciences.

In 2005 there were six universities, six specialized university institutions, twenty-five university colleges, two art colleges, and thirty-two private higher education institutions providing tertiary education. The universities are located in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø, Stavanger, and Aas. The length of studies changed in 2003 in accordance with the Bologna Process and varies between three and five years. There are of course exceptions to this new model (two plus three years), such as the four-year programme in teacher education. About 209,800 students were enrolled in higher education in Norway in 2003 (somewhat fewer than in the year before), and more than 28% of the Norwegian population between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-four holds a university degree.

The Norwegian adult education system is based on the ideas of the Danish educationalist and theologian Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig. His ideas were adapted to Norway's needs and conditions by persons such as Ole Vig. Today, the aim of public adult education is both to raise the level of the entire population's general competence and foster general education, personal development, and equality. A wide variety of adult educational courses are offered in Norway. In 2005 alone, approximately 670,000 adults attended an organized course in adult education, and 400,000 of these students were publicly examined.

Current discussions and perspectives

Although quality assurance and new prospects of lifelong learning legitimated the reform process of the 1990s, a new reform process was initiated early in 2000. A government-appointed Quality Committee submitted its report in 2003 and criticized Norway for not maintaining a national system of quality assurance. Data for improvement and development was missing. One consequence is that national tests are being introduced in writing, reading, mathematics, and English at four different levels of the educational system. These tests will provide data and assess students on basic skills. The system of national tests also measures the quality of single schools and standards at the municipality and county levels. The results of these are published at www.skoleporten.no. Together with development reports, these results provide information not only to schools and school owners, but also to the community in general.

The new reform is labelled Knowledge Promotion. The aim of the reform is to sustain and develop best learning practices at all levels. A new culture of learning is going to be implemented through new leadership roles and well-organized learning strategies. Schools will be held accountable for ensuring that every pupil is better able to meet the new challenges of the knowledge society.

The Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education is now designing a new national curriculum framework for primary and secondary education based on the principles of the white paper 'Culture for Learning'.¹ This report asks for more emphasis on basic skills and knowledge and greater diversity among both students and

¹ Report No. 30 to the *Storting* (2003-04).

schools, which means that each school is going to decide upon methods and organization without being dictated narrowly defined principles in curriculum guidelines. At the same time, competence standards are being introduced on different levels to ensure that schools work systematically, improving their learning culture. These will be adopted at grades 1 to 9 and 11 from August 2006, at grades 10 and 12 from 2007, and at grade 13 from 2008. Through this reform, primary school will be restructured into one level (and no longer divided into a primary and intermediate stage). The government has allocated around 700 million noks, or eighty-six million euros, to start the implementation of the reform. It is suggested that approximately 500 million noks (sixty million euros) of this amount should go towards in-service training for teachers and head teachers. The aim is to raise the level of competence in schools, which is necessary to carry out the reform.

This very general reform operates with the terminology of competence understood in terms of skills and knowledge, which also forms the core of the ongoing public debate. Later on, the Ministry of Education and Research will commit to the fortification of ICT in Norwegian education through a national programme for digital competency (*Programme for Digital Kompetanse 2004-2008*). The Ministry has also highlighted the importance of equal education in practice through a strategy for better learning and greater participation by language minorities in day care centres, schools, and education in general (*Likeverdige utdanning i praksis! 2004-2009*), and has initiated a reading campaign to encourage pupils' interest in reading and the ability to read (*Gi rom for lesing! Stimulering av leselyst og leseferdighet 2003-2007*). Many of these action plans and programmes respond to international challenges as well as internal directives. The main concerns of the new policies in Norwegian education are the strengthening of basic skills, sciences, a second foreign language, and school management, and ensuring that education is better adapted to stakeholders' needs. In the long run, a national quality assurance system for all educational areas is planned.

References

- Abrahamsen, R./Hallstensen, J. (Tromsø kommune, Avdeling for undervisning, Pedagogisk senter): Fra M87 til L97 - revisjon eller revolusjon? Oppsummering av plandokumenter og sammenligning av sentrale prinsipper og retningslinjer i de to læreplanene. Tromsø 1996.
- Allardt, E.: Nordic Democracy. Ideas, Issues, and Institutions in Politics, Economy, Education, and Social and Cultural Affairs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Copenhagen 1981.
- Bachmann, K./Sivesind K./ Afsar, A./Hopmann S.: Hvordan formidles læreplanen? En komparativ evaluering av læreplanbaserte virkemidler - deres utforming, konsistens og betydning for læreres praksis. Evaluering av Reform 97 - i regi av Norges forskningsråd. 2004.
- Bjørndal, I. (The Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in co-operation with the Royal Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs): The Norwegian educational system. Oslo 1992.
- Bjørnsrud, H./Raaen, F. D.: Grunnskolereformen -97. Om læreplanidealene og undervisningsrealiteter. Oslo 1996.
- Böckman, P. W.: Alternative skoler i Norge. Liberalt forskningsinstitutt. 1993.

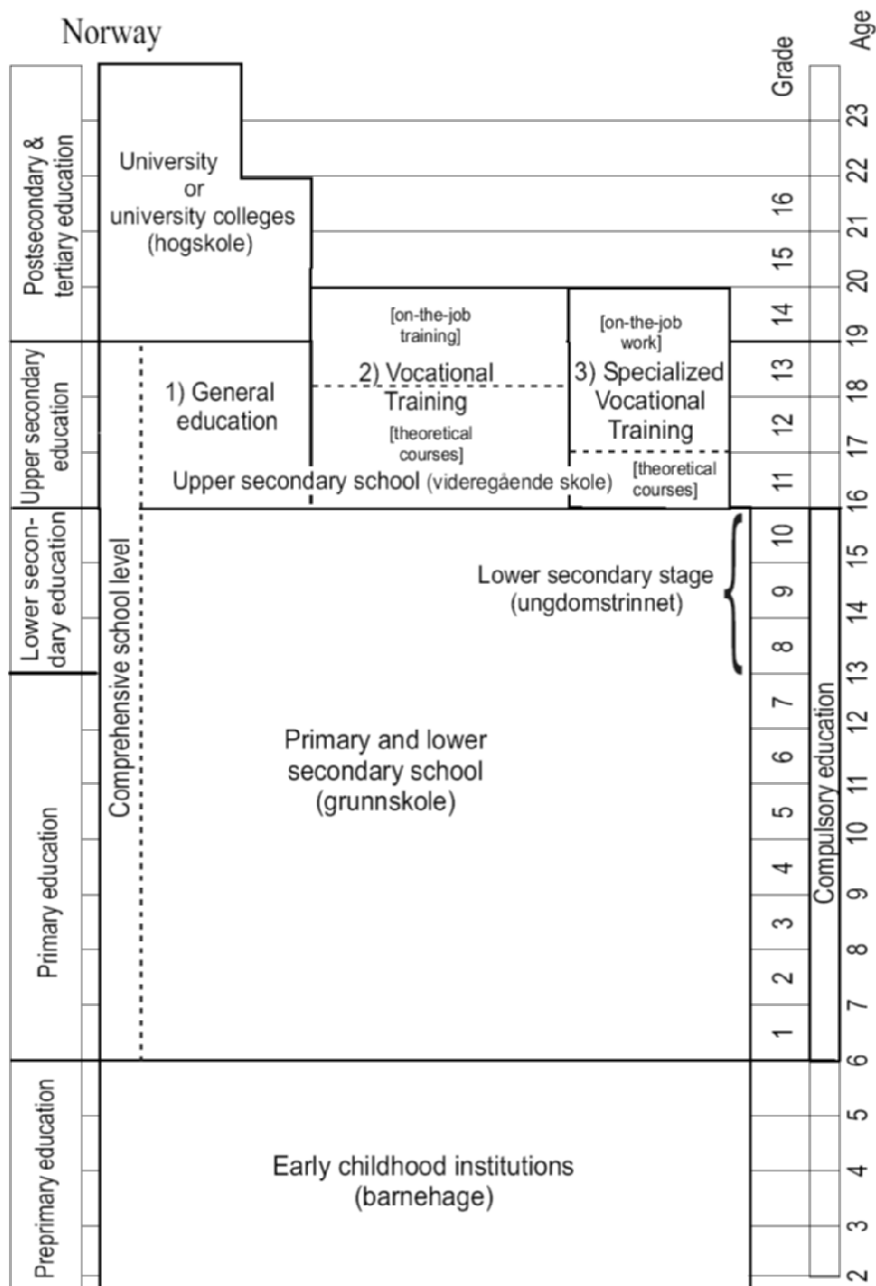
- Engelsen, B. U.: Ideer som formet vår skole? Læreplanen som idébærer - et historisk perspektiv. Oslo 2003.
- Gooderham, P.: Skolesystemer og samfunnsystemer i 1990-tallets Norge. Trondheim 1993 (= Universitet i Trondheim, Institutt for sosiologi og statsvitenskap. ISS RAPPORT, No. 37. 1993).
- Gundem, B. B.: Mot en ny skolevirkelighet? Læreplanen i et sentraliserings- og desentraliseringsperspektiv. Oslo 1993a.
- Gundem, B. B.: The History of the Curriculum. In: Husén, T./Postlethwaite, T. N. (Eds): The International Encyclopedia of Education 2 (1994). New York 1994, pp. 1301-1308.
- Gundem, B. B./Karseth, B./Sivesind K.: Curriculum Theory and Research in Norway: Traditions, Trends, and Challenges. In: Pinar, W. F. (Ed.): Handbook of International Curriculum Research. New Jersey 2003.
- Hagemann, G.: Skolefolk. Lærernes historie i Norge. Oslo 1992.
- Haug, P.: Resultat får evalueringa av Reform 97. Noregs forskningsråd. 2004.
- Haug, P./Schwandt T. A.: Evaluation Educational Reforms: Scandinavian Perspectives. Greenwich 2001.
- Hopmann, S. T.: On the Evaluation of Curriculum Reforms. Journal of Curriculum Studies 35 (2003) pp. 459-478.
- Klette, K./Carlgren I.: An Increase in the Technical Elements of Teachers' Work? In: Klette, K./Carlgren, I./Rasmussen, J./Simola, H./Sundkvist, M. (Eds): Restructuring Nordic Teachers: An Analysis of Policy Texts from Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Report no. 10, Institute for Educational Research: University of Oslo. 2000, pp. 363-390.
- Lie, S./Kjærnsli M./Roe, A./Turmo, A.: Godt rustet for framtida? Norske 15-åringers kompetanse i lesing og realfag i et internasjonalt perspektiv. Oslo 2001. (= Institutt for lærerutdanning og skoleutvikling. Universitetet i Oslo. Acta Didactica 4 (2001))
- Møller, J.: Lederidentiteter i skolen. Oslo 2004.
- Nesje, K./Hopmann, S.: En lærende skole. Oslo 2002.
- Nordiske læreplaner. Oslo 1993.
- OECD: Reviews of National Policies for Education. Norway. Oslo 1990.
- The Ministry for Education and Research: Report No. 30 to the Storting (2003-2004). Culture for Learning. Norway.
- Rotholz, W.: Ursprünge und Elemente der wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Demokratie Norwegens. In: Sivesind, K./Bachmann, K./Afsar, A. 2003. (Eds): Nordeuropa - Studien (1993) 30.
- The Royal Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs: The Curriculum for the Ten-year Compulsory School in Norway. 1999.
- Aasen, P./Foros, P. B./Kjøl, P.: Pedagogikk og politikk. Festskrift til Alfred Oftedal Telhaug i anledning 70-årsdagen. Oslo 2004.

Internet Sources:

<http://odin.dep.no/ufd/>

<http://lovdata.no/>

<http://www.ssb.no>



Poland

History of the school system

The history of Polish schools has always been closely linked with the history of the Christian Church. As in the countries of Western Europe, it was the Catholic Church that founded the first schools. In 1364, however, when the Academy of Krakow was established, the focal point of educational initiatives shifted from the Church to this newly established academic centre. Later on, in Polish Renaissance society, educational problems were considered of key importance and were therefore attended to with care and concern, leading to the introduction of many novel ideas. In such circumstances, the idea that the State should be held responsible for schooling was born. The sixteenth century, the 'Golden Age' in the history of Poland, saw many schools promoted by the adherents of particular religious groups. However, after the success of the Counter-Reformation movement, these were reduced to Jesuit schools. Nevertheless, the Jesuit schools were very influential and played an important part in the considerable increase in the intellectual achievements of the youth of the time.

The subsequent period in the history of Poland was marked by the idea of 'bringing the lantern of knowledge to the masses' (the Polish equivalent of the word 'education', *oświata*, is derived from the word *światło*, which means 'light'). Its institutional apogee occurred in the year 1773, when the National Educational Committee, the first Ministry of Education in Europe, was founded. It was mainly concerned with the idea of the dissemination of fundamental education (it might be noted that this preceded the French Revolution!) through the introduction of a multi-level organization of schools, as well as with adequate teacher training. The whole system of education, from the primary level to the universities, was placed in the hands of the State; thorough reforms were introduced, and Polish replaced Latin as the language of instruction. Teachers were given new instructions, new curricula, new rights and duties, and new teaching objectives. As a matter of fact, some of the innovations introduced in the years 1773-74 are still in use (e.g. the assessment of the education system by reports, the codification of teachers' rights, curricula, textbook contests, etc.). However, this process of innovation was soon ended by the partition of Poland.

The three separate schooling systems of the three occupiers, present for 120 years on the territory of Poland, produced a great deal of tension, since education was extensively used for the colonial purposes of the occupiers, serving as a means of uprooting the Polish national identity. Therefore, the mainstream education system was commonly accompanied by unofficial, private educational institutions that strove to preserve a national identity. For these reasons, the first educational policies of independent Poland after 1918 were mainly addressed to the unification of the

three parts of Poland, disparate not only in terms of socio-economic development, but also on the level of educational standards (Wołoszyn 1966). The 1921 census revealed illiteracy to be at a level of 33.1% among citizens above ten years of age (Buszko 1984, p. 341). This state of affairs gave priority to the promotion of universally accessible education at the elementary level, which was at the same time designed to contribute to the integration of the heterogeneous parts of the nation.

The damages caused by the Second World War were calculated to be at a level of 60%. 4880 primary schools, 487 secondary schools, and seventeen universities were destroyed, and 6000 teachers and academics were killed (Buszko 1984, p. 440). In addition, the borders of the Polish State were moved from east to west, resulting in huge migratory movements. As a result of the war, there was a 20% shortage of school teachers in 1945, and a vast proportion of those who worked in schools were not adequately qualified; many of them worked without any qualifications. 1947 saw the initiation of ideological programmes in schools promoting a 'cultural revolution'; this shift was apparent not only in slogans and propaganda, but also in such undertakings as the creation of a centralized system and new institutions modelled on Soviet prototypes. Nevertheless, Polish society, despite being subjected to the omnipresent ideological pressures of the time, managed to resist alien influence to a much greater degree than most of the other nations in the Soviet zone of influence.

The first regulatory act concerning the system of education was passed by Parliament in 1961. It introduced an eight-year primary school with a three- or five-year secondary extension providing either vocational or general academic education. The attempts to introduce a ten-year system after the Soviet model failed in the 1970s due to the rapidly worsening economic situation in the country and an increasingly profound social crisis.

The social significance of schools in Poland was a direct consequence of the historical awareness of a nation that, having been subjected to long alien occupation in the past, had successfully learned to maintain its independence against foreign intruders. This defiance was actively supported by the Church (in 1998, 90% of the population considered themselves Catholic). In this context, schools assumed a leading role in the promotion of the mother tongue, national culture, and national identity. The consequence of the ubiquitous non-compliance of the Polish nation with Eastern rule was the increasing acceptance of Western paradigms.

In 1989 Polish society was once again confronted with the challenge of adapting itself to completely new conditions with little preparation. New values and policies had to be implemented; people had to adapt to democracy, to new educational authorities, new rights, curricula, and textbooks. New political objectives were institutionalized in 1991 by the Educational Reform Act. The foundations of the education system were erected on democratic principles; moreover, necessary innovations designed to match European educational standards were introduced. These included not only those already in use in the European Union, but also those in the process of introduction. Major modifications were initiated (including the change of the structure of the education system) by the introduction of the new Educational Reform Act in 1999. New prerogatives now focus on the reinforcement, extension, and institu

tionalization of the tendencies first mentioned in the Act of 1991 and revised in subsequent years by means of amendments.

The socio-cultural context of the present school system

Educational targets and general functions of school education

At the threshold of the socio-political changes of 1989, the level of education of Polish society was much lower than in the countries of the West: only 7% of the population had a university degree, 25% had secondary general school certificates, 23% had diplomas of vocational training, 39% had completed primary education, and 6% of the population had not even reached the end of the primary level (Pachociński 2000). Therefore, the new order after 1989 emphasized the need for democratization and the levelling of educational chances.

The preamble of the Education Act of 1991 laid new foundations for Polish schools (Hörner/Wompel 1994, p. 32). These principles are:

- The school system belongs to the whole society.
- It respects international constitutional regulations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on Human and Civic Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of Children. It is based on general ethical principles with a special emphasis on the Christian system of moral values in order to develop social awareness, responsibility, patriotism, and respect for the cultural heritage of both Poland and the rest of the world.
- Schools are required to provide an adequate environment in which every pupil is prepared to fulfil societal functions in the spirit of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, truth, and freedom.

The changes initiated by the Ministry of Education were designed to adapt the system to the contemporary, rapidly changing conditions (Lewowicki 1994). The changes involved:

1. A shift of the position that education holds in the social system, with special emphasis on critical analysis of educational reality as well as on endeavours to create a better reality.
2. Differently perceived values and objectives of education with the re-introduction of basic ethical values, such as freedom, democracy, the right to life, peace, personal development, self-fulfilment, political pluralism, and tolerance. The hierarchy of the new objectives highlights the provision of conditions necessary for unhindered personal development with an emphasis on self-development and access to information.
3. A re-orientation of teaching contents towards functionality and usefulness, with an emphasis on knowledge about the present and the future, and a tendency to integrate the contents of different subjects in order to make them more comprehensible.

4. Changes in educational strategies, diversification of teaching methods, and relaxation of fixed requirements, as well as the broadening of sources of knowledge and of the possible means of communication.
5. Changes in the relations between pupils, teachers, and parents; and integration of their objectives. This co-operation results in an enhanced outcome of mutual effort.
6. Changes in administration and financing, with decentralization of all domains of education and improved privileges of local communities and the three parties of pupils, teachers, and parents.

However, the gradually diminishing responsibilities of the State and the shift of the decision-making process to local authorities and/or parents failed to produce an eruption of social activity in education. It seems that the majority of citizens focused their endeavours on adapting to the market economy, on securing their income, and on politics or recreation, whereas education was perceived as a domain of social life habitually taken care of by 'someone in the governing bodies'. Characteristically, a random survey of 1995 revealed that a mere 30% of all Poles approved of the direction of the transformations, while a majority of 55% objected to it. Only every fourth Pole believed that living conditions would improve, and every third Pole feared that they would deteriorate further (Bogaj/Kwiatkowski/Szymański 1997, pp. 7ff.). The reservations were mostly expressed by farmers, pensioners, housewives, manual workers, and the unemployed. However, the interpretation of this data must take into account the fact that the period in the mid-nineties was the culminating point of the economic crisis after the political change.

Socio-economic context

Poland is ethnically and religiously homogeneous. German, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Lithuanian ethnic minorities comprise only between 2.5 and 4% of the whole population. Statistically, Poland cannot be seen as a country of immigration. Although after the wave of Polish emigration there has been a period of illegal immigration to Poland from Asian or East-European countries, this is not yet an omnipresent problem at schools. However, multicultural education in areas that are already inhabited by ethnic minorities was successfully addressed after the 1990 reform. Where possible, lessons are taught in the language of the local minority. In the year 2002-03, there were 452 primary schools with languages of instruction other than Polish: 261 teaching in German, eighty in Ukrainian, forty-eight in Kashubian, twenty-four in Byelorussian, thirteen in Lithuanian, and six in Slovak. Additionally, there were 142 lower secondary schools with a foreign language of instruction, sixty-three of which with teaching in German (GUS 2003). At the secondary level, ethnic minority institutions have statistically ceased to play a significant role; their number is gradually decreasing.

The social position of the teaching profession

There are 692,000 teachers working in primary and secondary schools and a further 88,500 in tertiary education. Their working week is relatively short, with eighteen

hours of teaching at primary and secondary level and between five and seven hours in higher education. At primary and secondary level, educational skills, rapport with children, and co-operation with parents are required from the teachers rather than specialized knowledge. The immediate aims of the Ministry include teachers' specialization in more than one subject and the enhancement of their prestige in society. Such objectives must be accompanied by changes in financing policies: increased wages are expected to be followed by an increase in the quality of teaching. Therefore, the revised Teacher's Code includes new regulations concerning the system of promotion: from teachers on probation to contract teachers, and from nominated teachers to the highest rank of certificated teachers. Promotion to the higher ranks is contingent on demanding requirements and successful completion of qualifying measures; it is also accompanied by a significant pay rise and is expected to enhance quality. The highest rank of a certificated teacher may be additionally honoured with the title of Professor of Education.

Despite these changes, however, teachers' salaries are still at a very low level. Teachers' concerns are additionally aggravated by the scope of new requirements introduced together with the educational reforms of 1999, to such an extent that only 8.3% of them regard their preparation for the new responsibilities as adequate and 78% claim that it is insufficient.

The school and the role of the family

The crisis of the 1990s also affected family life. Surveys published by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) indicate that as many as 75% of all Polish families were in need of some support with respect to the education of their children, and that the level of educational competence in rural families was dramatically low. At the same time, there was a striking lack of institutions designed to solve these problems (such as the formerly successful 'universities for parents'). All responsibility in educational matters was given to schools and teachers. It also appeared that the strained relations between parents and teachers failed to yield a successful co-operation, as the former preferred to believe that school was solely responsible for the education of their children, comfortably assuming the role of occasional supporters. It was believed that the introduction of Religious Education (R.E.) in schools would improve the relationships between parents and the school, as about 93% of the Polish population are Roman Catholics. However, subsequent surveys failed to confirm the significance of this factor (Ferenz 2000, pp. 187ff.). Apparently, parents seem to be mostly preoccupied with the didactic functions of schools, with the development of their children's interests, and with the organization of after-school activities. This argument was supported by 55% of the families questioned.

Organizational context and management of the current school system

Basic legal principles

In spite of the major economic difficulties accompanying social change, educational reforms have been introduced persistently in parallel with the ongoing processes of the decentralization and democratization of educational structures. Decision-making

prerogatives have been placed in the hands of the head teachers and the competencies of local consulting structures have been broadened, especially those of parents. The intermediate level of school management and assessment was abolished as early as 1990. Two levels of competence remain, namely the local school supervising institution (*Kuratorium Oświaty*) and the national Ministry of Education.

Moreover, the management of schools has been separated from the supervision of teaching contents. The local administration has been made responsible for nursery and primary education, for special care units, and for sporting as well as recreational venues. Secondary education, in contrast, has been placed under the supervision of county administrations. In practice, this division has created much room for decision-making at the level of a particular unit, such as the individual school, with the head teacher, the teachers, and the parents being at the heart of the process.

Financing

The state education sector is financed by the government. Whereas in 1990 all payments came directly from the central budget, 1991 saw a shift in responsibilities for pre-primary and primary education to local authorities. Thus, in 1991, local administration covered 20% of all expenses. Since 1998, this quota has been stabilized at a level of 70%. Nowadays, educational expenses constitute a major segment of local expenditure. For many municipalities, especially those in rural areas, educational expenditure constitutes for them, in fact, more than half of their total budget. The level of financing is still insufficient, even for the most basic needs. The scarcity of funds limits expenditure to obligatory payments, such as salaries, which account for more than 85% of the budget, leaving little for the funding of infrastructure. 5% of schools' budgets come from their own initiatives (Piwowarski 2002, pp. 259ff.). It is planned for the future to correlate the level of financing with the number of pupils in a given school by introducing 'educational vouchers' in accordance with the principle of 'money follows the pupil'.

Public and private schools

Although Polish legislation has provided the possibility for private education since 1991, the vast majority of all schools are still in the hands of the State. In the school year 2002-03, the private sector accounted for merely 3% of the educational market at nursery school level, just under 1% at primary, 1.2% at lower secondary, and 4.7% at upper secondary level. After the changes in educational legislation, numerous general secondary schools chose to go down the path of privatization. Furthermore, at the post-secondary level, more than half of the pupils (51%) attend private schools. In higher education, nearly 30% of all students attend one of the 252 non-state institutions (GUS 2003).

Since January 2001, the status of state and private schools has been harmonized. Private institutions are now financed by the State with an allocation of the equivalent of the sum that would be paid for a pupil in a state school of the same type (MEN 2002, p. 29). However, this regulation is valid only for those non-state institutions that comply with the requirements of the national curriculum.

General standards of the school system

The competence of central structures, such as the Ministry of Education or the local school supervisory body (*Kuratorium Oświaty*), has been significantly diminished, leaving them merely the responsibility for such aspects as curricular standards, teachers' qualifications, or standards of assessment, all of which are necessary for the preservation of a coherent education system. The local supervisor is required to analyse and assess the educational standards in schools in the name of the Ministry.

Teaching contents have been similarly affected by the ongoing reforms. Emphasis has been placed on replacing encyclopaedic knowledge with useful skills and the application of acquired information. Teachers have been given far more freedom in selecting their teaching contents and methods. Alternative curricula and textbooks have been allowed. The general requirements for the curriculum established by the Ministry of National Education and Sport (MENiS) have been limited. These innovations have led to a great deal of diversification, shaping particular educational institutions according to their own needs.

The extent of this freedom must, however, be adapted to a national curriculum, on the one hand, and to central examination requirements, on the other. Since 2002, each stage of the school career is concluded with an examination administered by independent, external examination boards, assigned by the newly established Central Examination Committee and eight Local Examination Committees. Their responsibilities include the establishment of homogeneous standards as well as the preparation, the administration, and the assessments of the tests.

Quality management and supporting systems

Social control over the functioning of the school system has also been regulated by the introduction of a scheme of quality assessment that furnishes individual schools with thorough and valuable insights into their own accomplishments and deficiencies. Moreover, an internal and external system of evaluation has been established, taking into consideration the following factors:

1. Pupils' acquired knowledge and skills;
2. The organization and procedures of instruction and pupils' support - this means the control of enrolment procedures, didactic processes, the general atmosphere in the school, pupils' home environment, social care and support, pupils' conduct and attendance, and organizational efficiency; respect for equality of chances, democratic procedures, and children's rights; monitoring the impact of safety and health regulations and preventative measures; co-operation with parents; and the openness of the school to its environment; and
3. School management, namely the head teacher's efforts, organizational structures, pedagogical supervision, pupils' and parents' accessibility to information, advertising strategies, school facilities and buildings, and finances.

Some of these factors are subjected to internal evaluation, routinely performed by the head teacher, whereas others are the object of external scrutiny on the part of inspectors delegated by a supervising body. These inspectors are obliged to produce an appropriate report related to internal accounts, which is given to all parties con-

cerned. In addition to indicators traditionally measured in internal evaluation, such as the percentage of pupils promoted to the next form, average marks, or the number of participants in special subject competitions, new categories of criteria have been introduced, such as the degree of parental satisfaction with a given school, pupils' and teachers' well-being, etc. Never before have such elements of school life been measured; they had existed merely in the realm of ideas and wishful thinking.

In addition to these innovations, great emphasis has been placed on the significance of external examinations, which have been introduced in all types of school as a consequence of their extended autonomy. While each school is permitted to use different techniques and materials, it is at the same time obliged to conform to certain general norms, assessed in the course of these external examinations. These norms are designed equally for all schools of the same level by the Ministry of Education. Thus, the achievements of particular schools can be easily compared. This comparison is not only a means to assess their performance, but also, and more importantly, diagnoses their problems and provides a valuable overview, hopefully leading to substantial developments in the quality of education.

The external evaluation system is co-ordinated by the Central Examination Committee together with the regional examination boards. Their responsibilities comprise procedures such as the preparation, administration, and evaluation of the tests; the co-ordination of their contents and administrative procedures, timing, or supervision; and finally the communication of the results to the parties concerned. Hence, the institutions obtain their data and the pupils a record of their progress. Such tests are administered at the end of the primary and lower secondary levels with similar requirements and objectives. The final lower secondary school exams, furthermore, indicate the kind of upper secondary school that a given pupil should attend. After the upper secondary level, pupils are required to sit a final examination called *matura* (equivalent to English A-levels). It is now also an external examination; the existence of a *matura*-examination as such, however, is not a novelty and is deeply rooted in the educational tradition of Poland.

It is also worth noting that the outcome of the external examinations additionally results in the designing of programmes that adequately prepare teachers in a given region.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The longstanding structure of the school system created in the Education Act of 1961 was finally abandoned by means of a comprehensive reform project in 1999. A four-level structure was introduced:

- A primary level of six years, compulsory for children from seven years of age onwards;
- A lower secondary level of three years, compulsory for all pupils - this level is a novelty in the system;

- An upper secondary level of between two and four years with academic, comprehensive, and vocational courses; and
- A differentiated system of higher education. State institutions of higher education are free of charge, whereas other forms of education at the higher level have to be paid for. The number of private institutions is growing. Currently about 30% of all students attend one of the 252 non-public establishments of higher education (GUS 2003).

All levels are free of charge, except evening courses, distance learning (via the Internet, television, or radio), and extramural courses at universities. Pupils of all levels have to pay for textbooks and other school materials.

Pre-primary education

Nursery schools constitute an integral part of the Polish education system. Children between three and six years of age attend independent nursery schools, as well as nursery departments at primary schools. The latter are classes for six-year-olds, which are called the 'zero' year. 'Five-hour-a-day' care and the instruction provided at the basic level are free of charge, whereas any additional time in pre-primary education as well as meals must be paid for by the parents. The places available at pre-primary level, however, are still insufficient, especially because the crisis of the 1990s caused a great number of schools to be closed down. In 1988, i.e. in the last years of the socialist regime, 52% of all children attended nursery schools, whereas by 1993 the percentage had dropped to 42% (cf. Bogaj/Kwiatkowski/Szymański 1997). There was a slight increase in 1995, however. The data for 1998 for children between the ages of three and five shows that less than 30% of children in this age bracket attended nursery schools. It was the high attendance of six-year-olds (97%) that significantly improved the overall statistics (GUS 2001, p. 257). Apparently, the crisis had its roots in transitory difficulties during the period of political and economic change, such as increasing unemployment, especially among women, skyrocketing fees, and financial crises at the level of local administration.

Pre-primary education, similar to other levels, is furnished with its own curriculum, which places special emphasis on the promotion of health and the development of creativity and psychomotor skills.

Primary education

In 1999, the former primary school of eight years was reduced to six. In 2001-02, there were 15,693 primary schools with a total of 3,141,569 pupils (MEN 2002, p. 8). Compared to 1990, when the number of pupils was at the level of 5,287,000, a dramatic decrease is evident, which is not only due to the fact that primary education 'lost' two years, but also to demographic changes.

Within the six-year period of primary education there is a clear division: grades 1 to 3 offer integrated instruction whereas in grades 4 to 6 there are specific subjects. In the first stage, one teacher teaches all subjects; in addition to a weekly total of eighteen hours of learning time, two hours are dedicated to religious education or ethics. The head teacher may, furthermore, allot four hours to additional courses, such as foreign languages or computer studies. The statutory maximum, however, is

twenty-three hours per week. Any additional classes must therefore be regarded as optional. According to the newly established regulations, each of the two terms at this level must be concluded with a descriptive mark. In grades 4 to 6, the particular subjects are marked on a numeric scale ranging from 6 (the best) to 1.

In the fourth grade, instruction is organized in three modules: sciences, humanities, and technical subjects. Particular subjects are interwoven with 'educational paths', which are not subjects, but rather certain fields of study mandatory for teachers of all subjects (e.g. health, ecology, media, and social education). At this level, pupils are required to receive a minimum of twenty-two hours tuition per week, plus two hours of religious education or ethics and three hours to be allocated by the head teacher. The maximum time spent in compulsory education must not exceed twenty-eight hours per week.

Teaching contents have also been significantly improved. More emphasis is placed on social and ecological education, or foreign languages and computer studies. There is also a tendency to make these subjects compulsory from the first year onwards. It seems that the only constraints, especially in the expansion of foreign languages and computer studies, are the shortages of subject teachers, who, instead of teaching in schools, find better-paid jobs outside school. There is, nonetheless, a growing tendency to replace Russian and even German with English. Between 1999 and 2000, the percentage of pupils learning English grew from 38% to 43%. German increased by only 0.1% to 19.7% whereas the percentage of students learning Russian further declined from 11% to a mere 6.6%. It is characteristic that pupils in rural areas learn Russian much more often than those in urban areas. This is due to the difficulties that village schools have in attracting teachers of Western languages. Nevertheless, the emerging dominance of English and German over Russian proves that the deficiencies in language teaching are being gradually overcome. It is noteworthy that, in 2000, English for the first time ranked first in vocational schools, ousting Russian.

Lower secondary education

This intermediate level was introduced in the school year 2000-01. Its name, '*gimnazjum*', corresponds to that of a similar institution which existed in Poland before World War II, and equivalent structures are also organically rooted in the educational tradition of several EU countries. This educational stage has been established in response to criticism levelled against the last two grades of the former eight-year primary school. The new school has taken the obligatory subjects from grades 7 and 8 of the former primary school, but it has also been equipped with the above-mentioned learning fields (educational paths), which are part of different subjects. In lower secondary education, however, the scope of the educational paths was broadened by introducing philosophical, civil, regional, and European education, together with reflections about the place of Polish culture in relation to the Mediterranean civilizations. At this level, pupils are taught for thirty-one hours per week, with two additional hours to be allotted by the head teacher.

Although the introduction of the additional level has lengthened compulsory education by one year, it has also, according to several educationalists, decreased the

chances of some of the weaker pupils of completing secondary education. These pupils are permitted to conclude their education after the lower secondary level, a phenomenon that may become especially apparent in rural schools. Pupils in rural areas are additionally challenged by long distances, as they may have to commute to their schools.

At the end of the third year, each pupil is required to sit an external examination divided into two parts: the humanities and the sciences. This exam constitutes the basis of the pupil's further educational career. There is a heavy emphasis on the supporting function of teachers, who are at this level obliged to balance pupils' chances and assist weaker pupils by giving them additional instruction or advising them on learning strategies.

Upper secondary education

The changes at this level were introduced in the school year 2002-03. After fiery debates and numerous revisions, the following types of school have been established:

- A three-year academic course (*liceum ogólnokształcące*), concluded by a final examination called *matura* (baccalaureate), which enables pupils to apply for a tertiary education programme;
- A three-year school with fourteen different career-oriented profiles (*liceum profilowane*), which may be concluded by the *matura* examination, but whose main aim is to prepare adolescents for particular trades (without providing vocational qualifications recognized by the labour market);
- A four-year technical school (*technikum*), the graduates of which receive a double qualification, namely both the *matura* and a vocational qualification on the level of a technician; and
- A two- or three-year vocational school, which trains qualified workers.

Every school that awards *matura* qualifications admits its pupils on the basis of an entry examination. In vocational schools, the diploma of a qualified worker may also be obtained in the form of an apprenticeship with an industrial company or in a craftsman's trade.

The strategic aim of these innovations is to strengthen education at the upper secondary level and, at the same time, to increase pupils' chances of entering higher education. By the school year 2010-11, 75% of all pupils are expected to continue their education at the upper secondary level. In this way, the standard qualification for young people is to be shifted from the vocational level (two years of secondary education, which 50% of all young people attended in 1990) to the upper secondary level; the great majority of adolescents should thus acquire the *matura* diploma.

Such a shift naturally leads to a decrease in the number of certain types of school and to the expansion of other types. Many of the structural changes necessary in this respect have already been implemented. In the school year 1989-90, only 48.4% of pupils chose academic and technical courses concluding with the *matura* examination, while vocational schools admitted as many as 45.6%. By 2000-01, however,

the percentage of pupils in vocational schools had dropped to 23% (GUS 2001). As 97.6% of all primary-school pupils enter the secondary level, it is evident that the percentage of pupils in schools leading up to the *matura* was at the level of 74.6% in 2000-01. For female pupils, the percentage was even higher, namely 83%.

General secondary schools

General secondary schools offer academic programmes that, over a period of three years, prepare pupils for the final external examination, *matura*, which enables them to enter higher education. Their curriculum encompasses a broad spectrum of compulsory subjects such as Polish; two foreign languages; mathematics; social studies; history; geography; biology, which includes hygiene; ecology; physics and astronomy; chemistry; technology, including computer studies; fine arts; music; physical education; and civic studies. The educational programmes are also streamlined into certain profiles corresponding to the pupils' interests and preferences. The general profile attracts 63% of all pupils; the mathematical, 13%; languages, 8.6%; and the sciences, 8%. There are also optional classes and clubs designed to foster particular abilities, such as philosophy, ethics, current affairs, law, economics, computer science, ecology, pedagogy, and psychology.

Furthermore, since 1991, there are bilingual classes in secondary schools (now on the *gimnazjum*- and the *liceum*-level and even in a few primary schools). According to data supplied by the Co-operative European Comenius Research project in bilingual education, there existed, in 2004, ninety-eight bilingual classes, among them forty with an English and thirty-six with a German profile (www.mobidic.org/m-o-b-i-d-i-c). Their graduates may, in addition, obtain international diplomas, like the International Baccalaureate, which confirm their intercultural and linguistic capabilities.

All graduates of upper secondary schools may, but are not obliged, to sit the final *matura* examination. It is possible to leave school with a simple 'certificate of secondary education', without the right to enter institutions of higher education. However, 98.7% of all graduates participate in the final examination, and 94.1% pass it.

Vocational schools

Vocational schools comprise, on the one hand, four-year schools with technical profiles, which are concluded with the optional *matura* examination (in recent years, 78% of the students in *technikums* passed it), and, on the other hand, basic technical schools with a two-year curriculum, which train qualified workers in general and specialized profiles. The general profile focuses on the stimulation of pupils' learning capacities, and places less emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge. The latter takes up merely 35% of the pupils' workload. The specialized profiles are closely linked to the requirements of the job market and are thus mostly tailored to the expectations of local employers, with as much as 65% of school time devoted to skills corresponding to these requirements. A part of the less specialized practical training takes place within the schools and the rest in factories or workshops. However, the system promotes the acquisition of skills in target locations, striving to abandon the long-standing system of school workshops, where pupils merely dealt with substi-

tutes or simulations of reality. Both practical training and theoretical instruction are concluded with external examinations, mostly outlined by future employers, which bestow on graduates the diploma of a qualified worker and a certificate of general education, thereby enabling them to continue their education and obtain further qualifications at regular, evening, or extramural institutions.

The high level of unemployment of about 30% among young people up to the age of twenty-four (half of them being graduates of vocational schools) encouraged the authorities to seek to enhance the mobility of the workforce in Poland by strengthening advisory institutions that are to assist in looking for alternative employment and educational schemes.

Special education schools

In 2002-03, there were 783 special schools at primary level and 214 special departments at primary schools, with a total of 48,029 pupils (GUS 2003). A comparable number of children attended integrated classes. The two figures added up constitute 2.5% of the total of pupils at primary level, which experts consider insufficient. Among the total of fifteen to twenty pupils in integrated classes, between three and five children are disabled. There is an option of two teachers per class, one of whom must be a special care pedagogue. About 3% of all disabled children continue their education in vocational schools (Pachociński 2000). Institutions employing disabled people are entitled to tax discounts and other privileges.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Since the political breakthrough of the 1990s, higher education in Poland has been developing rapidly (Hörner 2002b). Between the years 1990 and 2003, the number of students in higher education rose from 403,000 to 1,800,000, and the number of institutions increased from 112 to 377. Such an expansion was made possible by structural diversification (among others, by introducing new three-year colleges), on the one hand, and by the authorization of private institutions of higher education, on the other. Thus, out of 377 institutions of higher education, 252 are in private hands, 103 of which are colleges. In 2003, already 29% of all students attended private schools (GUS 2003); considering the high tuition fees of between 250 and 2500 dollars per year, this illustrates the high prestige of education in Poland (Zielińska 1998).

In addition to the certificate of the *matura* examination, Polish institutions of higher education require further forms of entrance selection by administering entrance examinations, interviews, or the selection of the highest scoring candidates. In private institutions, there is usually no preliminary assessment, and progress is instead evaluated in the course of the students' studies.

An alternative to academic studies is the post-secondary sector, which offers, in most cases, a two-year higher vocational qualification to all graduates of upper-secondary education. The demand for this track is growing. As the number of graduates in secondary general education has doubled over the last ten years, more and more of these graduates are entering non-academic post-secondary education: in

2003 almost 70% of all graduates of secondary general education did so. However, this increase was only made possible by a growing number of private institutions in this field. In 2003, private institutions were responsible for 44% of the students in post-secondary education (GUS 2004).

Teacher training (Zielińska 1998) is provided by different types of institutions. Teachers of the humanities typically graduate from universities, colleges of education, or specialized colleges of physical education or art. Teachers of sciences acquire their qualifications at technical colleges or academies of agriculture or economics.

Nursery, primary, and special care teachers may obtain their qualifications from three-year colleges, which closely co-operate with the universities. These fast programmes have provided many primary institutions with urgently needed teachers of foreign languages. In the school year 2000-01, there existed twenty-seven teacher training colleges and fifty colleges for teachers of foreign languages, with 13,530 full-time students and an additional 4270 students attending evening or extramural classes. Nearly 80% of all students on teacher training courses are female (GUS, 2003). In order to be promoted, teachers with college diplomas are required to enhance their qualifications through an additional two years of university studies.

The institution responsible for the professional development of teachers, the Centre for Teachers' Professional Progress (CODN), was founded in 1992. It is mainly preoccupied with those areas of the education system which required special attention in the post-reform system, such as foreign languages, ecology, computer studies, or the new form of the *matura* examination. In addition to this national centre, there are also numerous local training centres (ODN), where teachers and didactic consultants form advisory groups.

Head teachers are elected in open competitions. The candidates are mostly successful and experienced teachers. They are not required to possess any special formal qualifications, although their scope of competence is very broad. Not only do they supervise teachers' legal and didactic status, but they may also decide on their employment or dismissal.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The cost of the enforced changes in the economy became evident in the sphere of education, leading to reductions of teaching hours, to drastic cuts in the number of extra-curricular activities (participation fell from 50% in 1989 to 28% in 1997), to an increase in the number of pupils per class, and to the closures of many nursery schools. Vocational schools supported by local industry underwent similar curtailments due to economic difficulties. Moreover, their graduates found it hard to find employment.

Educational difficulties have surfaced mainly as a consequence of the political and economic transformations of the 1990s. Schools must cope with the high number of unemployed parents. Insufficient funding is especially apparent in the area of pre-primary education, but also in primary schools, where higher quality is only obtainable in private schools. There is also the ever-existing problem of the in-

qualities between urban and rural areas, further aggravated by exceedingly poor financing in most rural areas, caused by growing deprivation and employment deficiencies.

A further dilemma has emerged with respect to the size of school administration and its painful adjustments, which are propelled by both economic reasoning and endeavours to conform to European norms. School structures are also being adapted to European norms. The newly created system of six-plus-three closely matches the French five-plus-four system, which is certainly not accidental (Hörner 2002a). The comparison of the education systems in the two countries reveals some intrinsic analogies beyond their unquestionable historical affiliations (Hörner 2002a). There is, however, an enormous gap between Western European and Polish education, which is apparent in teachers' salaries, hampering their motivation and thus the progress of the reforms. This in turn thwarts the course of integration. Moreover, any additional work suggested by the reform process, such as preparing the curricula, is in reality difficult to realize, since most teachers are overworked and have to take up more than one job in order to make ends meet. Such environments have an impact on the quality of instruction, which, according to the PISA study of 2000, leaves much room for improvement. Nevertheless, the improved Polish results of the latest PISA survey (2003) foster the hope that the reform process is beginning to bear fruit.

Recent discussions have revolved around the problem of the new format of the *matura* examination. Its introduction has been objected to by parents for a long time, but it has finally been introduced in 2005. It seems, however, that the system of central control and the homogeneous criteria strived for in the new *matura* constitute an initial sign of integration into the future system of common European educational norms. International research, such as PISA, and Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, will certainly accelerate the present processes.

References

- Bogaj, A./Kwiatkowski, S. M./Szymański, M. J. (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych): System edukacji w Polsce. Osiągnięcia, przemiany, dylematy (Education system in Poland. Achievements, Changes, Dilemmas). Warszawa 1997.
- Buszko, J.: Historia Polski (The History of Poland). Warszawa 1984.
- Ferenz, K.: Oczekiwania rodziców wobec szkoły w małych społecznościach lokalnych (Parental Expectations of Schooling in Small Communities), In: Miłkowska-Olejniczak, G./Uździcki, K. (Eds): Pedagogika wobec przemian i reform oświatowych (Pedagogics in the face of educational change and reform). Zielona Góra 2000.
- GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny (Ed.): Rocznik Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2001 (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland 2001). Warszawa 2001.
- GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny (Ed.): Rocznik Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2003 (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland 2003). Warszawa 2003.
- GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny (Ed.): Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2003/2004. Warszawa 2004.
- Hörner, W./Wompel, I. R.: Die polnische Schule im Umbruch. Das neue polnische Bildungsgesetz im Kontext der gesellschaftlichen Veränderung (The transformation of Polish

- Schools. The New Polish Education Act in the Context of Social Change). Wiesbaden 1994.
- Hörner, W.: Das polnische Bildungswesen auf dem Weg nach Europa? Zur europäischen Dimension der polnischen Bildungsreformen (Polish Education on its Way to Europe? On the European Dimension of Polish Educational Reforms). In: *Bildung und Erziehung* 55 (2002a) 2, pp. 137-150. 2002a.
- Hörner, W.: Higher Education in Poland after 1989. In: Reuter, L. R./Döbert, H. (Eds): *After Communism and Apartheid: Transformation of Education in Germany and South Africa*. Frankfurt a.M. 2002b, pp. 231-240.
- Lewowicki, T.: *Przemiany oświaty. Szkice o ideach i praktyce edukacyjnej*. (Educational Transformations. Drafts on Educational Theory and Practice). Warszawa 1994.
- MEN – Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej: *Edukacja. Raport 1997-2001*. (Education. 1997-2001 Report). Warszawa 2002.
- Pachociński, R.: *Współczesne systemy edukacyjne* (Contemporary Education Systems). Warszawa 2000 (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych).
- Piwowski, R.: *Infrastruktura oświaty oraz potrzeby inwestycyjne szkolnictwa obowiązkowego* (Educational Infrastructure and Financial Needs of Compulsory Schooling). In: Instytut Spraw Publicznych: *Zmiany w systemie oświaty. Wyniki badań empirycznych* (Changes in the System of Education. Results of Empirical Research). Warszawa 2002.
- Wołoszyn, S. (Ed.): *Źródła do dziejów wychowania i myśli pedagogicznej* (Sources for the History of Education and Pedagogical Thought). T. III, *Pedagogika i szkolnictwo w XX stuleciu*. Warszawa 1966.
- Zielińska, K.: *Lehrerbildung In Polen im Kontext der Hochschulpolitik der 1990er Jahre* (Teacher Training in Poland in the Context of Higher Education Policies in the 1990s). In: *Bildung und Erziehung* 51 (1998) 4, pp. 461-474.

Jesus Maria Sousa and Carlos Nogueira Fino

Portugal

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

The Revolution of 25 April 1974 was a great milestone of change with obvious consequences for the historical development of schooling in Portugal. Putting an end to a forty-eight-year-old dictatorship, it opened the country to democracy. After Salazar's death in 1968, the new Prime Minister, Marcello Caetano, tried to gradually reform the regime, but the so-called Marcellist spring was so weak and corrupt that the Revolution broke out in the early morning hours of 25 April 1974. It was the army, tired of a bloody and futile war in remote colonies in Africa, that led the Revolution (also known as the Carnations Revolution, because these flowers were in bloom at that time of the year and were placed in the guns of the soldiers). It was a peaceful revolution, since the forces of the *ancien régime* surrendered with little resistance.

The national euphoria did not last long, however. In spite of the coherent 'three D's' political programme, which promised democracy, decolonization, and development, the MFA (Armed Forces Movement) was not a unified body. Some officers wanted a liberal democratic state, while others sought radical social transformations. In the following two-year period, there were six provisional governments, two presidents, a failed right-wing coup attempt, a failed left-wing coup attempt, three elections, seizures of land and housing, bombings, and strikes, while the country was flooded by millions of Portuguese settlers escaping from ex-colonies at war. Surprisingly, however, and contrary to the expectations of most observers, national political players committed themselves to a democratic system determined by the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, which was approved by the Constituent Assembly on 2 April 1976.

Portugal thus became a democratic state based on the rule of the law, the sovereignty of the people, the plurality of democratic expression, and the respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens. As far as education was concerned, it was proclaimed that everyone had an equal right to education. Abandoning a strongly centralizing tendency, the State was to be responsible for the democratization of education and was not entitled to orientate education and culture in any particular philosophical, aesthetic, political, or religious direction; it was rather required to foster freedom of personal choice. In this context, education was seen as a means to 'minimize economic, social, and cultural differences; stimulate democratic participation in a free society; and promote mutual understanding, tolerance, and a spirit of community'. A 'new' education was to be provided for a 'new' society. The following principles were set out in Article 74 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, with obvious consequences for the development of schooling in Portugal:

1. Everyone has the right to education and the right to equal opportunities of access to and success in schooling.
2. In the implementation of its policy for education, it is the duty of the State:
 - To ensure compulsory and free basic education for all;
 - To institute a public system and develop the general system of pre-school education;
 - To guarantee continuing education and to eliminate illiteracy;
 - To guarantee all citizens, in accordance with their ability, access to the highest levels of education, scientific research, and artistic creativity;
 - To institute, by stages, free education at all levels;
 - To provide for schools within the communities they serve, and to co-ordinate education with economic, social, and cultural activities;
 - To promote and support access to education for citizens with disabilities, and to support special education where necessary;
 - To protect and develop Portuguese sign language as a cultural expression and an instrument of access to both education and equality of opportunity;
 - To ensure instruction in the Portuguese language and access to Portuguese culture for the children of emigrants; and
 - To ensure that the children of immigrants have adequate support to implement their right to education.

Another historical corner-stone forming the basis of a number of changes to schooling in Portugal was European integration on 1 January 1986. Since all EU decisions and procedures are based on treaties signed by all the EU countries, Portugal had to adapt itself to new rules. In the early years, much of the co-operation between EU countries was concerned with trade and the economy, but it now involves many other subjects of direct importance for Portuguese citizens' everyday life and increased living standards, such as their rights to freedom, security, and justice; job creation; regional development; and environmental protection. The euro as the European currency gave Portugal a new philosophy, strengthening a neo-liberal economic trend.

Portugal had to learn how to articulate its specificity within an extraordinary European diversity, and share values with different traditions and languages. Unity in diversity was another challenge demanding co-operation with other peoples in Europe, in a spirit of openness, tolerance, and solidarity. Although the EU does not decide what Portuguese pupils learn in school, it has a say in Portuguese educational and professional qualifications in terms of recognition by other EU countries, in access to learning opportunities at home and abroad, in partnerships and exchange schemes, and in the removal of bureaucratic obstacles.

A corner-stone of schooling that was already in place before the revolution of 1974 was the primary education reform of July 1964 under the leadership of Galvão Teles. This reform extended the previous four years of compulsory education to six years. Later, in 1967, the first cycle of secondary school and the preparatory cycle of technical school were established by the same Minister of Education. In fact, on 25 July 1973, one year before the Revolution, another reform took place under

Marcello Caetano's government. The Minister of Education, Veiga Simão, divided basic education into primary and preparatory education, each of four years' duration, making a total of eight years of compulsory education. Secondary education was constituted by two cycles of two years each. Thus, one academic year was added to the Portuguese school system. Even so, and despite the nominal openness of the school system, explicit and intentional ideological indoctrination continued to exist through subjects such as 'the political and administrative organization of the nation', and 'morals and religion', and even in other more academic subjects as 'history and the mother tongue', as stated in curricula and transmitted through uniform and obligatory textbooks.

Immediately after the Revolution, through the Law of 29 April 1974, all academic authorities, such as school principals nominated by the previous government, were removed, and decisions were made by pupils, teachers, and auxiliary personnel in general assemblies after long hours of debate. Several important changes followed: education won a place in the mass media; there were direct consultations of the population on some educational reforms; parents' associations had the right to express their opinion on the general lines of educational reforms; ideological features were removed from the old programmes and a committee was nominated to study new programmes; schools themselves obtained the right to elect their management boards (so-called democratic management), thus replacing nominated principals; a few optional subjects were introduced in secondary school; and the Azores and Madeira autonomous regions received wider decision-making powers in educational affairs.

Another important reform that still persists, although it has been and continues to be an occasional object of attack, was the 'unification' of secondary schools, i.e. the amalgamation of study and 'productive work'. Before the revolution, twelve-year-old children had to choose between a technical school and a high school, which was the standard route to university. Of course the 'choice' was very much determined by their parents' profession and status. Now a new philosophy of integration of theory and practice, of intellectual and manual work, was launched in schools. Instead of indoctrination, expressed in the slogan 'God, the Country and the Family', and praising values such as obedience, submission, order, and respect for hierarchy and conformity, other, 'new' values, such as freedom, tolerance, and solidarity were given priority. The dominant ideas were now 'interdisciplinary areas', 'going out into the community', and doing 'productive' or 'socially useful' work. The respective activities were to be developed with the collaboration of persons outside school, and were supposed to include areas such as farming and woollen goods manufacturing, fishing and fish canning, mining, etc. The most typical example of this new vision was 'Civic Service', a new intermediate year between secondary school and university, to be completed outside school. According to the Law of 11 July 1975, all students wanting to go to university should have 'an intermediate year of activities of civic service that might create in students the habit of socially productive work and acquaint them with the great national problems'.

After these revolutionary times, a 'normalization period' involving preparation for European integration followed, when all features informed by socialist ideology

were gradually opposed and removed from schools' daily routines. Curricula were changed again: the recently introduced interdisciplinary areas that sought to link school to the community and manual work to intellectual work, and to engage pupils and teachers in 'productive work' were 'suspended', and the subject 'introduction to politics', which had been introduced in the last grades of secondary school, vanished, remaining only in evening courses for adult learners. The intermediate year of 'Civic Service' was replaced by an academic year, the twelfth year of schooling. In October 1986, twelve years after the Revolution, the Education System Act was finally passed, establishing nine years of basic compulsory education which were divided into three cycles.

In 1997 this Education System Act was amended by the Law of 19 September, which introduced uniform teacher training for all school forms and thus brought to an end the schism between primary and secondary school teachers. All teachers now completed their training with the academic qualification of a *licenciatura* degree. Meanwhile, the pendulum swung back in favour of the ideas of the earlier 'idealistic' movement, and several corresponding political measures were taken under the government of the socialist Prime Minister, Antonio Guterres. Two laws of 18 January 2001, related to basic and secondary education respectively, brought significant changes to curriculum development in Portugal, although the latter was suspended by the subsequent social democratic and popular PSD/CDS coalition government. New cross-curricular interdisciplinary project areas were created. Among them were: a project area making use of research methodologies on particular problems felt by the pupils themselves; an area of guided study to help pupils learn how to study in order to acquire their autonomy; and, finally, a civic education area to create habits for responsible, critical, active, and participatory citizenship. Thus, for the first time Portugal had a coherent national curriculum for all nine years of compulsory basic education. Subject teachers were no longer aware only of the logical sequencing of their own subject from the first to the ninth year of schooling, but also of the subject matter of all other disciplines. This led to a multi-disciplinary approach, rather than the isolated development of individual subjects. Moreover, and contrary to the highly centralized Portuguese tradition, the national curriculum started to be decentralized into a school curriculum project and a class curriculum project, which responded to the different interests and needs arising from both regional and local characteristics and the individual idiosyncrasies of pupils. This provided a new kind of autonomy that schools did not have in the past, and a new regulation confirmed the autonomy of school management. Other reforms took place in the areas of learning assessment, school management, the continuing professional development of teachers, and teacher education.

Most recently, under the social democratic and popular coalition government of Prime Minister Durão Barroso, the draft of a new Education System Act (*Lei de Bases da Educação*) has been sent to the Assembly of the Republic for discussion, after being approved by the Government Council. One of the most important measures, among many others, is the establishment of twelve years of compulsory education, instead of the previous nine years.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets

As mentioned above, it took twelve years for the educational aims prescribed in the Constitution to be legally implemented in the Education System Act. Given that education policy is the translation of a series of political intentions, the Education System Act is one of the most important sources for its analysis. Thus, what are the priorities regarding the personal development of Portuguese people? Is priority given to the individual or to society as a whole? Is the policy designed according to the interests of a pressure group, for one social class over others, for an economic lobby, a political party, or a religious group? Or is there a balance between the interests of each individual and the whole society?

In spite of its insistence that personal self-realization contribute to the development of society, the Law attests a very strong preoccupation with the freedom of the individual. Over and over again it expresses 'the right to develop personalities, individual life projects, and the consideration for and valorization of different knowledge and cultures'. As suggested above, however, great emphasis is also placed on the construction of society as a whole, since education is expected 'to promote the development of a democratic and pluralist mind open to dialogue and to the free exchange of opinions, with respect for others and their ideas', and 'to make citizens able to judge their social environment in a critical and creative way, and to make them able to engage in its progressive transformation.' Everyone is expected to participate in the development of society, through an education that is concerned with 'the defence of national identity and the reinforcement of Portuguese historical tradition and the cultural heritage of the Portuguese people', and that is to be linked to 'a universal and European tradition and the growing interdependency and necessary solidarity among all peoples of the world.'

Socio-economic context

Basic education is free of charge: pupils do not pay any entrance or enrolment fees and they all have school insurance. General support, such as school meals, transports, books, and materials are only provided, however, to the neediest pupils. Even so, and despite the fact that the Portuguese Education System Act recommends the provision of 'second chance schooling for those who did not enjoy it at the appropriate age' and 'equal opportunities for both sexes', Portugal, according to the 2001 Census, has an illiteracy rate of 9.0% (6.3% male and 11.5% female). This is due to the disadvantaged socio-economic conditions of some of its population, mostly older people from the region of Alentejo (15.9%). We still consider 9.0% a high rate of illiteracy, although in 1991 it was 11.0%, of which 7.7% was male and 14.1% female.

Another aspect that relates to the socio-economic context of schooling in Portugal is the optional nature of pre-school education, in spite of its being a part of the state education system. The number of places available is lower than the number of applicants. It is thus probable that those with greater economic resources will be able to send their children to pre-school education, with obvious consequences for their

success in the following basic education. Secondary education is not compulsory either. Access to university or polytechnics is determined by the well-known *numerus clausus*, which restricts the access of many candidates to higher education. Socio-economic conditions are a determining factor in access to higher education, especially for those who have to leave home and rent rooms in another town. In addition, not everyone is able to pay the fees charged by private higher education institutions.

As for the levels of schooling achieved, 37.8% of the Portuguese population has completed primary education, 18.8% and 18.7% respectively has finished the second and the third cycle of lower secondary education, 15.0% has completed secondary education, and only 8.9% has completed higher education.

Another relevant indicator in the socio-economic context of schooling is the high percentage of the Portuguese population aged eighteen to twenty-four who abandoned education at a low level. According to a Eurostat study on the social situation in the European Union in 2001, this figure was 46%, whereas the European average was 21%. This statistic is probably connected with the proportion of the population with an income below 60% of the national median, which was 22%, while the European average was 17%.

Social position of the teaching profession

Since the amendment to the Education System Act in 1997, all teachers in Portugal have had to obtain a *Licenciatura* degree. For pre-school, primary, secondary, or university level, the same type of academic qualification is demanded. This fact has obvious consequences for the attitude of society towards the teaching profession.

According to a well-known survey concerning confidence in professions comparing fourteen European countries including Central and Eastern Europe, 72% of the Portuguese population had a firm faith in the integrity, ability, and character of teachers as a profession, while the European average was 76%. In 2001 primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary Portuguese teachers started their career earning about 19,585 US dollars per year. That figure lay below the OECD average, which was \$21,982 (primary), \$23,283 (lower secondary), and \$24,350 (upper secondary). After fifteen years' experience, their wages rose to \$28,974 (equivalent to 1.56 GDP per capita), while the OECD average was \$30,047, \$31,968, and \$34,250. However, at the top of the scale, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary Portuguese teachers earned \$52,199, while the OECD average was only \$36,585, \$38,787, and \$41,244.

School and the role of the family

Before the Revolution of 25 April 1974, families had no right to participate in the school system or to choose any particular school to send their children to. It was not until the introduction of the Education System Act in 1986 that the decentralization of the curriculum began, returning school to families and the community.

In 1990 the Ministry of Education published a legal decree (*Despacho Conjunto*) giving parents the possibility to choose their children's school whenever possible. Furthermore, the new school management system of 1991 gave parents the right to

be represented on the Class Council, Pedagogic Council, and School Council. From then on, families were allowed to be more involved in school management, which in turn strengthened the links between school and families.

An example of parents' desire to engage in school activities is the creation of the National Confederacy of Parents' Associations (the CONFAP), combining fourteen regional federations. It has an executive committee, whose members come from the regional federations, a discipline council, and a general assembly in which 970 associations of parents from public and private schools take part. The responsibilities of this confederacy of associations are to inform its members about the education system, to analyse and discuss educational policy, to organize training on various subjects concerning education, and to defend the rights and duties of parents.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

Education in general is the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Education, apart from a few educational establishments that are either jointly supervised with, or fall under the administration of other ministries. The central services ensure the implementation of laws passed and decisions taken by the government and Parliament, and develop additional decisions, instructions, and notifications, essentially dealing with the design, development, co-ordination, evaluation, and inspection of education and training. The Ministry of Education thus makes decisions with regard to the establishment and general organization of schools and school time and the employment of staff, and issues guidelines on the content of pre-school education and on the curricula for basic and secondary education.

Because of their political and administrative statutes, the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira have regional secretariats of education (*Secretarias Regionais de Educação*) which are specific educational organizations relying on their own regionalized administration. They are responsible for matters that do not impinge on the fundamental educational law that gives Portuguese people a national identity in terms of education and training. Within these limits, all legal measures can be adapted to the insular reality, after their approval in the regional legislative assemblies (*Assembleias Legislativas Regionais*).

The Ministry of Employment and Social Security (MESS), through its Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), and in collaboration with social partners, is responsible for apprenticeships, centres of employment, and vocational training. It also has joint responsibility, with the Ministry of Education, for vocational schools, and runs some pre-school establishments. As far as higher education is concerned, public universities and polytechnics have administrative, financial, academic, and pedagogical autonomy.

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the administration of all levels of education is currently being reformed, and the Ministry's regional services are being restructured with a view to decentralization. The decision-making powers of local and regional authorities are also increasing, and educational institutions themselves enjoy increasing autonomy.

Financing

Portugal spends around 5.73% of its GDP on Education, which is slightly above the European average of 5.03%. Public education is essentially financed by the Ministry of Education, although the financing of some institutions is shared with other ministries. The Ministry of Education finances central and regional services through the allocation of funds, and finances private and co-operative education by means of budgetary transfers. However, the regional administrations of the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira finance educational services and establishments through their own resources and state budgetary transfers.

The co-financing provided by the PRODEP (Programme of Educational Development for Portugal), resulting from the European Community Decision of 18 June 1990, should also be mentioned. The programme involves financing and resources within the fields of training, innovation, and the modernization of educational infrastructure (construction and equipment of new classrooms, vocational education, and higher education). The municipalities are partly responsible for educational funding and expenses. They cover the construction, maintenance, equipment, and certain operational expenses of pre-school education and the first cycle of basic schools, and provide complementary funding for school transport and extra-curricular and leisure activities.

Compulsory education is free, and in certain cases pupils are also entitled to the free use of books, school materials, transport, meals, and accommodation. However, pupils and their families do make an important financial contribution to education through the payment of enrolment and tuition fees, and the purchase of books for both secondary and higher education.

Public and private schooling

Private and co-operative schools are set up and managed by private individuals acting individually or collectively; those schools which provide instruction in line with the objectives of the national education system are eligible for the same benefits as public schools. More learners attend public institutions, however, than private ones, except in the area of pre-school education, where private establishments account for slightly over 50% of the total enrolment. Taking the mainland alone, 10.2% of pupils in primary education are enrolled in the private sector; in the lower secondary schools the figure is 10.9 %, in upper secondary schools 11.4%, and in higher education 10.9%.

General standards of the school education system

The principles of curriculum design are regulated by the above-mentioned Education System Act and the Law from April 1999 (Autonomous Regime for School Management). The Education System Act demands that the curricular organization of the schooling system strive towards an harmonious balance in pupils' levels of physical, cognitive, affective, aesthetic, social, and moral development. The same Law prescribes the existence of a national curriculum, although there is the possibility of some regional-based components being added to it, both at primary and secondary

levels. Universities and polytechnics have the authority to design their own curricula, provided they meet regional and national needs. On the other hand, the Law from April 1999 allows primary and secondary schools some autonomy in the strategic, pedagogical, administrative, financial, and organizational domains, provided they have prepared an educational project which neither contradicts nor substitutes any components of the national curriculum.

As mentioned above, in contrast to the highly centralized Portuguese tradition, the national curriculum can now be partially decentralized into curriculum projects for schools and classes, according to the different interests and needs arising from both regional and local characteristics and the individual idiosyncrasies of pupils. Thus, the participation of teachers in curriculum design is possible both at school and classroom levels. Parents' participation in curriculum design is made possible by the participation of their associations in the National Council for Education (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*). Participation at school level is also guaranteed, since parents' representatives must make up at least 10% of the school assemblies. Pupils' representatives must also be included in school assemblies.

Quality management

The quality management of the education system in Portugal is internally assured by a number of central services of the Ministry of Education, and is made public through the Department of Information and Evaluation of the Education System (GIASE).

The Department of Educational Evaluation (GAVE) deals with pupils' academic performance and is one of the Ministry of Education's key departments. It has administrative autonomy, and is responsible for planning, co-ordinating, producing, and monitoring instruments of external assessment of the learning process. GAVE provides, together with schools and the regional boards of education (*Direcções Regionais de Educação*), the information necessary for the production of the assessment instruments; co-operates with the basic and secondary education departments (DEB and DES) in the process of implementation of external assessment instruments for primary and secondary school pupils; supervises the evaluation of textbooks of primary and secondary education; and participates in international studies related to the assessment of pupils' learning processes. In this context, GAVE has produced testing items for secondary education; has prepared tests for the fourth, sixth, and ninth grades of basic education; and has prepared national exams at the level of secondary education. It has also provided courses for teachers involved in the process of evaluation.

Another key department for the quality management of the education system in Portugal is the General Inspectorate of Education (IGE), which is responsible for the educational and technical supervision and monitoring of all educational establishments. With regard to public higher education, the Inspectorate is also responsible for controlling compliance with legal provisions regarding fees and financial support for students. Finally, the Inspectorate has the task of monitoring the financial and administrative efficiency of the education system as a whole.

Teachers of the primary and secondary levels are evaluated by their schools. Whenever they want to progress in their professional career, they have to present a 'document of critical reflection' describing the commitment they have made and the work they have done; the document is then assessed by a commission composed of colleagues from their own school who are designated by the Pedagogic Council.

As far as higher education is concerned, the autonomy enjoyed by higher education institutions means that quality evaluation and monitoring does not directly depend on the government. However, in 1994 the Law on Higher Education Evaluation was introduced, which focuses on the evaluation of higher education programmes in two respects, namely internal and external evaluation. With regard to the latter, commissions of experts and external evaluation commissions carry out evaluation under the auspices of the National Commission of Higher Education Evaluation (CNAVES). At the present moment, the following are objects of analysis: the quality of teaching, the organization of the curriculum, the scientific level aimed at, the pedagogical process and its level of innovation, the qualifications of teaching personnel, the amount of research carried out in connection with the programme under evaluation, the contribution of the programme to the community's scientific and cultural development, the condition of physical installations and equipment, and the international projects in which the institution participates. In addition, a number of other aspects are taken into consideration, such as organizational and managerial efficiency; academic proficiency; social support services; interdisciplinary, interdepartmental, and inter-institutional approaches; and, finally, the uptake of graduates by the labour market.

In general terms, it can be said that there was previously no strong tradition in Portugal of external, let alone foreign, evaluation in either secondary or tertiary education until membership of the EU demanded both national evaluation and international comparison. Common projects under the co-ordination of the European Commission, such as the 'fifteen quality indicators of lifelong-learning performance in Europe' forced the Portuguese education system to measure its performance against that of other countries. Since January 1999, GAVE has also been the Portuguese organization responsible for the country's participation in PISA. The External Evaluation Commission of Higher Education now seeks to gain one foreign expert at least as a co-operating member, although there are severe limitations due to language problems.

Support systems

There are some mechanisms in schools to support pupils in overcoming problems associated with academic failure or a lack of vocational orientation. The Psychology and Orientation Service (*Serviços de Psicologia e Orientação*) aims at supporting pupils by helping them to identify their problems and advising them how to overcome them. They also provide information to assist them in choosing an educational and vocational career. Other services are devoted to supporting pupils and students from lower social and economic strata. The School Social Service (*Acção Social Escolar*) seeks to guarantee that all pupils have access to school, and that they enjoy the conditions necessary for successful attendance, so that they will complete com-

pulsory education and hopefully proceed to a post-compulsory programme. These services partially or even completely cover the costs of meals, canteen services, school transport, accommodation (university residences in the case of support for students in higher education), books and other school materials, fee exemptions, health care, and scholarships. There are also private institutions that grant scholarships to students in higher education.

These support systems cater to those who are in the regular education system. For those who fail to complete their education at the usual age, or who dropped out of school early, adult education, which includes basic and secondary education (*Ensino Básico recorrente* and *Curso Geral e Cursos Tecnológicos do Ensino Recorrente*), provides a second opportunity. Adult education requires a distinct pedagogical approach that is adapted to different groups, different life experiences, and individual knowledge. This approach is interdisciplinary, focuses on real problems, and aims to enhance learner autonomy. Although it entails specific forms of curricular organization, methodologies, and evaluations, adult education leads to diplomas and certificates that are equivalent to those provided in regular education.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The Ministry of Education administers national school education policies, and the curricula and programmes of primary and secondary education. The administrative structure of the Ministry of Education consists, in addition to other departments, of two central departments with the task of pedagogic conceptualization, orientation, and co-ordination at the various levels of education: the Department of Basic Education (*Departamento de Educação Básica - DEB*) and the Department of Secondary Education (*Departamento do Ensino Secundário - DES*). There is also an important consultancy board, the National Council for Education (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*), which is made up of specialists and representatives of different educational stakeholders.

Education is universal, compulsory, and free of charge for all children for a period of nine years. Compulsory education consists of basic education (*Ensino Básico*), which runs from six to fifteen years of age, and covers three successive cycles of four years, two years, and three years respectively. The educational programme of basic education aims at providing all individuals with a general and common education that enables them to continue to higher levels of education or to join programmes oriented to working life.

A new Education System Act (*Lei de Bases da Educação*), already approved by the Government Council, has been sent to the Assembly of the Republic for debate. The extension of compulsory education to a period of twelve years is one of the most important changes already agreed upon.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education (*Educação pré-escolar*) complements and/or supplements the role played by the family in early learning. Attendance is optional. The aim of pre-

school is to stimulate the skills of each child, encouraging learning, the balanced development of the entire child's potential, the acquisition of moral values, and a sense of freedom coupled with responsibility. At the same time, the aim is to encourage the child's integration into different social groups outside the family, in order to develop social awareness. In terms of administration, pre-primary education is incorporated into the Department of Basic Education (*Departamento de Educação Básica*).

Primary education

Primary education is the first cycle of basic education and lasts four years. In line with the developmental characteristics of this age group, the aims of the first cycle are the fostering of linguistic skills in the areas of speaking, reading, and writing; basic notions of arithmetic; an awareness of the physical and social environment; artistic expression; drama; music; and physical skills. This level of education is administered by the Department of Basic Education (*Departamento de Educação Básica – DEB*).

Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education corresponds to the second and third cycle of basic education in Portugal. The second cycle lasts two years and its specific aims focus on education of a humanistic, artistic, physical, sporting, scientific, and technological nature, together with moral and civic education. It seeks to enable pupils to both assimilate and critically and creatively interpret information in order to acquire knowledge, working methods, and instruments that will allow them to continue their learning. The third cycle lasts three years and its aims are the systematic and differentiated acquisition of modern culture in its humanistic, artistic, physical and sporting, scientific, and technological dimensions. These are vital for entry into the workforce and for continuing studies.

The basic education diploma (*Diploma de Ensino Básico*) is awarded without a final examination to those pupils who successfully complete the third cycle of basic education. This diploma is awarded by the School Board, and specifies the subjects studied and the level attained in each. It entitles pupils to proceed to upper secondary education. There is also a level 2 vocational qualification diploma (*Diploma de Qualificação Profissional de Nível II*) at the level of lower secondary education. It is awarded to pupils who have completed a course in initial vocational training, or a level 2 vocational qualification course in a vocational school, or a set of technical training supplementary credits qualifying for a given occupation in second chance education. There is no examination, and the diploma specifies the subjects studied, the level of the course, and its equivalence to the basic education diploma. This diploma gives access to employment.

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education corresponds to the term secondary education in Portugal. Secondary education, whether public, private, or co-operative, is optional and con-

sists of a three-year cycle after basic education. Access is through the basic education diploma. The secondary school curricular structure seeks to achieve the three main aims defined in the fundamental law for this level of education:

- a) To create the conditions allowing the consolidation and increase of personal autonomy conducive to personal and social fulfilment;
- b) To deepen and consolidate knowledge, instruments, and methodologies that support a humanistic, artistic, scientific, and technical culture, and that promote the definition of individual interests and motivations when facing school and vocational options; and
- c) To reinforce practical values and attitudes that will prepare young people intellectually and emotionally to consciously play their roles in society.

There are two types of secondary courses: general courses (*Cursos Gerais*) and technological courses (*Cursos Tecnológicos*) or vocational education courses (*Cursos Profissionais*).

General courses are aimed at those wanting to continue on to higher education. At the end of the twelfth year of schooling, there is a compulsory nation-wide final examination leading to the award of the secondary diploma (*Diploma de Estudos Secundários, Diploma de Fim de Estudos Secundários*). This examination is taken in some subjects by pupils who have regularly attended officially recognized schools (internal pupils), by pupils whose attendance was for some reason interrupted or who attend schools not officially recognized (external pupils), and by independent candidates in the context of the general or technological courses.

The technological courses (*Cursos Tecnológicos*) and vocational education courses (*Cursos Profissionais*) are aimed at those seeking to enter the labour market. Permeability between general courses and these courses is guaranteed, as pupils may change from one course to another. The teaching and practical elements of technological or artistic courses, including visual arts, dance, and music, are provided by vocational schools and special schools for education in the arts. Each of these courses lasts three years, corresponding to the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth year of schooling.

All technological courses provide a level 3 vocational qualification, in the form of a certificate of professional qualification level 3 (*Diploma de Qualificação Profissional de Nível III*), after a final assessment based on the pupil's subject average and his or her final assessment in the PAP (*Prova de Aptidão Profissional*). The PAP is an examination that takes the form of an interdisciplinary project developed according to the pupil's personal interests, and is organized in close co-operation with enterprises. This project is submitted to and assessed by an examination board which includes the Pedagogical Director of the vocational school, who chairs the board, the pupil's tutor, and representatives of the relevant local trade associations and trade unions.

This kind of education is highly flexible and can be adapted to the pace, availability, knowledge, and experience of the individual. Therefore, it consists of a system of units which pupils can accumulate. Consequently, the length of the courses depends on the individual path taken by each pupil. The grading system in secondary school is a numerical one from 0 to 20. A grade from 18 to 20 is very good

(*muito bom*), 14 to 17 is good (*bom*), and 10 to 13 is fair (*suficiente*). The highest mark on the scale is 20. The pass mark is 10, and the lowest mark on the scale is 0.

The secondary education diploma (*Diploma de Estudos Secundários, Diploma de Fim de Estudos Secundários*) is awarded at the end of the three years of upper secondary courses, whether general or technological and vocational, and is the prerequisite for access to higher education. The diploma specifies the course that has been completed and the final mark obtained.

Secondary education is administered by the Department of Secondary Education (*Departamento do Ensino Secundário – DES*).

Special education schools

Until 1994 the responsibility for special education lay mainly with two ministries: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Both ministries offered services to children and youths with special educational needs (SEN). With the Declaration of Salamanca (1994), Portugal tried to alter the way it responded to the needs of special education by initiating the implementation of an inclusive system in regular schools.

According to the data supplied by the National Institute of Statistics, Portugal has an average pupil population of 1,600,000 (INE, 1996), of which 12% has SEN and only 2.9% receives assistance. 79.6% of the pupils receiving assistance are in integrated schooling, while the others are in special schooling or are assisted through other types of support structure. Thus, the majority of pupils with special needs are in regular schools, although this does not mean that all pupils are in regular classrooms. With regard to specific special needs categories, it is recognized that the assistance for pupils with hearing and visual impairments has grown substantially over the years; it is expected that the coverage will be 100% within a few years. As for assistance given to pupils with physical disabilities, the majority are being attended to in one way or another, despite differences from district to district. However, the level of assistance provided for pupils with mental handicaps, learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and multiple disabilities is much lower.

The number of specialized teachers is still very low. Indeed, there is a pronounced shortage of qualified teachers and only a few psychologists and therapists working in the field of integrated education. There are 115 special schools that assist 9396 pupils with SEN and employ the services of 1397 teachers, 106 psychologists, 99 therapists, 80 special technicians, and 607 teachers' aides.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

According to Article 76 (University and Access to Higher Education) of the Portuguese Constitution, the rules governing access to universities and other institutions of higher education must guarantee both equal opportunities for all and the democratic character of the system of education; they must also take into account the need for qualified graduates and the enhancement of the educational, cultural, and scientific standards of the country. Universities are guaranteed autonomy, within the limits of the law and without prejudice to the appropriate assessment of the quality

of education, in the making of their regulations and in their scientific, educational, administrative, and financial decisions.

Higher education in Portugal at both university and non-university level is provided in autonomous public universities, private universities, polytechnic institutions, and private higher education institutions of other types. In addition, there is the Portuguese Catholic University (*Universidade Católica Portuguesa*), established by Decree of the Holy See and recognized by the State of Portugal. It offers courses in management, anthropology, sociology, history, economics, and psychology. Private higher education institutions can only operate if they are recognized by the Ministry of Education. Access is regulated by the same procedures as those for state higher education institutions. The two systems of higher education (university and polytechnic) are linked, and it is possible to transfer from one to the other. It is also possible to transfer from a public institution to a private one and vice versa. At present, distance higher education is provided by the Open University (*Universidade Aberta*).

The pre-requisite for admission to both non-university and university study programmes is the secondary education diploma (*Diploma de Estudos Secundários*). However, there is a special competition for students over twenty-five years of age who have passed a special (ad hoc) exam, and for candidates who already hold a qualification for a medium/higher level course. Admission to higher education in Portugal is not absolutely free: entrance exams are carried out. There are also *numerus clausus* restrictions. Each year, the institution (public or private) establishes the number of places available for each course, which has to be approved by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. In addition to passing entrance and access tests, students must fulfil particular prerequisites for the chosen course. Universities make their entrance requirements known in a booklet distributed to applicants by the regional office of the Board for Access to Higher Education (*Direcção de Serviços de Acesso ao Ensino Superior*), which is responsible for placing applicants in courses according to preference. Vacancies allocated by public institutions are filled by means of a national competition organized by the General Board for Higher Education (*Direcção-Geral do Ensino Superior*). Each private institution fills its places by means of a local competitive examination which it organizes.

Colleges and institutes of higher education (*Escolas* and *Institutos Superiores*) provide courses in such fields as education sciences, teacher training, fine arts, applied arts, nursing, business and management, agriculture and forestry, engineering, and technology. Polytechnic institutions can award the *Bacharelato* and *Licenciatura* degrees, while the degrees of *Mestre* and *Doutor* can only be awarded by universities. The *Bacharelato* degree is awarded by universities and polytechnic institutions of higher education at the end of a specific course (usually of three years' duration). The form of the certificate varies from one institution to another, but always indicates the subject area and the qualification or classification awarded. It confers the title of *Bacharel* and gives access to employment or to further study leading to the *Licenciatura* degree. The *Licenciatura* degree is also awarded by both universities and polytechnics at the end of a specific course, usually of four to six years' duration. It confers the title of *Licenciado*. The most common format in poly-

technic education is that of the *Cursos Bietápicos de Licenciatura*. These courses are divided into two cycles, the first leading to the *Bacharelato* degree and the second to the *Licenciatura* degree. The first cycle lasts for six semesters, while the second may vary between two and four semesters.

At the universities, most *Licenciatura* courses are organized according to credit units, but many are still organized on the basis of the semester or academic year. Students who have a *Licenciatura* degree may generally proceed to further study for the *Carta Magistral* degree or the *Carta Doutoral* degree if they obtain a grade of at least 14 (*Bom*) and 16 (*Muito Bom*) respectively. Those with a mark below 14 may also be eligible for a *Mestrado* course, depending on the curriculum at the given university. The *Carta Magistral* is an advanced degree at the second level in a specific scientific field, indicating the ability to conduct practical research. The third university level is represented by the *Carta Doutoral* degree, which is conferred to those who have passed their doctorate examinations and have defended a thesis. There is no fixed period to prepare for the doctorate examinations. The fourth university level is the *Agregação*. This is the highest qualification and is reserved for holders of the *Carta Doutoral* degree. It requires the ability to undertake high level research, as well as special pedagogical competence in a specific field. It is awarded after passing specific examinations.

Teacher education in Portugal is now conducted in the higher education system to the level of the *Licenciatura* degree, no matter what educational level teachers are training for. Educators (teachers in pre-primary education) and teachers in basic education attend four-year courses in *Escolas Superiores de Educação* or universities to obtain a *Licenciatura* degree. Teachers in secondary education must hold a *Licenciatura* degree and follow courses that last between four and six years. Studies are completed with the award of a *Licenciatura em Ensino* or a *Licenciatura – Ramo de Formação Educacional*, depending on the issuing institution. Educators and teachers in basic and secondary education with experience in regular or special education may obtain a qualification to teach in special education. Continuous training for teachers is offered in *Centros de Formação Contínua*.

Higher education is administered by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (*Ministério da Ciência e do Ensino Superior*) with the support of the Portuguese Conference of Rectors (*Conselho de Reitores das Universidades Portuguesas - CRUP*), the Co-ordinating Council for Polytechnic Institutes (*Conselho Coordenador dos Institutos Politécnicos - CCISP*) and the Co-ordinating Council for Private and Co-operative Higher Education (*Conselho Coordenador do Ensino Superior Particular e Cooperativo - CCESPC*).

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

One major problem that Portugal has to overcome is related to the demands of a knowledge economy and the low levels of performance demonstrated by Portuguese pupils in the PISA survey of 2000. In terms of reading literacy, Portugal was below the average in the three subscales: retrieving information (455 points), interpreting texts (473), and reflecting on texts (480). The same situation occurred with regard to

mathematical literacy (454 points) and scientific literacy (459 points). 27% of fifteen-year-olds were found to be inadequately prepared for lifelong learning with regard to their reading literacy skills, 22% are expected to experience difficulties in the area of numeracy and with subsequent learning activities requiring numerical skills, and 27% of Portuguese pupils were shown to be lacking the requisite skills for productive learning in the area of scientific literacy.

Another serious problem that Portugal has to face is connected with the high number of early school-leavers between the age of eighteen and twenty-four. In fact, in a Eurostat comparative study conducted in 1999 and involving thirty-five European countries, Portugal had the highest percentage (46%) of early school-leavers with low qualifications. Viviane Reding, the European Commissioner for Education and Culture, once said: 'If Europe is to achieve the goals set by the European Councils in Lisbon and Barcelona to make our continent a competitive knowledge-based economy and a world quality reference by 2010, important far-reaching reforms must now be introduced in most of our countries.' With regard to Portugal, we would say that the country has to immediately launch deep structural reforms in order to achieve the goals set by the European Council. Otherwise we run the risk of being completely overshadowed by our competitors. On the other hand, in our opinion the demands of competitiveness should not lead to a deterministic vision dominated by liberal-economic logic. It is crucial not to isolate the subsystem from the whole system, which is the case when, for example, education and teacher education are exclusively blamed for the evils of Portuguese society.

References

- Barreto, A.: Portugal na periferia do centro: mudança social: 1960-1995. In: *Análise Social* 134 (1995), pp. 841-855.
- Carvalho, R.: *História do Ensino em Portugal. Desde a fundação da nacionalidade até ao fim do regime de Salazar-Caetano*. Lisboa 1986.
- Conselho Nacional de Educação: *Os alunos com NEE: subsídios para o sistema de educação*. Lisboa 1998.
- Correia, L. M./Martins, A. P.: *The State Of The Art Of Inclusion In Portugal*. 2000. In: http://www.isec2000.org.uk/abstracts/papers_c/correia_1.htm
- European Commission: *15 quality indicators of lifelong learning performance in Europe*. 2002. In: http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/02/971&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en#file.tmp_Ref_1
- Eurostat e Comissão Europeia: *A situação social na União Europeia*. 2002. In: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/mar/online_pt.pdf
- Grácio, R.: *Educação e processo democrático em Portugal*. Lisboa 1981.
- Instituto Nacional de Estatística – Portugal.: *Censos 2001. Resultados definitivos*. 2002. In: <http://www.ine.pt/prodserv/destaque/2002/d021021/d021021.pdf>
- Lima, L. C.: *Participação docente na gestão das escolas secundárias*. Lisboa 1988.
- OECD: *Teachers' salaries*. 2001. In: www.oecd.org/document/34/0,2340,en_2825_495609_-14152482_1_1_1_1,00.html
- OECD PISA: *Measuring Student Knowledge and Skills – The PISA 2000 Assessment of Reading, Mathematical and Scientific Literacy*. 2000. In: <http://www.pisa.oecd.org>
- Reader's Digest: *Trusted Brand*. 2004. In: <http://www.rdglobaladvertising.com/trust/>
- Silva, M. /Tamen, M. I.: *Sistema de Ensino em Portugal*. Lisboa 1981.

- Sousa, J. M.: Education Policy in Portugal: Changes and Perspectives. 2000. (= Education Policy Analysis Archives 8 (5)). In: <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n5.html>
- Sousa, J. M.: Teacher Education in Portugal: analysing changes using ATEE-RDC 19 scenario methodology. In: *European Journal for Teacher Education* 26 (2003) 1, pp. 77-86.
- Souta, L.: Educação Multicultural – do imperativo social à ausência de políticas. 2004. In: <http://www.apagina.pt/arquivo/Artigo.asp?ID=624>
- U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics (Office of Educational Research and Improvement): *Outcomes of Learning: Results From the 2000 Programme for International Student Assessment of 15-Year-Olds in Reading, Mathematics, and Science Literacy*. Washington, DC 2001.

Romania

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

As in most countries, the development of the Romanian education system is related to the evolution of the political, economic, and social sectors of public life. From an historical point of view, the education system in Romania – its curriculum, structure, and organization – has been determined by a few moments of national importance. These marked the beginning of particular historical periods, and were accompanied by important political changes. Each period is characterized by its own ideology, which informed the Romanian Constitution, the country's laws, and every sector of public life.

The first period that is relevant to the present discussion runs from 1864 to 1947. In the year 1861, the union of the two main principalities of the country (Moldova and Valahia) into a new political state under the name of Romania was internationally recognized. From 1866, Carol I of Hohenzollern ruled Romania as 'hospodar'. In 1881 he was invested with the title of King, and Romania was subsequently ruled by a king assisted by the government. The three other main principalities of the country, namely Basarabia, Northern Bucovina, and Transylvania joined the country in 1918, thereby creating the so-called great territory of Romania. The last king of Romania was Mihai of Hohenzollern. From 1940 to 1944, a military dictatorship held power under the rule of Ion Antonescu. During this period, the Socialist Party of Romanian Workers changed its name to the Romanian Communist Party. In 1945 the leader of the Communist Party became the leader of the government, and this political change led to the transformation from a monarchy into a republic. In 1947 the communist government imposed by Moscow dethroned the young king, and in 1948 Romania was proclaimed a popular republic. In the period from 1864 to 1947, compulsory education for a duration of three years was established (1864 Education Act Framework), and it had been extended to seven years by 1948 (Education Laws from 1893, 1898, 1899, 1900, and 1939). From 1925, children who could pay for their education were enrolled in private schools. Secondary education was reformed in 1898. After seven years of compulsory education, pupils could attend high school, which was divided into three strands: humanities, sciences, and a vocational strand which included specializations in agriculture, trade, and handicrafts (Bunescu 2004). Between 1864 and 1898, compulsory education aimed to provide all children with elementary intellectual abilities, especially reading and writing, and to communicate important social principles based on morality, citizenship, and national values. From 1898, new national and international tendencies, such as the extension of compulsory education, the emergence and development of the new trades, the development of sciences and industry, and especially the great union of the country in 1918, in-

formed the development of vocational education and contributed to the upward social mobility of academically successful pupils.

The second important period runs from 1948 to 1989. During this time, the Romanian Communist Party was the only party in power in the Romanian Popular Republic. A new ideology was promulgated, based on the principle of a single party that controlled all activities in the economic, cultural, and social spheres. The leader of the party was also the President of the Republic. Nicolae Ceaușescu was the leader of the party from 1965 and also the Head of State from 1967 until 1989, when he was executed during the Romanian Revolution. In the education sector a number of important changes took place: the generalization of schooling; the extension of compulsory education; the development of the entire educational process in public schools, controlled by the State; the centralization and homogenization of the curricula of the universities. The Education Act of 1948 reduced compulsory education to four school years and generalized it. Later, between 1968 and 1978, compulsory education was extended to eight and then ten school years. The political structure of society had a great influence on the education system. New social values were promoted. Marxism-Leninism was the main ideology of the ruling class, and was later transformed into communism (Bunescu 2004). The teaching of religion in schools was prohibited, and new subjects were introduced within the school curricula. The new communist ideology was promoted within society through the education system.

The third defining period runs from 1990 to the present. At the beginning of the 1990s, after the overthrow of Ceaușescu's communist regime, there was a lack of democratically determined political action. A number of important changes took place, however, such as the economic reform leading to social reconstruction and the privatization of industry, agriculture, transport, and public services. A new constitution was adopted in 1991 (revised in 2004) and an entire group of laws was derived from it. Even so, the majority of Romanians still see the State as carrying primary responsibility for the organization, administration, and control of public life. This is a consequence of people's education before 1989 (Bozgan/Lazar/ Stamatescu/Teodorescu 1999). The political transformation after 1990 also brought about important changes in the educational sector. The 1991 Constitution required that Romanian citizens enjoy equal access to all levels and types of education. A government decision made in May 1990 was the beginning of a new education system that was given its legal foundation in the Education Law of 1995. Amendments to the Education Law came into force in 1999. In addition to the introduction of this law, the new policy sought to restructure the education system to meet economic, social, and political demands and challenges. In 2003 a new amendment to the Education Law was passed. The main changes were the establishment of compulsory education from the age of six and its extension to ten school years, as in the majority of European countries. In conclusion, it can be said that Romania was among the first countries in Europe to make education free and compulsory for all children, and that the education of the country's citizens has always represented a national priority.

Reforms and innovations

As described above, numerous important socio-political changes have taken place in Romania in the last thirty years. This time span can be divided into two periods, one before 1989, when communist ideology influenced schooling, and one after 1989, when Romania again became a democratic state. It is thus necessary to consider these two periods separately, with a more detailed treatment of the second period.

The period before 1989

From the 1960s, when Nicolae Ceaușescu was the Head of State, Romania's Communist Government began to assert some independence from the Soviet Union. The dictatorship of the Ceaușescu family generated distortions in the economy, the degradation of Romanian social and moral life, and increased isolation from the international community. The dramatic decline in the standard of living in Romania and the acceleration of the social crisis were the results of the Ceaușescus' predilection for monumental building projects. Reform and innovations in the educational sector were influenced by the following factors: the system was oversized and possessed limited resources, there was a lack of alternative and intercultural education, there was excessive centralization and manifest political propaganda in the schools, and the emphasis was on paramilitary training, homogeneity, and the suppression of autonomy and individuality. These factors led to the 'polytechnicization' and politicization of schooling.

The period after 1989

The Romanian Revolution created real possibilities for important change at the national socio-economic level. With regard to educational reform, Bîrzea and Fartușnic (2003) have distinguished four distinct phases: deconstruction, stabilization, transformation, and co-ordination, each with distinctive transformations and innovations. In the deconstruction phase, corrective reforms were implemented through self-induced change. The most significant change undertaken during the 1990-91 school year was the reduction of compulsory education from ten to eight years. This change informed a number of innovations, such as discarding polytechnic education as the foundation of educational policies, ensuring university autonomy, eliminating the meaningless examinations which were formally held half way through compulsory schooling, limiting class size to thirty-six pupils per class, decreasing the teaching load to eighteen classes per week in urban areas and to sixteen classes per week in rural areas, and guaranteeing education in the languages of ethnic minorities. In the stabilization phase, the implementation of modernization policies utilizing the forces of change (1991-92) was the main tendency. The most important issues which appeared at the end of this second stage included: the absence of a coherent structure in the Romanian system, a lack of knowledge of reform alternatives, limited competence in managing change, crisis in the in-service teacher training programme, difficulties in mobilizing educators to support the reform efforts of the Ministry, and a highly centralized decision-making process. The transformation phase was characterized by the implementation of structural reforms (1993 to 1996). The first na-

tional education policy documents were prepared.¹ During this period, important problems were tackled for the first time: the issue of the quality of education was debated, and the questions of financing and infrastructure received in-depth analysis and were included in a comprehensive programme. In the co-ordination phase, structural changes aimed at systemic reform have been continued (1997 to the present). The World Bank's comprehensive reform initiative has begun to be implemented in its main points: the development of infrastructure necessary for linking institutions to national and international communication systems, the decentralization of school and university management, greater institutional autonomy, progress towards a global financing system, the redefinition of the central functions of higher education, and the establishment of joint curriculum and research units based on performance and operational compatibility criteria.²

In brief, the main areas affected by reform and innovation in education were: the legal framework; the organization, structure, and management of the education system; curricular policies; content and both teaching and learning strategies; and the objectives and main features of current and future reform initiatives. Generally speaking, educational reform was an extremely problematic process, characterized by contradictions, regressive tendencies, and a lack of real political support.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general functions of school

A few fundamental principles underlie education policies at the present moment: the provision of access to education in the context of lifelong learning; equality in the educational sector according to every individual's needs; quality of education with respect to strategies, to high professional standards on the part of both teaching staff and managers, and to teaching, learning, and evaluation methods; educational contents that respond to the major trends and challenges involved in the curriculum development process; political dialogue and partnerships; and the participation of civil society in the process of change in the field of education. These principles have been conceived in accordance with the educational ideal stated in the Romanian Education Act No. 84 from 1995, revised in 1999 and amended in 2003 (available at www.edu.ro), in terms of the desired personality traits of graduates of the school system. The strategic principles outlined in the education policy documents address both general and specific issues. They are aimed at reforming the school system by taking into consideration demographic trends and the economic and social backgrounds of students, and by respecting human rights through a programme that embraces ethnic minorities and the socially excluded.

¹ The main educational policy documents were: Education Reform in Romania, drafted by an expert team from the Institute for Educational Sciences (1993); Higher Education Reform in Romania, prepared by the Consultative Group for Higher Education and Research (1994); and The White Book of the Reform of Education in Romania, published by the Ministry of National Education (1995). All these documents are available at www.edu.ro and at www.ise.ro.

² All the data presented above is drawn from the Education Act No. 84 from 1995 and other national decrees.

Socio-economic context

Although at the beginning of the 1990s the aim of the economic reforms was to establish a market economy society by reducing the role of the State and stimulating private initiative, a series of delays and hesitations affected both the economy and institutional and legislative reform. The main factors determining this situation were: an excessive concentration on political confrontations, the division of the political parties, and a number of unfavourable external circumstances (especially the crisis in the area of ex-Yugoslavia) (Bîrzea 1999). A great influence was also exercised on the economy by movements towards the realization of certain foreign policy objectives: in 1993 Romania was admitted to the Council of Europe, in 2004 it became a NATO member, and on 25 April 2005 it will sign the Accession Treaty to the European Union.

Political reform in Romania has on the whole been more successful than economic reform. After ten years of transition, Romania is a lawful state based on the separation of powers, political pluralism, human rights, and an increasingly active civil society. The observation of the right to the cultivation of cultural and linguistic patrimonies is an important issue in light of recent conflicts in the region; in Romania, the law guarantees the right of persons belonging to national minorities to study in their mother tongue within faculties, school units, classes, and study groups³. Although in recent years extensive social legislation has been introduced regarding pensions, health insurance, and social assistance, the retrogressive character of some social policy and programmes, as well as the slow pace of measures in the areas of professional re-training and reintegration into the labour market have become most evident. In fact, there is a certain asymmetry between on the one hand more developed and more complex social policies, and on the other programmes for reintegration and professional re-training that are often poorly financed, uncoordinated, and out of step with the existing requirements of the labour market. Since November 2003, the Romanian economy has held the status of a market economy. The percentage of unemployment is about 6%, and 20% of the Romanian population earns an average wage of eighty euros per month (source: www.mfinante.ro).

Social position of the teaching profession

Because of numerous legislative and institutional changes related to the accession of Romania to the European Union on the one hand, and low salaries on the other, the teaching profession is not a very popular choice among young people. Nevertheless, the number of qualified teachers increased in the years 2001 to 2004 (source: National Institute for Statistics). This is an effect of national legislative measures such as the participation of teaching staff in the decision-making process;⁴ several national projects offering support to teachers working in education units in socially and

³ This right is stipulated in the Romanian Constitution adopted in 1991, and revised in 2004, available on www.gov.ro.

⁴ This measure was stipulated in the Law on the Transparency of Decision-Making in Public Administration, No.52, published in the Official Gazette no. 70/02.03.2003.

economically disadvantaged areas;⁵ the establishment in June 2001 of the National Centre for the Training of Pre-university Education Staff, which is dedicated to the continuous education of teachers; and one specific national regulation which contains all the rights and responsibilities of teaching staff.⁶ In an international Eurydice survey (2004) that focused on what motivated teachers to take up their profession (available on www.eurydice.org), 36% of the Romanian teachers questioned indicated 'love for children' as the main reason for their decision to join the profession. However, 35% provided no reason. In addition, 57% of teachers were only to a very small, small, or medium extent aware of the realities of teaching when they entered the profession. 50% of teachers felt they had acquired additional teaching skills within one to three years of completing initial training, and 59% of teachers felt they needed advice and guidance during their induction period.

School and the role of the family

After 1989, the involvement of families in school life in Romania increased substantially, along with their role in defining and controlling both pupils' timetables and the quality of the training and education provided by the school. Parents are now invited to co-operate with schools through discussion with teachers and school counsellors in counselling and guidance sessions, which help pupils to choose their educational and vocational careers: theoretical, vocational, or professional upper secondary school; vocational school; or the labour market. The Education Act of 1995 stipulates that a specialist has to identify speech deficiencies and to assist families in choosing a remedial programme, which is carried out in kindergartens or in specialized centres. Psycho-motor and language skills development is also monitored through specific evaluation tests. These tests are not compulsory and could be carried out by teachers. Furthermore, the County Centres for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance have competencies in educational guidance and in assisting teachers and parents to ensure the proper development of children. According to the present legislation,⁷ parents have the right to choose which school their children attend at the beginning of schooling and which modern language they learn (especially when the children are in primary education). Also at the school level, parents are required to nominate one of their number as a representative on the Management Board of each school.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

According to the Education Act No. 84/1995, there are three levels of governance in the Romanian education system: the central level, the regional level, and the institu-

⁵ The main projects are: Programme for the Rehabilitation of School Buildings (1998-2009, two stages), Programme for the Re-launch of Education in Rural Areas (2003-2006), TVET Phare Programme (2001-2005).

⁶ Law No. 128/1997 on the Statute of the Teaching Staff is available at www.edu.ro.

⁷ The Education Law (Law No. 84/1995) and its further amendments and supplements, available at www.edu.ro.

tional level, each with specific principles of organization and governance. At the central level, the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth (*Ministerul Educației, Cercetării și Tineretului*) ensures the general administration of education across the country. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity have important decision-making roles in establishing both the size of the national budget for education and the workload for teaching and non-teaching staff. At the regional level in each region of the country, a department of education (*Direcția pentru educație*) makes technical recommendations and monitors funds allocated from the local budget. The regional level of decision-making exists only for pre-university education. Higher education institutions are autonomous and are directly subordinated to the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth. They are evaluated periodically by the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation. County School Inspectorates (*Inspectorate Școlare Județene*) are the regional level administrative decision-making bodies for pre-university education. They are in charge of all schools, units for extra-curricular activities, and auxiliary units for primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

At the institutional level, there are few observations and distinctions to be made. Pre-university education institutions (*școli*) are directed by their principals. According to the law, the principals are assisted in their management duties by a school board and a management board. The School Board has a decision-making role in the field of education and training. Its members are teachers working in that school. The Principal chairs the School Board. The Management Board has a decision-making role only with respect to school management. Its members are the Principal of the school, a number of members of the School Board, the chief accountant, and representatives of pupils, parents, local authorities, and local companies. School principals for primary and lower secondary levels are appointed by the General Inspector on the basis of professional and managerial competence. Principals of upper secondary and post-secondary schools are appointed by the Minister of Education. Not all schools have their own accountancy departments. For these schools, grouped in clusters, accountancy services are provided by budgetary centres. Higher education institutions (*universități*) are autonomous, as set out in the general provisions of the Education Act. The university charter endorsed by the Senate of each higher education institution is the document regulating the institution's operation. Governing bodies are elected by secret ballot for four years according to the provisions of the university charter of each higher education institution. The superior decision-making bodies are represented by university senates and faculty councils. The students participate in the Senate and faculty councils: one fifth of the members are students. The Rector is elected by the Senate and approved by the Minister of Education. The Rector has executive and representative functions with respect to the institution's relationships to other institutions and organizations. Usually a dean manages each faculty.

Financing

Public education institutions are financed by the state budget approved by Parliament. The education budget must be at least 4% of GDP. In a law on public finance

(Law No. 10/1991), the Ministry of Education established the budget allocated to each subordinate institution until 1998. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education allocated the funds for teaching staff salaries and distributed the approved budgets to its subordinate units and to the county school inspectorates, which then distributed the funding to their subordinate units, i.e. the schools.

In order to decentralize the financing system of the education process, local public bodies have since 1999 provided the necessary funds for financing pre-university education. To this end, local authorities use funds received from the government and from the local budget and their own resources (Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, The State of the Romanian Education System, 2004). However, this new regulation is not always a source of progress. The total funds allocated from local authorities to education at this level are not accessible to the public. Because school principals are not economists, these funds are often not used properly. Real dialogue between schools and representatives of local authorities and society regarding topics other than education is not common. The positive aspect is that a policy has been established whereby all the stakeholders in schools are invited to be part of a real social partnership that also includes financial issues. Public kindergartens offering a normal programme are completely free of charge. For long programmes and weekly programmes, 50% of the costs (meals and accommodation) are covered by the State. The fees in private kindergartens are established by each institution according to legal regulations. The reform programme for higher education has included substantial changes in the area of financial administration in order to comply with the principle of university autonomy. The Ministry of Education finances higher education on the basis of the Government Ordinance No. 66/1998, which regulates the global financing of higher education institutions, allows these institutions to be autonomous in their decision-making with regard to the use made of the funds received and the creation and administration of their own resources, and gives them the right to charge tuition fees. Private schooling has a special status in with respect to financing. In this sector, funds come from sponsorships, donations, or other income-generating activities. In general terms, the financing of the public education system in Romania is centralized.

Public and private schooling

Private education is considered an alternative or a complement to public education, and accredited private educational institutions are a part of the national education system. Private educational institutions have organizational and operational autonomy and they must comply with national standards. They are organized on an exclusively non-profit-making basis and on non-discriminatory principles. Private institutions for pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and vocational education may be established upon receipt of a license from the County School Inspectorate, which is issued on the basis of an evaluation procedure. Private upper secondary and post-secondary schools may be set up on the recommendation of the School Inspectorate and with the consent of the Ministry of Education (National Ministry of Education 1995). Teaching positions in private pre-university education are filled according to the provisions in the Statute on Teaching Staff regarding staff selection, recruitment,

deployment, and dismissal. The educational plans and curricula of private educational institutions are approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth. At present, 95.6% of all pupils attend public schools funded by the State. Private educational establishments administered and organized by non-governmental organizations are more common at the higher education level (source: Eurydice 2004). Private higher education institutions are established and operate according to the provisions of the Education Act; they have the same level of autonomy and the same evaluation and accreditation criteria, standards, and procedures as public higher education institutions. A number of private alternative institutions also exist (Waldorf, Montessori, Step by Step, Jena Plan, and Freinet schools). These educational alternatives are available all over the country and at all levels of instruction.

General standards of the school education system

In recent years, important education policy documents have been published regarding national interests, specialist opinions, and European perspectives and initiatives. According to these documents, the aims of the reform of compulsory education are to improve students' competencies in the following areas: basic skills (communication, writing, reading, and arithmetic), ITC skills, entrepreneurial abilities, foreign languages, civic awareness, democratic citizenship, critical thinking, adaptability to new contexts, team-work skills, and interest in education and training (National Ministry of Education 1995). To date, the major outcomes of reform in the pre-university education system include: the development of a new, consistent national curriculum, structured on the basis of a unitary educational philosophy and a common set of principles and standards, and designed according to a new methodology; the elaboration of a single structure for the presentation of school curricula so as to enable the set objectives to be correctly understood and accomplished; the encouragement of an innovatory mindset among teachers, so that they value new teaching approaches and take action to disseminate them; and an increase in the awareness of the need for a new teaching rationale that would turn the 'teacher-centred school' into a 'student-centred school'. Later documents relating to the educational reform process⁸ took into consideration the strategic objectives formulated at the European level for 2001 to 2010, as well as the objectives and priorities developed by several international bodies such as the OECD, World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF.

As mentioned above, the main education policy document for the pre-university sector is the national curriculum. It consists of the national curriculum frameworks, the subjects curricula, and the methodological guides for teaching individual subjects. The national curriculum frameworks are structured on the basis of seven curricular areas which were designated according to epistemological and psycho-pedagogical criteria: language and communication, mathematics and natural sciences, humankind and society, arts, physical education and sports, technologies, and counselling and professional orientation. They are the same for both compulsory schooling and upper secondary education, but their weighting in each key stage and grade

⁸ The main documents are: Development Strategy for Pre-university Education from 2001 to 2004 and Strategy for Romanian Higher Education from 2002 to 2004, available at www.edu.ro.

is variable. The principles⁹ underlying the curriculum frameworks explain the relationships between the philosophy of education pillars and their implementation at the school level. Subject curricula contain attainment targets, reference objectives, learning syllabi and curricular standards of achievement for grades 1 to 8, and general competencies, specific competencies, and relevant correlated syllabi, values, and attitudes for grades 9 to 12/13. There has been a transition from curricula focusing on objectives characterized by a certain degree of generality, impossible to avoid in the case of a diverse, but not yet specialized school population, to curricula which are competence-centred, more practical, and easier to evaluate in the context of pupils' integration into society and especially professional life (The National Curriculum 2001). In the subject curricula, the curricular standards of achievement for compulsory education are set out. These are synthetic statements capable of indicating the degree to which pupils have met the curricular objectives, and are conceived as performance specifications referring to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes set forth in the curriculum. They are established for each subject and level of education, and they represent a common and equivalent reference system for all pupils at the end of a school level. The framework education plans developed for the pre-university sector are centred upon the following components: grades 1 to 8 – common trunk and school-based curriculum, and grades 9 to 12/13 – common trunk, differentiated curriculum, and school-based curriculum/locally developed curriculum.¹⁰ No single national policy document exists for the higher education level. On the basis of the principle of university autonomy, which is grounded in the Education Act No. 84/1995, each university possesses a university charter that includes the university's mission, objectives, organizational values and principles, and curriculum framework and plans, as well as the rights and responsibilities of university teaching staff.

Quality management

Enhancing the quality of education and training is one of the major priorities of the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth. The most efficient means of ensuring quality of education is the national adoption of the European framework for quality assurance. Based on international and national opinion regarding this issue, a number of measures were undertaken within the pre-university education framework, focusing on the following areas: improving teaching, learning, and evaluation methods and strategies; investing in the development of the educational infrastructure; developing and improving the quality of the basic and on-going training of teaching staff and managers; and developing professional training for school managers with a view to monitoring and improving the quality of education provided by

⁹ The principles of the curriculum frameworks are as follows: decentralization and flexibility; reduction of the formal curriculum requirements in pupils' timetables; effectiveness; compatibility of Romanian pre-university education with European quality standards; cultural selection and hierarchy; functionality; coherence; equal opportunities; and links with social issues. (Ministry of Education and Research: The National Curriculum, 2001)

¹⁰ An explanation of these terms and other details related to the framework education plans are presented in the next section.

the education units that they co-ordinate. In the field of higher education, the Diploma Supplement was introduced within universities, issued upon the request of graduates, as a significant document to support educational mobility and the recognition of qualifications. With respect to quality assurance in higher education, Romania has joined the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the network agencies for quality assurance in higher education for Central and Eastern Europe. It also intends to participate as a full member in the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. At the national level, there is the intention to set up the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education under the co-ordination of the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth. Its purpose will be to develop and implement the national framework for quality assurance in the national education system.¹¹

Support systems

In Romania special attention to the issues of education and social inclusion have arisen from the following paradigmatic changes in education policy: the shift from reproductive to problem-solving education, the reduction in learning during class and in the weight of 'parallel education' (private coaching) in school achievement, the reform of the exam structure through a reduction in the number of exams, and the introduction of formative evaluation (Ministry of Education and Research 1999). In this context, several measures have been introduced affecting all categories of pupils on the one hand, and the main vulnerable groups on the other. With respect to the former, the government, in partnership with the responsible Ministry and with other governmental and non-governmental organizations, has developed educational programmes related to computerized education,¹² continuing education,¹³ distance learning,¹⁴ and school-community partnerships.¹⁵ Among the measures concerning the education of disadvantaged pupils are: internally and externally funded pro-

¹¹ With respect to quality assurance in education, one project is presented on the website of the national ministry – www.edu.ro; the infrastructure required for quality assurance in education that the new project aims to establish covers the national, county, and institutional levels.

¹² The computerization of education has been realized by implementing a programme of equipping schools and high schools with computers, by extending the educational network ROEDUNET, and by implementing a single national AeL (Advanced e-Learning) platform which can be accessed at the high school level to teach and learn certain contents of certain subjects.

¹³ At the national level, direct measures have been taken that are aimed at the causes and effects of non-participation in education. The 'Second Chance through Education' programme is aimed at providing young people who have left school with opportunities to resume education and acquire minimum professional skills.

¹⁴ This type of learning is available only at the high school, post-secondary, vocational school, college, and university levels.

¹⁵ As a concrete result of the discussion between Emma Nicholson and a representative of the Romanian government in 2003, the National Strategy for Community Action programme was conceived; its scope is to develop community activities involving volunteers from non-governmental organizations, high schools, and the Romanian Orthodox Church on the one hand, and orphan children from special institutions and children with disabilities on the other. Other programmes include: the National Programme for Health Education, the National Programme for Civic Education, and the National Programme for Environmental Education within the Pre-university Education System. Details of all these programmes are available at www.edu.ro.

grammes for the improvement of education in rural areas,¹⁶ programmes to stimulate the participation in education of Romany children and adolescents,¹⁷ the National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Promotion Plan (2002 to 2012), and the National Action Plan for Employment (2004 to 2005). It is also important to mention a number of national documents whose support programmes include specific educational measures: the Development Strategy for Pre-university Education, the Strategy for Romanian Higher Education, and the National Plan for Development 2004 to 2006, which is related to human resources.

The current school system

General structure: overview

In order to adjust the education process to social requirements and to the conditions of accession to the European Union, significant changes¹⁸ in structure, organization, and management took place within the Romanian education system. The main changes introduced by Law No. 268/2003, which amended and supplemented the Education Act No. 84/1995 concerned: extending the duration of compulsory schooling to ten years; reducing the age at which compulsory education begins to six; establishing the possible paths for pursuing compulsory schooling after the first eight grades, i.e. at the junior high school level or in schools of arts and crafts; changing the structure of upper secondary education to two cycles, namely a junior cycle (two years) at the junior secondary level and a senior cycle (two to three years) at the senior secondary level; changing the institutional bodies related to basic vocational training by replacing vocational schools and apprenticeship schools with schools of arts and crafts; improving quality at all levels of education; and developing a path of gradual specialization within basic vocational training, beginning at the level of junior upper secondary education within the schools of arts and crafts providing level 1 vocational qualification, and progressing to studies at the senior upper secondary level through the addition of one year of supplementary studies (available at www.edu.ro). The latter would play a two-fold role: to provide higher vocational qualification, and to provide the basis required for the pursuit of studies in the senior upper secondary cycle. These changes were implemented from the 2003-04 school year onwards. The curriculum framework for the pre-university level, elaborated by the Ministry, allows schools to design their own timetables schemes and consists of: grades 1 to 8 – common trunk (CT) and a school-based curriculum (SbC) representing a low percentage of the total; grades 9 to 10 – a) for regular high school classes, CT 75-80%, differentiated curriculum (DC) 15-20%, and SbC 5%, and b)

¹⁶ The most important programmes are the Programme for the Rehabilitation of School Buildings and the Programme for Education in Rural Areas, both of which are co-financed by the government of Romania and the World Bank.

¹⁷ A sectoral strategy – the Strategy for Stimulating the Participation of Romany Children and Young People in Education – was conceived within the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Social and Economic Living Standards of the Romany Population, elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Research in collaboration with the Institute for Educational Sciences in 2002.

¹⁸ In the appendix we present a schematic description of the Romanian education system in accordance with ISCED 1997.

for the schools of arts and crafts, CT 30%, CD 40%, and the locally developed curriculum (LDC) 30%; grades 11 to 12/13 – CT 50-60%, CD 30-35%, and SbC/LDC 10-20%. Although the structure of the education system has changed through the reform of the curriculum and the assessment process, the school year structure at all education levels has remained the same: two semesters providing thirty-six weeks of teaching over 179 days, one fixed summer holiday, and two flexible holidays, namely the winter and the spring holidays covering the Christmas and Easter holidays. The Romanian education system includes at all levels both institutions in which teaching is carried out in the Romanian language, and institutions where teaching is in the languages of the national minorities.

Pre-primary education

This type of education is provided in kindergartens (*gradinite*), most of which are public. Attendance is optional, except for the last year which is compulsory and free of charge. Both public and private kindergartens provide educational activities that are organized into normal programmes (five hours per day), long programmes (ten hours per day), and weekly programmes (five days per week). Pre-primary classes are organized according to the following age groups: the lower class (three to four years old), the middle class (four to five years old), and the upper class (five to six years old). They contain an average of fifteen pupils (minimum of ten, maximum of twenty). In localities where there are a low number of pupils (e.g. in rural areas), classes can be formed without taking age groups into account. Kindergartens are in most cases under the remit of general schools (years 1 to 4 or years 1 to 8). Teachers in kindergartens are educators (*educatori*), who have completed five years of study in pedagogical high schools, or schoolmasters (*institutori*), who are teachers trained in teacher training university colleges in either a two-year course (for those who attended a pedagogical high school) or a three-year course (for those who attended another type of high school).

The pre-primary curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research 2001) covers the following educational areas: communication and language, mathematics, aesthetic education, environmental education, psycho-motor skills, and civic education. The daily activities (four hours per day) are determined by the teaching staff and consist of common compulsory activities performed by the whole group and non-compulsory activities such as games, outdoor activities, and compensatory and complementary activities. At the present time no assessment of pupils is undertaken in pre-primary education, although their mental and physical development is monitored.

Primary education

There are no entrance requirements for the enrolment of children in schools (*școli*) of primary education. According to the Education Law No. 268/2003, at the request of their parents or legal guardians children can start school at the age of six or seven, providing they have reached an appropriate stage of physical and mental development. In regions with a low number of pupils, mostly in rural areas, classes may have fewer pupils; as a result teachers work with more than one class simultane-

ously. Teachers in primary education are either educators (*învățători*), who have completed five years of study in pedagogical high schools, or schoolmasters (*instituteori*).

The main objective of the primary education curriculum¹⁹ is to provide an all-round education. The following areas are given special attention: scientific knowledge about the world and human beings; the environment and environmental protection; knowledge of the national language and, beginning in the third year, a foreign language; knowledge of mathematics; knowledge of history and civics; artistic education; the development of aesthetic sense; sports and physical education; health education; knowledge of human and children's rights; and the development of democratic behaviour. Teaching methods are not imposed by official regulations, but there are some recommendations concerning alternative textbooks, homework, and the use of ICT for didactic purposes. In regions with a low number of pupils (especially in rural areas), primary school teachers have to provide simultaneous teaching to two or more classes. The teacher may also provide differentiated teaching to small groups of highly gifted pupils. Starting in the school year 1998-99, a new evaluation system was implemented in primary education using the following scale of performance: very good, good, sufficient, insufficient. Pupils are assessed continuously by the class teacher. Primary schools organize compulsory summative assessments at the end of each semester. There are also assessments at regular intervals in the form of school tests, especially in basic subjects. In March of the school year 2004-05, the Ministry will organize one national examination for pupils in the fourth grade in order to obtain a significant sample for analysis.

Lower secondary education, first phase

There are no entrance requirements and school attendance is compulsory. Lower secondary school teachers (*profesori*) have a diploma gained through specialized short- or long-term higher education, depending on the subject taught. Every subject in lower secondary education is taught by specialist teachers.²⁰ Counselling and vocational orientation are carried out by one of the class teachers, who is also responsible for co-ordinating the educational activities of the class and maintaining relations with parents.²¹

The current main objectives of the general education curriculum are: to transmit knowledge and instil respect for our cultural and historical heritage; to develop basic skills and working methods; to develop communication skills in a foreign language; to promote personal development; to motivate pupils to continue learning; to stimulate pupils' creativity and initiative; and to prepare pupils for adult life. Pupils are continuously assessed by their teachers. In addition, a compulsory summative assessment is undertaken at the end of each semester. Written tests, especially in basic

¹⁹ Source: Ministry of Education and Research, The National Curriculum, Bucharest 2001.

²⁰ There are several exceptions with regard to teachers' specialization and training: technological education is taught by engineers, practical training is supervised by instructors, and agriculture is taught by biology teachers.

²¹ The County Centres for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance and the Information and Career Counseling Centres provide psycho-pedagogical assistance and information on careers and the labour market.

subjects, are held in each assessment session. The results of the various assessments carried out during the semester are taken into account in the final mark awarded at the end of each semester. The first phase of lower secondary education ends with a national examination organized on the basis of the methodology developed by the Ministry. At the end of the school year 2004-05, pupils will receive a final mark awarded as follows: 50% based on the mean of the academic results of all four school years, and 50% based on the final national tests in three subjects, namely Romanian language and literature, mathematics, and one of Romanian geography or Romanian history. Pupils from minority groups who have studied in the language of one of the national minorities will also sit one final national test in this subject. Pupils will pass to the next class if at the end of the school year they obtain for each subject a mark at least equivalent to a 5 (on a scale from 1 to 10); if they fail they will have to repeat the school year. At the end of general education, all pupils will receive a certificate that confirms their graduation and permits admission to the next educational phase.

Lower secondary education, second phase

The second phase of lower secondary education provides general, specialized, or vocational courses (two years).²² At this level, pupils may choose to continue their education either in the lower cycle of high school (*liceu*), which offers comprehensive education and includes pre-specialization elements that prepare pupils for studies in upper secondary education, or in arts and crafts schools (*școli de arte și meserii*), which provide vocational education in various occupational domains that leads to employment; in this case graduates must complete a supplementary year before entering upper secondary education. This structure of the second phase of lower secondary education will be available from the 2004-05 school year. The teaching process is organized by subject, and teachers are free to recommend one of several alternative textbooks.

The curriculum framework includes: the common trunk, which focuses on key skills and comprises a range of common subjects, compulsory for all pupils, that are assigned the same number of hours in all profiles, majors, and specializations within one given type of education; the differentiated curriculum, which includes a series of subjects established at the central level that are compulsory for all pupils enrolled in a given profile and that are assigned a specific number of hours differentiated according to the different profiles of general, specialized, and vocational courses; the school-based curriculum for the lower cycle of high school, which may include either subjects from the common trunk chosen for thorough study by pupils with low academic results, or subjects from the common trunk chosen for intensive study by pupils with very good academic results, or other subjects outside of the CT or DC; and the locally developed curriculum for arts and crafts schools, which consists of subjects that are specific to every school unit and that correspond to the pupils' spe-

²² In high school education, the term general education refers to academic education profiles – humanities, sciences, and social sciences; the term specialized education refers to certain profiles such as pedagogical schools, military schools, theological seminars, and schools of arts; the term vocational education refers to the technological profile.

cific learning needs and interests. Graduates of the lower phase of lower secondary education are awarded a graduation certificate, a portfolio for further education, and, on request, a copy of the record containing the marks received during compulsory education.

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education includes on the one hand the supplementary year for pupils who graduated from an arts and crafts school, and who want to acquire a higher vocational qualification, and on the other the last two or three high school classes for pupils who continue their high school education in a particular profile.

The Curriculum. For the supplementary year, the curriculum has been designed according to the new structure of the education system and will be implemented in the 2005-06 school year. For the last classes of high school the curriculum has the same structure as in the first classes, presented above, with differences in terms of the percentage of the number of hours allocated to each component. Graduates of the supplementary year are awarded a graduation certificate, a portfolio, and a copy of their academic record. In addition, after taking a vocational examination, they obtain a level 2 vocational qualification certificate; with these two documents they may attend upper secondary education. At the end of upper secondary education there is a final examination (*examen de bacalaureat*) leading to a diploma (*diploma de bacalaureat*) that allows pupils to sit the entrance examination for higher education.

Special education schools

The policy of integration is currently being developed in Romania. Most children with special education needs attend corresponding special schools. The structure of special education in these schools is very similar to that of mainstream education.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Post-secondary education

At this level of education, only the medical and some private post-secondary schools require a baccalaureate diploma; all post-secondary schools hold an entrance examination. This level of education is organized by the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, sometimes at the request of local companies. Consequently, the curriculum and the qualification frameworks are established by these two ministries. The duration of study is one to three years, depending on the profile of the school, and is provided by independent institutions or institutions integrated into combined groups of schools belonging to the public or private sectors. The courses lead to employment. The teachers hold a diploma gained through specialized short- or long-term higher education, depending on the subject they teach, and the instructors for practical activities (*instructori*) must hold at least a post-high school education leaving certificate. The curriculum includes a general and a specialized part. Practical training accounts for about 40% of the course in the first years of study and 50-60% in the last year. Post-high school

education concludes with a final examination (*examen de absolvire*) leading to a leaving certificate (*certificat de absolvire*).

Higher education

Higher education reform aims to facilitate access to higher education studies, to improve the quality of education and of scientific research, to decentralize academic and financial management, and to encourage academic and social partnership. (Ministry of Education, Research and Youth 2004b). Currently, higher education comprises short-term courses for two to three years in university colleges (*colegii universitare*) and long-term courses for four to six years in universities (*universități*) and academies (*academii*); several laws²³ have been passed to organize and develop the entire sector. In line with the Bologna process, beginning with the 2005-06 school year changes stipulated by a number of new laws²⁴ will be implemented: a degree structure based on three main cycles; the ECTS system, aimed at the generalization of courses and improved comparability between universities; the development of education policies related to e-Learning; and the facilitation of student and teacher mobility.

Curricula, examination procedures, and in-service training possibilities are stipulated in university charters, according to the principle of university autonomy (Education Act No. 84/1995). Admission is based on the baccalaureate diploma and on entrance examinations at the institutional level. Currently, students who graduate from university colleges are awarded a college qualification (*diploma de absolvire*) and can continue their studies in long-term higher education establishments, while students who graduate from universities are awarded a bachelor's diploma (*diploma de licență*). As of the 2005-06 academic year, university colleges will be incorporated into the first cycle of study at higher education level, according to the new laws.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The Romanian education system is in a state of continuous change and adaptation, in accordance with the main conditions of accession to the European Union, the educational initiatives and priorities of international and national governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the characteristics and challenges of the 'knowledge society'. A very important issue that points to future measures within the Romanian education system is the country's participation in international studies and

²³ The specific legislation consists of: the Education Law (No. 84/1995) with its further amendments and supplements, the Statute of Teaching Staff (Law No. 28/1997) with its further amendments and supplements, and the Law of Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Recognition of Diplomas (Law No. 88/1993). A particular characteristic is that the Statute of Teaching Staff (Law No. 28/1997, available at www.edu.ro) stipulates that university teaching staff have to attend one of the following forms of in-service training: national or international research programmes, specialization, or post-graduate courses.

²⁴ The new legislation includes: the Law on the Organization of University Studies, No. 288/2004, the Law on the Organization of the Universities' Consortium, No. 287/2004, and other recent regulations elaborated in 2005 regarding university profiles (available at www.edu.ro).

agreements concerning pupils, students, and teaching staff. A series of legislative²⁵ and practical measures²⁶ were introduced in response to the scores obtained by Romanian pupils in the PISA²⁷ study. However, although the set of indicators provided by PISA and the publications of the OECD²⁸ create the possibility of comparing education systems, these indicators only present educational situations and pupils' performances; they do not deal with causative aspects. Comparison can thus only be based on the analysis of socio-economic and educational factors at the state level. For this reason, it is still problematic to refer to one set of indicators, or to draw a comparison between specific educational situations.

Looking at the amendments and supplements provided by recent legislation, and the development of international and national educational programmes and research projects,²⁹ it can be seen that education quality assurance has become a national priority. Specific initiatives in this direction include: the new approach to the national curriculum, educational policy documents generating a better correlation between high school education and the university studies – students who graduate from secondary education will conceive one portfolio attesting their level of education within the context of lifelong learning, the possibility for high school pupils to obtain a qualification certificate in ICT, and one law regarding the quality maintenance of the education process. Even so, there are issues and challenges that our education system will have to face in the future: demographic decline, youth migration to more developed countries and the resulting decrease in the number of pupils and students, an aging population and the need to develop adult education, compliance with the conditions of the Lisbon Strategy of 2000, and the increased exploitation of existing limited resources.

References*

- Birzea, C./Fartusnic, C.: Reforming the Romanian System of Education. In: Polyzoï, E./Fullan, M./Anchan, J. P. (Eds): *Change Forces in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*. London; New York 2003. (In English)
- Bozgan, O./Lazar, L./Stamatescu, M./Teodorescu, B.: *History of Romanians – Handbook for the 7th form*. Bucharest 1999. (In Romanian)

²⁵ In recent years, important changes related to the Statute of Teaching Staff (Law no. 28/1997) have taken place, including the new teaching staff positions of mentor, tutor, and documentary teacher. Many innovations were determined by the modification to the Education Act No. 84/1995 by the Law No. 268/2003 – all the legislation is available at www.edu.ro.

²⁶ The development of several educational programmes that comprise interdisciplinary and cross-curricular activities in civic education, education for health, and the ICT domain.

²⁷ According to the PISA Report, Bucharest, 2002, which describes achievements in three areas of educational activity, namely reading literacy, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy, Romania occupied rank thirty-four out of forty-two participating states.

²⁸ The annual report of the OECD, *Education at a Glance*, presents a set of indicators within education systems.

²⁹ Beginning with the school year 2004-05, several priorities included in the self-evaluation guide for providers of vocational training, which is part of the European framework, will be implemented in twenty-two school units (*Quality and Equity in the Romanian Education System, 2004*).

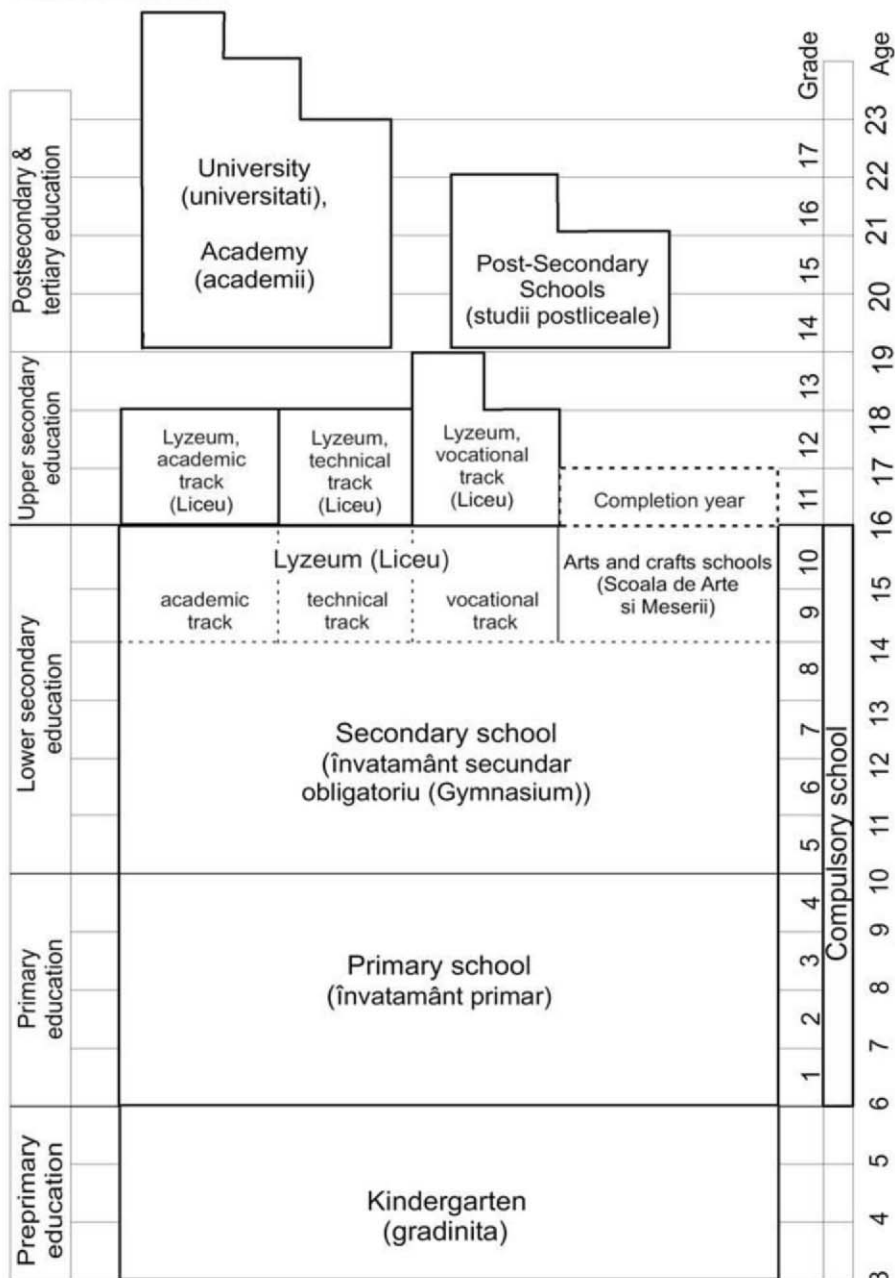
* All the Romanian legislation and the national curriculum regulations and frameworks are available at www.edu.ro.

- Bunescu, Gh. (coord.) (Institute for Education Sciences): The Anthology of the Romanian Education Laws. Bucharest 2004. (In Romanian)
- Eurydice: Romania. Summary Sheets on Education Systems in Europe. Brussel 2004.
- Eurydice: Romania – 2003. Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe. Brussels 2004.
- Eurydice: The teaching profession in Europe: profile, trends and concerns. Report I: Initial training and transition to working life. General lower secondary education. Key Topics in Education in Europe. Vol. 3. Brussels 2004.
- Institute for Educational Sciences: The Extension of the Compulsory Education. Analysis of the Implementation Conditions. Bucharest 2004.
- Ministry of Education and Research: Romania: Education for All – country report. Bucharest 1999.
- Ministry of Education and Research, National Curriculum Council: The New National Curriculum. Bucharest 2000.
- Ministry of Education and Research: The National Curriculum Framework for Pre-university Education. Bucharest 2001.
- Ministry of Education, Research and Youth: The development strategy of Romanian pre-university education, defined for the period 2001-2004. Forecasting until 2010. Bucharest 2002.
- Ministry of Education, Research and Youth: The development strategy of Romanian higher education, defined for the period 2002-2010. Bucharest 2003.
- Ministry of Education, Research and Youth: The Dimensions of Education for the National Minorities in Romania. General Directorate for Education in the Languages of National Minorities and Access to Education. Jubilee edition 1993-2003. Bucharest 2003.
- Ministry of Education, Research and Youth: The State of the Romanian Education System. Bucharest 2004a.
- Ministry of Education, Research and Youth: Country Report – European Conference of the Ministers of Education, Berlin. Bucharest 2004b.
- Ministry of Education, Research and Youth: Quality and Equity in the Romanian Education System. Bucharest 2004c.
- National Ministry of Education: Education Law 84. Bucharest 1995.
- National Ministry of Education: Statute of Teaching Staff no.28. Bucharest 1997.
- Vlăsceanu., L.: Școala la răscruce – studiu de impact. Iassy 2002.

The majority of the documents are available online on the following sites:

www.edu.ro
www.mfinante.ro
www.mie.ro
www.ise.ro
www.eurydice.org

Romania



Russian Federation

History of the school system

In Russia the education system, and thus the school system, has been shaped by a recurrent tension rooted in the country's history. Situated on the periphery of both Europe and Asia, the Tsarist Empire and later the Soviet Union had at their command a population and material resources that enabled them to establish themselves as a world power. The education system was one of the factors involved in the process of extending this power, and was employed to achieve this end. However, until the end of Tsarist rule, the modernization of the country lagged behind that of the progressive countries of the 'West'. The example that these countries set, along with the use that Russia made of specialist workers from abroad, has a long tradition. Until the present day, Russia has been shaped by a tension, or rather an oscillation, between opening the country up to the wider world and sealing it off, between basing its course on 'Western' or global concepts and taking steps towards an independent and often dynamic modernization of its own. On the international stage, the development of the school system, in particular, gave cause for surprised admiration in the decade following the Revolution. In the sixties, after the sputnik shock, the Soviet education system was regarded as a central area for overtaking the West in the race between the two systems.

The vast geographical dimensions of the country, the coexistence of a great diversity in the economic stages reached by its inhabitants, and its variety of ethnic groups and nations have historically presented a huge challenge to the education system, confronting it with vastly heterogeneous tasks. This explains the traditional tendency towards a gap between scientific and cultural excellence which has been acknowledged the world over, and the level of education of the population in general, a gap which has widened again since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the country's historical development, the expansion of the universities and the sciences was allotted first place, the chief aim being to provide the State with officials and soldiers, and the country with a qualified workforce. Before a secondary school system based on a division of the social classes became more widespread, the instruction of the next generation had been limited to the restricted group of the nobility, who were tutored at home. The processes in the course of which a differentiated system of vocational education was set up for the majority of the previously agrarian population and for the growing number of industrial workers were not set in motion until the last decades of the nineteenth century. After the October Revolution, Bolsheviks made the education system one of the priorities among the problems left by the Tsarist era: the abolition of widespread illiteracy was to be pursued, the emancipation of national minorities was to be encouraged by the development of their languages and cultures, and measures were to be taken to educate a qualified workforce

for the centrally planned process of industrialization. All this was to be undertaken at a speed and to an extent previously unheard of. The general education and vocational school systems became an area for comprehensive experiments during the first decade after the Revolution. The basic principles of the international education reform movement were mixed together with revolutionary concepts of linking school and society, learning and working, general and vocational education, and instruction and production. Based on a combination of these ideas, the aim was to create the 'new man' along the lines of the Soviet branch of Marxism. In the course of an extraordinary development of national cultures, success was achieved in gradually reducing illiteracy and in enabling instruction to be given to a large number of nationalities in their own languages, using their own national script for the first time.

With the establishment of Stalinism at the beginning of the 1930s, the education system increasingly became an executive tool of a central, hierarchical, and, in the long run, totalitarian government. At the same time, it was placed completely at the disposal of the economic management of the planned economy. In the school system, a return to an authoritarian and uniform school took place, with strict control over contents and ideology, which were embedded in rote learning. This likewise saw the beginning of a long period of isolation from international developments. To start with, the length of compulsory schooling was limited to four years in response to the demands of social reality; it was then gradually extended in repeated attempts at reform until it was eventually possible, after the Second World War, to introduce seven years of compulsory schooling. However, before the break-up of the Soviet Union it was not possible to fully extend it to ten years or, with the emphasis on polytechnical and vocational education under Khrushchov, to eleven years, nor to achieve the aim of enabling all school leavers to acquire a secondary school leaving certificate.

As *perestroika* took root, the fundamental ideas of the Soviet school system and the principles of its pedagogy and educational policies were no longer unquestioningly accepted. For decades the educational ideas of the early Soviet period, as well as of pre-revolutionary Russia and modern international reformers, had been a taboo subject. However, as debate became more open, Soviet pedagogy was publicly condemned as 'education from the military barracks', 'education without children', and 'levelling down'. Blame for the mistakes made was directed at the way contents had been influenced by the ideological dictates of the monolithic Communist Unity Party and by the requirements of an economy and employment sector dominated by the so-called 'military-industrial complex' (*voenno-promyshlennyi kompleks*). Calls now arose for the removal of ideology from education, for the introduction of a more humane approach, and for the humanities to be stressed rather than the natural sciences and technology. In addition, the concept of individualization was introduced, meaning that the all-round development of a person's character was to be encouraged along with the fostering of his or her special skills and gifts. These were to grow in newly developed educational programmes offering a range of differentiated contents and individual choice. The state monopoly of the school system was

broken down, and schools were to fulfil a service function directed towards the interests of an increasingly pluralistic civil society.

Political and socio-cultural context of the current school system

The Russian Federation, which in 1991 came into being as the legal successor to the Soviet Union, comprises three quarters of the former Soviets' territories and 143.1 million inhabitants (the figure applies to 2003 after a continuing drop in the birth rate and a general decrease in the size of the population). Over 70% of its inhabitants live in towns and cities, and the work of rural schools is hampered by the scattered settlement structure. Some four fifths of the Federation's inhabitants considered themselves Russian after the period of transition, in contrast to just over 50% of the population of the USSR. The newly drawn boundaries and the resulting diverse migrational trends also affected the education system and schools of the young, non-Russian national states, a fact which applied most particularly to their 25 million Russian or Russian-speaking inhabitants, many of whom have since resettled in Russia. Educational matters are of great importance for the co-operation between the Russian Federation and the new independent states adjoining it, both within the CIS (Community of Independent States) and in the Baltic states, many of which for centuries belonged to the Tsarist empire. Russia's political transition took place under the influence of a newly formulated liberal and democratic paradigm which embraced the construction of a democratic and federal state and the establishment of a civil society along Western lines. The economic system which was introduced was the free market, and elements of the market economy entered social spheres and the education system. Educational policy-making was faced with the task of guaranteeing a political, legal, and organizational 'unified education space' beyond the boundaries of the federal territories. It also had to provide common contents, and to compensate for regional and social disparities.

Within the structure of the education system of the Russian federation as a whole, the school system was allotted a key function. This likewise applied to the general education (comprehensive) school, the traditional *srednyaya shkola*, as the school for the majority of the population was called. Since the beginning of *perestroika*, one of the central points of departure for the reform of the education system has been the refocusing of the school's tasks within the system as a whole, including the issues of its age range and thus of its contents, the qualifications it provides, and the ensuing right to enter institutions of further education. The process of realizing these reforms has been through several phases already, and has only been partially successful. The general education school was persistent, however, in implementing unfamiliar neo-liberal principles of governance and finance. This helped it to retain its position, in contrast to the pre-school sector and vocational schools, which suffered a drastic drop in numbers. However, in general terms the State has been unable to maintain the standards of school instruction, care, and welfare to which the population was previously accustomed, and in the institutions' struggle to survive, self-organization 'from below' has become the norm. On the one hand, independent behaviour was to a certain extent fostered by the 1992 Education Act, with its con-

cept of governance based mainly on the provision of rules and regulations; on the other hand, the scope of the State proved slight when it came to influencing the contents of diverse regional systems or to guaranteeing equality of educational standards, fairness in education, and the social balance of the school system.

The great diversity in the political, economic, and social situation in the regions has since resulted in considerable material differences. It has proved impossible to prevent the individual territories setting their own priorities for regional school and education policies, and instrumentalizing them in favour of ethnic and national special interests.

While the tertiary sector, i.e. the field of higher education, was one of the trailblazers for educational reform under the conditions of the new market economy, and now has an influential body of actors in the Association of University Chancellors, the general education schools remained to a very large degree the object of state regulation and control. The resistance of teachers and head teachers has been expressed in repeated strike action, although this has been basically directed towards improving teachers' salaries and the social position of the teaching profession, rather than towards the basic problems of school policies and educational contents. Among the experts there has been no settlement of the old controversy between the adherents of a technocratic course of modernization and the supporters of traditional, patriotic values. This controversy has been blocking change in the school system for over a decade. Nonetheless, it has hardly affected the educational aspirations of the new middle class, which is still prepared to provide quite considerable financial backing for the advancement of its children in the education system. This willingness has been exploited by a number of head teachers through the frequent imposition on parents of various fees. It has also become more and more difficult to gain university admission without recourse to expensive tutoring, bribery, or other forms of corruption, a situation which has increasingly challenged the State to regain the necessary authority for controlling and monitoring the school system.

With Putin's accession to office (1999-2000) and a newly elaborated concept for modernizing the Russian education system, an attempt was made to rectify the rampant growth of defects in both contents and the financial and legal state of affairs in the school system. The projected modernization of the school system was linked to the task of contributing to the strengthening of the Russian economy within a globalized world, and to counteracting the existing trend towards disintegration in the areas of political, economic, social, and ethnic-national affairs. As far as educational funding was concerned, the 'Western' models of indirect control by means of competition and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and achievement levels of schools and institutions of higher education were to be systematically introduced as soon as they had been adequately tested – with the financial assistance of the World Bank. This evaluation applied to per capita funding, the competition among educational institutions for users, education vouchers and loans, the combination of state and private funding, an acceptable agreement on the services to be supplied for the 'customer', and quality checks. With regard to ideological contents, the ideas of national patriotism were employed to a considerable degree, including the demand for the retention of the strong points of the Soviet Union's education system as one

of the best in the world. There is a permanent tension in the school system between the traditional egalitarian approach and the demands to expand educational provision for an elite (*élitnoe obrazovanie*). This has given rise to an on-going public debate. It is true that, following the lifting of the traditional prohibition, the number of the new types of school is not much higher than that of elite state schools during the late phase of Soviet schooling. In fact, at merely one per cent of all schools, the newly introduced private schools have only reached a very thin segment of the population. Issues that are extremely controversial, however, are the increasing reduction of school options that used to be free of charge, and the fact that admission to higher education, particularly to the universities, now depends to a large extent on the social and economic standing of the family. In addition, the school system in particular is faced to a great degree with many aspects of social exclusion that go hand in hand with the growing poverty of large sections of the population. Because of rapid changes in society, many families find it increasingly difficult to fulfil their previous function of bringing up children. The general health of school children has deteriorated considerably and the number of social orphans, homeless young people, and children suffering neglect has increased – a situation that in the past was virtually unknown. There has also been a growth in the number of young criminals and drug addicts.

In politics and public debate, these issues have thrust into the background the question as to how the school system can react more vigorously to the ethnic and national diversity of the country and to immigration; stricter visa and residence regulations were intended to ease the problem. Against the background of the conflict in Chechenya and growing terrorist activities in the country, there has been an obvious spread of xenophobia. Nonetheless, in view of the number of pupils who are refugees or were forced to resettle, individual teachers have tried to set a good example. Reports in the media claim that children of the growing number of people living illegally in Russia – immigrants who do not have Russian nationality and often do not speak Russian either – are frequently not admitted to state schools. There are said to be 1.5 million children who do not attend school at all, including many refugees and those who have been forcibly resettled (Education for All 2000).

The new federal structure of the State, the liberal concept of the education system as an institution based on the demand and supply of educational services, and the willingness of or even pressure on the population to invest in and pay for education, which has developed parallel to high educational expectations, have all resulted in a gap developing between the winners and losers in the process of educational reform. As there is in fact already competition to attract users who pay, educational institutions have become subdivided into different groups. There are on the one hand those that, both as a result of and with benefits for their funding, can make full use of their financial autonomy, and on the other hand those that do not earn any extra funds outside their normal budget, and are not likely to do so in the future either.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The Russian Federation is a federal multi-ethnic state with a democratic system of governance. It consists of eighty-nine federal area units, the so-called federal subjects, more succinctly referred to as regions. The majority of these are sub-national areas (*oblast'*), including six regions and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, but they also include twenty-one national republics of the non-Russian titular (*eponymous*) nations as well as eleven autonomous territorial units, defined as 'national', with diverse administrative structures. The Education Act of July 1992, and the new Constitution of the Russian Federation, passed in December 1993, laid down the basic legal regulations for the education system. They are still in force today, although there has recently been talk of amending them in order to speed up the modernization of funding and to strengthen the school system's connection with the market economy. Both general human rights and citizens' rights are laid down in the Constitution, including the prohibition of discrimination for reasons of ideology, politics, religion, and ethnic background. For the school system this involves, in particular, the general right to education as well as the right of ethnic minorities to be taught in their native language and to be able to freely choose the language of instruction. The learning of Russian as the national language is compulsory, but the State has no obligation to provide instruction in other native languages. In addition, the Education Act states that schools are obliged to provide civic and patriotic education. Whereas state institutions of education are bound by the principle of secularism and are committed to political and ideological neutrality, non-state institutions, i.e. private schools, are permitted to pursue religious and ideological objectives.

A federal structure has been set up, characterized mainly by bilateral agreements between the central Education Ministry and the regions. However, intermediary institutions have hardly been developed at all. As far as basic decisions on educational policy are concerned, the range of the President's power has grown steadily during the last decade. Responsibility for the implementation of decisions lies with the federal Education Ministry, which was expanded in March 2004 to form the Ministry of Education and Science (*Ministerstvo obrazovanija i nauki*). This responsibility applies to all areas of the school system, from the pre-school sector through the general education system to initial vocational education, the post-secondary sphere of so called 'secondary vocational education', the tertiary sphere of higher education, and adult education. State schools and pre-school institutions are nearly all organized by the communes, the so-called municipalities, which form the bottom element in the vertical structure of state, federal, regional, and local levels. Their influence on the local school system is characterized by the fact that the traditional process of issuing orders frequently dominates, whilst attempts to set up a new structure of local self-administration have failed. This was to be based on social cooperation within the framework of the processes of civil society.

Financing

Article 40, Paragraph 2 of the Education Act states that educational expenditure is eventually to amount to at least ten per cent of the national income (*natsional'nyi dochod*). However, as a proportion of gross domestic income, total state expenditure on the education system has hovered around three and a half per cent since 1995 (3.58% in 2000 according to the Ministry of Education) and the proportion of educational expenditure in the budget of the Federation in relation to GDP ranged from 1.16% in 1994 to 0.52% in 1999 and 0.74% in 2003.¹

Up until recently, the funding of the general education school was borne mainly by the communes, whose financial capacity varies greatly, particularly since seventy per cent of them do not raise any income of their own from taxation. Regional deviations of up to 15.4 times the stipulated minimum funding per pupil are to be found in the statistics (Rossiiskoe obrazovaie 2001). The payment of teachers' salaries and the provision of textbooks was delegated to the federal subjects, which were supposed to pass on the allowances provided by the Federation, but which frequently employed them for other purposes. Since the end of the 1990s, the amount owed for teachers' salaries in over half the regions has been settled, but payment problems continue to arise in some areas. Since Putin, who recognized education as a priority, took up office, the financial situation of the education system, and in particular the schools, has improved. In view of demographic developments and the likelihood of a continuing drop in the number of pupils it may, however, well take up its customary position as a small fraction of the state budget.

A law introduced by the President in June 2003 is intended to restrict the communes' financial responsibility to the funding and maintenance of the school infrastructure, and to put more pressure on the regions by stipulating the use to be made of funds for school education transferred by the Federation. However, the success of these legal steps seems to be somewhat limited so far. In 2004, there is a new tendency to reduce, in principle, the federal Ministry's financial responsibility as fixed in the 1992 Education Act. In order to keep entrance to all areas of education open, the Education Act includes the requirement that attendance at state schools and pre-schools be free of charge within the state educational standards (i.e. core curriculum), as must higher education for at least 170 university students per 10,000 inhabitants, so long as entrance standards are complied with. While the proportion of fee-paying places in higher education has already reached over 50%, it has also become customary to charge for numerous educational services in the school sector. Unlike the institutions of higher education, which finance more than half their budgets themselves, the income raised by the majority of general (comprehensive) education schools and by some vocational schools only amounts on average to 12-15% of their budgets. Until now, these 'grey' funds have been beyond the range of state control and influence, but in the future they are to be officially included in the total

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the statistics included in the present text are taken from the annual book of statistics (Rossiiskii 2003), official statements from the Ministry, and the white book of the Russian education system (Belaya 2000). These sources are not always compatible; it is particularly difficult to check the percentages given and, even more so, their interpretation, as the reference basis is not always precisely quoted.

school budget and to form part of a standard per capita allowance. In this context there is talk of a generally binding regulation stipulating what services at what rates may be charged for by the individual school.

The federal Ministry of Education has also been responsible until now for determining the minimum level of salaries and for regulating the assessment and salary brackets of teachers. However, wide-ranging changes can be expected when the intended reform of salaries for public servants comes into effect in 2005.

Public and private schooling

The Education Act guarantees the right of both non-profit-making organizations and commercial providers (enterprises and private individuals) to run educational institutions, thus abolishing the State's previous monopoly. Non-state institutions of education have to go through a licensing (admissions) and certification (evaluation) procedure before being granted state recognition for the issue of examination certificates (accreditation). However, the legal entitlement to receive state grants linked to the number of pupils has generally not been properly complied with. If in the future state schools are to receive per capita funding and provide free schooling only within the framework of the uniform state standard for education, they will approach the financial conditions of the non-state schools. This convergence (of state schools towards the financial status of the private schools) has been further encouraged, although since the spring of 2004, with the beginning of President Putin's second period in office and the dismissal of the Minister of Education, it has been under question. Whereas until recently only 10% of all general education schools had been granted the status of a legal entity, the Minister of Education announced that in 2003 the proportion rose to more than 90%. However, schools which raise their own income are also liable to taxation. Only income from tuition as such is tax free, not extras such as the provision of a midday meal. Tax free income has to be reinvested in the teaching process. In contrast to the private economy, it is only in the last few years that special tax allowances have been introduced.

General standards of the school education system

Since 1993, the federal Ministry has issued framework core curricula based on a general syllabus for all schools (BUP; *bazisnyi uchebnyi plan*). It is responsible for state standards of education in the sense of minimum requirements for a 'unified education space'. Whilst the federal Ministry is in charge of determining at least 75% of school course work (federal component), the regions and the individual educational institutions (local schools) are to provide not less than 10% each to ensure a regional and a school-profile component. In line with the regulations of the Education Act, the Ministry has repeatedly announced competitions for the curricula and for the achievement of a federal standard of education. On the whole, groups of academics, specialists for innovative project development, and educators with practical experience have participated in these. Unlike in the spheres of vocational and higher education, the obligatory approval by the Duma of standards for school education has not yet been achieved due to conflicts in academic viewpoints and educational policy positions. In March 2004, the Ministry finally pushed through a com-

promise version for the federal components of the educational standard and, for the third time since 1993, issued a new basic syllabus. The responsibility of the Ministry for approving textbooks and for financing and supplying them to the regions has gained particularly in significance, since the number of textbooks that are permitted to be available in competition with one another and differentiated according to the region has again been restricted to a maximum of three. The reasons for this restriction are to be found in gaps in funding, the traditional attachment of teaching staff to one set textbook, and problems in guaranteeing both the necessary responsibility for contents and the Federation's function in ensuring checks on the standardization of course work.

Quality management

Until now the Ministry supervised examinations and their contents, and determined the requirements for pupils transferring to the next class. It also set the standards for the inspection of educational institutions at all organizational levels, whilst the monitoring of qualitative standards was delegated to independent expert service institutions. The federal Ministry granted the licences for non-state schools and was in charge of the accreditation of qualifications. Changes are to be expected after the establishment in March 2004 of a federal agency and an inspection service in the field of education and science – constituent parts of the restructured Ministry of Education and Science. At the level of individual educational institutions, considerable scope for autonomous decisions and independent actions has been created, these being placed mainly in the hands of the head teachers. This applies to the vital area of school funding as well as to organizing institutional affairs by means of a self-determined statute, deciding on the contents profile of the school, introducing new teaching methods, and selecting textbooks. Attempts to increase parental co-operation at school have been encouraged recently, as has the incorporation of alumni, local society, the school administration, and parents in a joint guardianship or trusteeship body, the so-called Board of Trustees (*popечitel'skii sovet*). However, the tasks of this board are focused on the financial promotion of schools and not on their contents and teaching. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Russia has participated in the IEA studies and, later, in the PISA tests. In this context, a special monitoring system was set up by the Russian Ministry of Education, making a large number of results concerning school assessment based on regional differentiation available on the Internet to specialists and scholars. The results are still not as well-known, however, among the general public and those involved in school life as such.

Support systems

There have been demands for institutionalized assistance for problem schools in connection with the idea of competition among individual schools, but this is a project for the future. Among the acute issues are, however, fee-charging coaching and revision courses for improving the chances of university admission; until recently these were tolerated by the Ministry of Education, as they boosted the salaries of teaching staff and professors. After an enthusiastic start in the 1990s, concepts and

measures to assist pupils with behavioural problems are now marginal areas of educational policy and daily life in state schools.

In 2000, in order to encourage the process of modernization, the government finally set up the Federal Development Programme for Education, which had been required by the 1992 Education Act. It includes a number of funds and so-called federal objectives programmes whose aim is to experiment with innovative projects and to alleviate problems, for example defects in the school sector. In addition, large power companies now contribute to providing schools with information technology equipment. The oil company Yukos has organized a programme for the next few years to familiarize teachers with computers and to establish regional information technology centres to assist them. In order to test new funding models and to spread access to the Internet in Russian schools, the World Bank has granted long-term loans.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The school system of the Russian Federation includes a tiered pre-school sector. It comprises crèches for babies and infants up to the age of three, as well as kindergarten institutions attended by older children up to the age of seven. This is followed by general (comprehensive) school, which is divided into three age levels. Compulsory schooling lasts only nine years and ends with an obligatory leaving examination. Pupils then continue, without entrance examinations, to the two-year upper secondary stage, which leads to the certificate of secondary (complete) education (*srednee [polnoe] obrazovanie*). Until recently, admission to a course of higher education was only possible after passing an entrance examination. While long-standing plans to introduce a twelve-year general (comprehensive) course of education have finally been abandoned, from 2004-05 all schools with the appropriate number of staff are to be encouraged to reduce the age of admission from seven to six. For the school year 2006-07, moreover, it has been decided to switch gradually to a two-year upper secondary stage differentiated according to a variety of profiles. An appropriate reshaping of course work in the ninth class in preparation for the individual choice of one of the available profiles is to take place in the preceding year.

A variety of new types of school and of school 'complexes' (*kompleks*) or organizational associations has grown up alongside the 'common' or comprehensive school. These serve to promote particular talents, to make admission to higher education easier, and to assist in early access to vocational orientation and preparation. For the schooling of children and young people requiring special care and support because of social, physical, or mental reasons, there are numerous special needs institutions. In addition, leisure activities for children and young people are provided outside school in institutions of 'supplementary education', including music, sports, and arts (*dopolnitel'noe obrazovanie*). Besides the traditional training in an enterprise, it is possible to gain a lower vocational qualification in vocational school within a system of vocational education comprising a great diversity of levels; this

can also be achieved in combination with the certificate of secondary (complete) education. At a later stage, a vocational qualification may be gained at evening (shift) schools (*vechernie [smennye] shkoly*) in the system of general school education. Secondary vocational education level certificates are awarded by technical lyceums (*litsei*) or the newly created colleges (*kolledzh*), and by the extensive sector of *tekhnikumy* and secondary vocational educational schools, which in some cases facilitate the transition to an abbreviated course of higher education. In Russia higher education is defined as a part, and more specifically the highest part, of the system of vocational education. The numerous universities and institutions of higher education (*vysshie uchebnye zavedeniya, VUZy*) award a diploma after a five-year course of study; these institutions also offer shorter courses, however. In the future, as part of the so-called Bologna process, Russian higher education institutions intend to switch to the internationally promoted structure of the bachelor's degree and the more research oriented master's.

Pre-primary education

Sub-divided into crèches and kindergarten institutions (*detskie jasli i detskie sady*), pre-school institutions are generally integrated in their organization. Whilst the ideologically based aim of an early introduction to a socially oriented upbringing belongs to the past, the traditionally clearly defined task of preparing children for school has been retained. The social remit, which used to mainly involve freeing women for the work process, has had its contents changed. Since 1998, state policy has increasingly attempted to react to the social crisis of the family, the drop in the birth rate, the worsening state of many children's health, and the deterioration in the family's performance in bringing up children. Whereas in 1990 there were still 87,900 pre-school institutions, the number dropped to 48,900 in 2002, with a continuing downward trend. There have been demands for institutionalized assistance for problem schools in connection with the idea of competition among individual schools, but this represents a project for the future. Among the acute issues are, however, the fee-charging coaching and revision courses for improving the chances of university admission; until recently these were tolerated by the Ministry of Education, as they boosted the salaries of teaching staff and professors. After an enthusiastic start in the 1990s, concepts and measures to assist pupils with behavioural problems are now marginal areas of educational policy and daily life in state schools. In 80.1% of all cases, the communes were responsible for pre-school institutions in 2000; programmes provided by the traditional educational institutions in industry, in the administrative bodies, and in the agricultural enterprises had largely collapsed. Following an abrupt drop in the birth rate, together with a slump in demand for nursery school places, the number of children being cared for shrank from 9 million in 1990 to 4.3 million in 2002. Whereas two thirds of an age group attended pre-school institutions in 1990, the number had declined to an absolute low of 53.4% in 1998, rising to 58.1% in 2002 and 58.4% in 2003. The aim is to restrict parental fees to the maintenance of children, with the State funding the care and educational side. Completely free provision is only envisaged for the socially needy.

The proportion of private kindergartens, with considerably higher fees, was under eight percent in the late 1990s.

Primary and secondary education

The general education (comprehensive) school (srednyaya shkola)

Since the transition, the core of the general education school system has been a comprehensive school of general education (*srednyaya shkola*) divided horizontally and leading to a certificate of basic general education (*osnovnoe obshchee obrazovanie*) at the conclusion of nine years of compulsory schooling, usually at the end of the ninth grade. Entry to the four-year primary stage or ‘beginner’s school’ (*nachal’naya shkola*) has only been achieved for about 35% of pupils at the earlier age of six; most children enter school at seven, complete this stage in three years, and transfer directly from the third grade into the fifth grade of the ensuing ‘basic’ secondary school (*osnovnaya shkola*). Thus, until now most pupils had eight instead of the prescribed nine years of schooling, a situation once again placed on the agenda to be dealt with from 2004. After a two-year course in the upper secondary stage, the certificate of complete secondary education (*srednee [polnoe] obrazovanie*) may be awarded, entitling pupils to take the university entrance examination.² In the school year 2002, there were 64,979 state general education schools with 17,805 pupils (not including evening (shift) schools, which offer young people in work the chance to gain certificates of general education; see above). Of these, over half offered all three stages of schooling (general (comprehensive) schools from grades 1 to 11). Nearly a quarter were primary schools (mainly in the countryside with a considerable number of one-room schools), and just under one fifth were basic general education schools comprising grades 1 to 9.

With some alterations, the ‘specialized school’, the so-called ‘school with in-depth tuition in individual subjects’ (*shkola s uglublennym obucheniem predmetov*), which was firmly established in the Soviet system, continues to exist. This type of school is supposed to provide early selection and promotion of particularly gifted pupils or those with specific talents, but has also led to a decidedly selective social bias. Frequently starting at the primary stage, extra tuition is offered in foreign languages, the humanities, mathematics, and the natural sciences as well as in sport, music, the fine arts, and dance. After rising to 15% of all pupils in one age group in the early 1990s, the figure attending these schools has probably dropped because of the newly introduced types of school, which have adopted the pre-revolutionary names of gymnasium (*gimnazii*) and lyceum (*litsei*).

These have grown rapidly. They also serve particularly to prepare pupils for admission to higher education, offering far more optional courses for an extra charge than the common comprehensive school. Whereas the grammar schools (*gymnasiun*s) start at grades 5, 7, or 8, and generally have a humanities-based profile, the lyceum usually does not start until grade 8 or 10, and usually has a more vocationally oriented profile focusing on the natural sciences or technical subjects. Since

² See below for details of the gradual introduction of new regulations for the school leaving certificate and university admission.

gimnazii are concentrated in towns and, for temporary demographic reasons, the total number of pupils in schooling has grown by about one fifth in the upper grades, the slight drop in attendance figures for *gimnazii* indicates that they have possibly reached their upper limits; they have at any rate been unable to supplant the specialized schools with in-depth tuition in individual subjects. The *gimnazii* were attended by roughly 2.7% of all pupils in 1993 and 4.8% in 2002; the lyceum catered to some 1.4% of all pupils in 1993 and 2.9% in 2002, i.e. for both types of school the proportion of pupils totalled 7.7% in 2002. In 2002 there were 2003 schools of these two types. Together with the schools providing in-depth teaching in certain subjects, in 2000 there were 7347 so-called schools of the 'higher' type (*povyshennyi tip*) preparing pupils for university entrance. These amounted to just under 15% of all general education schools with 12.7% of all pupils, 17.1% of the schools being located in towns compared with only 2.6% in the countryside.

Many grammar schools and lyceums have formal agreements for co-operating closely with individual colleges or universities and their teaching staff. School leavers are given preferential treatment in admission to courses at the institutions with the appropriate agreement, a situation that already existed informally for the specialized schools before the period of transition. In 1997 every third university had a special relationship with general education schools based on such a formal arrangement, with individual institutions being linked to between sixty and 120 schools. A small number of traditionally renowned boarding schools, the cadet schools, co-operate with military academies and institutions of higher education; they provide pupils from grades 5 or 9 with special preparation for entry to higher education and a military career.

Little change has taken place in the numeric development of the network of national schools, which are largely located in the twelve national republics as well as in other places with an ethnic non-Russian or very mixed population, including Moscow and St. Petersburg. In these schools, a special place is allotted to the national language and culture. In the 1998 school year, 1,660,900 pupils, amounting to 7.6% of the school population, attended 9048 schools where a total of seventy-nine non-Russian native languages were taught in appropriate courses; not all of these extended as far as grade 10, however. According to the figures for the year 2000, subject courses were taught either partially or completely to 239,554 pupils in 3469 educational institutions in the Russian Federation in thirty-three non-Russian native languages. In such cases, Russian language and literature is made a special obligatory subject.

In the school year 2002, 683 non-state schools (about 0.8% of all schools) existed alongside the state schools, and were attended by 68,000 pupils, which amounts to roughly 0.4% of all pupils and 1% in the towns. With an average of under 100 pupils, many of these schools are very small; some 400 of them have been planned as complete secondary schools. In 1998-99 only 269 (i.e. 47.3%) of the existing 568 private schools had received their accreditation, with the rest still waiting for state recognition of their leaving certificates. Most of the non-state schools are situated in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The number of pupils prematurely dropping out of compulsory schooling, which reached its height in the school year 1992-

93, had already decreased by half by the end of 1996; nevertheless, according to Russian statistics, 8.3% of the age group leaving school in 1996-97 dropped out prematurely (Belaya Kniga 2000, p.16). The number of pupils transferring to complete secondary (comprehensive) education (tenth class at the upper secondary level) has been gradually rising and had reached 67.5% by 2001 – compared with just 52-54% in the last years of the Soviet era. About 12% of those completing compulsory schooling entered institutions of secondary vocational education in the same year, and only 16.4% (1997 still 26%) started initial vocational courses. Of the remaining 4.1%, many did not continue their education at all (Centr modernizacii 2003). In 2001, pupils graduating from complete secondary schools were distributed as follows (Centr modernizacii 2003): 49.9% – with numbers rising rapidly since then – continued their education in institutions of higher education, 26.4% attended institutions of secondary vocational education, 13.6% went into initial vocational education, and the remaining 10.1% presumably did not continue their education.

Educational contents

Since the late years of *perestroika*, major attempts at reform have focused on making the contents of school instruction more varied and more flexible in comparison with those prevalent in the uniform Soviet school. The more humanities-based approach of the curricula as well as the orientation towards the individual needs of each pupil enabled new subjects to appear on the curriculum and syllabus: e.g. economics; law; environmental studies; modern information technology; religious instruction, including the history of religion; and, reintroduced in 1999, obligatory preparation for military service for male pupils. The wide scope for providing optional courses has been particularly exploited by those schools starting to develop their own school profile. In order to guarantee the necessary basic level of quality and the same standard of certificates, the Ministry of Education issued preliminary minimum framework curricula in 1993 and 1998 in the form of a basic syllabus. It was supposed to establish a uniform minimum level of educational contents and to lay down the appropriate standards to be achieved in diplomas and certificates, and comprises a number of additions with a new focus. In its core, however, the traditional range of subjects at Soviet schools has been retained. The curriculum or syllabus set the total number of lessons for the individual groups of subjects such as languages, literature, music and art, mathematics, social studies, and the natural sciences, as well as for specific subjects such as computer studies, crafts, technology, and sport. It should be stressed that there were special curricula for the lower secondary stage, where schools may work with reform models developed for the Soviet school by Zankov or El'konin and Davydov, or may operate as Waldorf or Montessori schools. In March 2004 a new federal framework curriculum was put forward, the introduction of which is, however, not compulsory for the school year 2004-05. This curriculum represents a compromise, instigated from the top down, in the long-term debate on educational standards. It is based on a four-year primary school only, as well as on the concept of creating profiles beginning in grade 9. A reduction and modernization of teaching material has been achieved in line with internationally widespread concepts concerning competencies to be taught, the func-

tional acquisition of foreign languages, and extra individual options for pupils. The future will show if it is possible to change to a performance- or outcome-oriented curriculum. The differentiation of contents known as profile shaping is intended to reduce the notorious overload of pupils with regard to the amount of subject matter to be taught, and to encourage and develop their individual abilities and interests. It is also to act as a way of providing vocational orientation and preparation for both courses of higher education and non-academic occupations. So far more than a dozen profiles have been listed for a preliminary stage of orientation for grade 9 from 2004-05 onwards, and for final introduction in grade 10 from 2006-07. They include a profile for physics and mathematics, and several in the natural sciences, the humanities, modern languages, social sciences, information technology, agricultural technology, military science, sport, and fine arts, as well as one not linked to a specific profile, the so-called universal profile.

Assessment and certificates

Unlike in the Soviet school, with its determination not to 'leave any of the pupils behind' and, if necessary to 'tidy up' assessment marks, schools were able to experiment with more flexible forms of assessment after the transition stage. This is a challenge which has been met with considerable hesitation. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education has once again recently proposed doing away with marks in primary schools. Examination results and other marks may now be freely utilized for selection based on performance, although most teachers are not used to doing this. Leaving examinations are held at the end of the ninth (certificate of basic general education) and the eleventh grade. The leaving certificate of the upper secondary stage, the certificate of complete secondary education, has now been granted international accreditation. Until now, the exam regulations for those completing secondary education (*abiturienty*) involved written and oral examinations in a larger number of subjects; written exams in mathematics and Russian literature and language were obligatory until very recently. The federal Education Ministry sets the essay topics and the tasks for the mathematics examination centrally. As a special means of encouragement, competitions are held at so-called 'Olympics', where 'gold' or 'silver' medals are awarded; the same applies to leaving examinations. The medals facilitate admission to higher education, as the receipt of a gold medal means exemption from the otherwise compulsory entrance examinations to higher education. These exams take place a few weeks after the leaving examinations at the institution of the candidate's choice, based on the institution's own criteria and in line with state guidelines for the proportion of students to be admitted to a free course of study. Admission to one university or higher education institution does not apply to any other one. In the past, it was often not possible to pass the entrance examinations without attending fee-paying tutorials, generally provided by teaching staff from the institution concerned, who were also the subsequent examiners. The exam has been a constant object of public criticism, as it is frequently impossible to pass without taking expensive tutorials (*repetitorstvo*), and bribes are often also necessary to gain admission.

As the procedure is on the whole inefficient and costly for the individual as well as for the State and society, in the last few years pilot projects have been set up in a growing number of regions in Russia. These projects aim to lead to the replacement of the two sets of examinations with a uniform country-wide state examination (*edinyi gosudarstvennyi ékzamen*; EGÉ), and the examination that they offer is being sat by a growing number of pupils. It is intended to facilitate the admission of less privileged pupils to higher education, as well as making it possible to apply to more than one university or higher education institution at a time. Conceived as an indirect means of controlling the flow of those gaining the upper secondary leaving certificate, the exam also features as one of the core elements, as it was linked to the controversial model of funding courses of higher education. The awarding of non-fee-paying places or, otherwise, the amount of the individual financial contribution, is to be graded according to the marks attained in the examination. Once the introduction of the profiled upper secondary stage has been introduced as decided upon (see above), it will be logical to take the exam in the profile option in order to achieve a good result and thus a place on a course in the same subject area. After prolonged resistance by some of the university rectors, the obligatory introduction of this examination system has once again become a matter for debate, and a final decision has been suspended for the time being. As an alternative, fee-charging preparatory departments (*podgotovitel'nye otdeleniya*) at the institutions of higher education have recently been proposed for pupils in the eleventh grade as a way of avoiding the above-mentioned weaknesses of the currently popular tutorials (*repetitorstvo*), such as a lack of transparency and uncontrolled money payments.

Out of school activities and organizations

The sphere of supplementary education (*dopolnitel'noe obrazovanie*) comprises out of school education and teaching, and in recent times has increasingly been urged to promote the character development (*vospitanie*) of children and young people. Emerging from the take-over of the Soviet pioneer palaces and youth clubs, and often even involving the employment of the same staff, this area displays a great diversity of structures in its different institutions, most of which are now run by regional and municipal authorities. Activities are provided in sport and the arts, and there are also children's and young people's music schools and holiday homes or camps which, following a serious slump, have been recovering once again since the mid-1990s. Attendance involves the payment of a small fee.

Initial vocational education and training

Full time initial or 'basic' vocational education and training (*nachal'noe professional'noe obrazovanie*; NPO), along with on-the-job training in the enterprises, belongs to the lower level of a hierarchically divided system of vocational training. It provides the economy with less highly qualified workers. Even before the phase of transition, the vocational schools were not properly fulfilling their job of providing workers for the changed requirements of the economy. With the introduction of nine years' compulsory schooling in 1992, the vocational school changed its function and guaranteed broad access to the top levels of a multi-tiered vocational education sys-

tem which is vertically open. This was reflected in the new name of 'initial' or 'basic' vocational education. In fact, the vocational schools have remained an attractive option for less successful pupils from the general education school, who are often thus spared unemployment. The schools are linked to the general schools in numerous ways. They provide a direct educational path for those who left school without a qualification and for those who have completed the nine years of compulsory schooling, but do not continue to the upper secondary stage. This group amounted to 11.1% of pupils in vocational day institutions (1999); their training lasts one to one and a half years. The vocational schools' remit is to enable as many pupils as possible to gain the certificate of complete secondary education. In 1999 73% of day pupils were taking these training courses, which last two, three, and sometimes even four years. These schools also cater for those leaving the complete comprehensive school who do not wish to go on to secondary specialized or higher education (15.8% in 1999). The large number (1200) of occupations with special training courses has been reduced to 293 integrated occupations (figures for the year 2000), which have been sub-divided into a larger number of specializations. The legislatively established educational standards, which feature federal, regional, and local components, set out the basic knowledge and skills to be acquired; these requirements are constantly being expanded. Amounting to a quarter or a third of total course time, the contents of the general education courses have a vocational focus. For the twenty most common courses, sample curricula have already been made available. The gap between what the vocational school system can provide, given its serious material, staff, and contents problems, and the demands of the newly emerging labour market, has attracted the attention of federal educational policy-makers, resulting in further changes to contents and shifts in financial responsibility away from the Federation towards the regions; the latter is strongly opposed, however, by the regions and the schools themselves.

Special education schools

In the Soviet Union, special education schools comprised day and boarding schools for mentally and physically handicapped pupils. Attended by only 1.5% of pupils, this group had a very marginal status. It was not until the end of the 1980s that supplementary provision was made for the considerable number of children with lesser learning and developmental deficits or other behavioural disorders, a group which was rapidly becoming visible. Previously, the existence of these groups had, for ideological reasons, been a taboo subject. While the general state of health of school children in Russia deteriorated seriously over the past decade, there are fewer than 2000 institutions for 501,500 pupils with a 'damaged state of health'. This means that roughly 3% of all schools are available for those with physical or mental handicaps and illnesses requiring special care. In 2002 70.8% of these schools were schools for mentally retarded children. One other particular problem group consists of the growing number of social orphans living without parental care and homeless children (according to official figures 123,200 in the year 2000). At present, children without parental care no longer tend to be put into homes and boarding schools, but are increasingly placed with foster families.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The higher education sector, where a considerable degree of privatization has taken place, has been able to achieve a dynamic development. The main reason for this has been the growing readiness among candidates for admission to pay fees for their studies. The number of higher education institutions, i.e. universities and more specialized so-called academies and institutes, doubled from 519 in 1991 to 1039 in 2002; of these 384 were private institutions. In many cases, academies and institutes expanded their previously narrow range of subjects in order to attain the coveted status of a university (in 1998 there were 270, in 2002 312 universities). The trend of associating with institutions from other stages of education, such as gymnasiums, lyceums, *tekhnikumy*, *kolledzhi*, and other secondary vocational education schools, has gained support from official quarters. Since the low point in 1993-94, the number of students has more than doubled to over 5.9 million, and the ratio of students per 10,000 inhabitants has risen by 50% in comparison with 1980 (in the year 2002, 364 students at state institutions of higher education only, compared with 219 in 1980). The maximum number of fee-paying students was set at 25% per institution, but has been greatly exceeded, reaching 44% on average and about 80% at the most. The comparatively extensive sector of private universities and higher education institutions has been attended until now by just 13.8% of all students. Private institutions of higher education, which are generally small, may demand enrolment fees of several thousand dollars a year. State control of the qualifications provided is being tightened up in this as well as in the state sector, in order to eliminate both fraudulent offers of certificates and qualitatively inadequate courses. Plans have been put forward by the State to reduce the number of higher education students in favour of secondary vocational education and basic vocational training, in order to better meet the economy's demand for a more diverse labour force. Amongst other financial measures, student loans are to be tested and introduced on a considerable scale, and not only for financially needy students. Repayment is to be waived in cases where graduates accept an occupation encouraged by the State, such as teaching in rural schools. Until now, the introduction of a tiered system of study on international lines (bachelor's and master's degrees) has been unable to supplant the traditional diploma awarded after five years' study. The decision to take part in the joint European movement, the so-called Bologna process, within which courses and degrees are to be made compatible all over Europe, will result in this structure of higher education being increasingly introduced. Most teachers are trained at higher education institutions, the so called 'pedagogical institutes', and pedagogical and classical universities. Whilst their graduates teach in the intermediate and upper stages of the general education school, those qualifying at teacher training colleges of secondary vocational education level (*pedagogicheskoe uchilishche and kolledzh*) work in pre-school education and at the primary level. The government still intends to make a higher education qualification compulsory for all teachers, an aim which is linked to the transition from studying just one subject on the school curriculum to two. The exodus of many younger teachers and teachers with sought after specializations (e.g. foreign languages and information technology) to other jobs and occupations led to a rise in the average age of teachers until quite recently. The rate of

young trained teachers leaving the profession is high: only about one third remain in the profession. Nonetheless, due to the anticipated drop in the number of pupils by about 30% within the present decade, the forecast is that a surplus of teachers, at least in the countryside, will emerge. Post-university in-service training for teachers (*postdiplomnoe obrazovanie*) takes place at universities and pedagogical institutes, and at special in-service training institutions in the regions. In addition to the theoretically still obligatory in-service training in topics dealing with contents and teaching methods, which must be attended every few years, teachers without a higher education degree are encouraged to gain one; this also improves their salary level. Particular attention is paid to the in-service training of head teachers, focusing on the organizational, legal, and economic aspects of school management.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

After the upheaval and the following period of transition, increasing radical liberalization, the financial crisis caused by the State's tendency to abandon its former responsibilities, and the noticeable qualitative decline in the performance of schools all prompted increasing criticism of the education system on the part of the general public. The reforms prompted by this criticism led to a limited return to some of the features of Soviet schooling now regarded once again in a positive light. In contrast to higher education, the development of new approaches only went ahead permanently in those schools that were able to retain efficient teaching staff and the appropriate group of customers by being particularly enterprising in financial and organizational matters and in the area of course contents. In a few regions and smaller administrative units, trend-setting problem-solving was also successfully experimented with in various areas of school reform. Although the 'school for the masses' lagged behind in these processes compared to other sectors of society, it did manage to retain a large part of its inner and outer stability. This noticeable continuity was due particularly to the conscientiousness and enthusiasm of the teaching staff, whose teaching and socializing routines admittedly preserved the basic pattern of Soviet schooling. Finally, an even greater collapse of the school system was prevented by the population's educational aspirations, which had been growing rapidly since the middle of the 1990s, and its willingness to invest considerable amounts of money in the instruction of the younger generation. In view of this disparate development, federal educational policies moved gradually away from the fundamental demands for a radical denationalization, or 'destatization' (*razgosudarstvlenie*), and decentralization of the school system. Under the slogan 'accessibility, quality, and efficiency', education, on Putin's accession to office, was to regain its political priority without, however, the heralded funding being made available with any reliability. The recovery of the country's economic, technological, and scientific performance, and the international competitiveness of the education system were just as much a focus of attention as the reduction of social tension, with increased instruction in democracy and legal studies also being theoretical issues.

At the commencement of Putin's second term in office, decisions lie ahead concerning the future speed and the further focus of the on-going process of moderniza-

tion of the education system. The framework needs to be filled by a continued development of the education system's orientation towards a market economy, and with a movement towards the establishment of a coherent indirect regulating system that will enable educational processes to be guided efficiently by the State, that is to say the central federal government. In the school sector, this system comprises state educational standards, competitiveness in quality among schools, and on-going quality control. The model of competitiveness in quality and the setting up of performance-related incentives remains controversial in view of the way it affects broad access to schools and the general quality of teaching, i.e. equality of opportunity. Appeals have been made for state assistance for the losers in the education reform, in particular the rural population, the impoverished middle classes, and groups on the fringe of society; the general public greatly fears that the social aspect will be lost in the face of the further expansion of education for an elite. The joint financing of the school system from state funds and from institutionally generated income (largely raised from users), which has already become a widespread means of funding, presents the schools with a huge economic and intellectual challenge. The same applies to the school administration and the general public. Opponents of the reform anticipate a continuation or even a spread of rigid bureaucracy, and 'grey' financing by means of fees and bribery.

A further issue, which does not, however, concern the general public to such a large extent, is the co-operation between the Federation, the regions, and the local administrative bodies in a basically centrally controlled system which is nonetheless partly decentralized. In order to function properly, the system must guarantee at least some fundamental co-operation in legislative, monitoring, and financing matters. However, at the beginning of Putin's second term in office, fundamental prerequisites for the coherence of the school system in the projected 'unified education space' are under question: the experimental introduction of the uniform state exam has already proved a stumbling block, and has revealed what obstacles can arise alone in the areas of educational policy-making, contents, and technical and organizational matters. Due to the newly evolved concentration of power in the President's hands, the entire character of Russia's current federal system is faced with further change, with the system of financial adjustment between the richer and poorer regions being an obvious focus for future disagreement. Besides this, experts have expressed a number of doubts about the new projects with respect to the quality and orientation of the contents of educational provision, the reduction of the amount of material in the curricula, the course profiles in the upper classes, and the inclusion of under-privileged children. These criticisms are informed by an inseparable mixture of professional issues and the motives of interest groups, a combination which now applies to head teachers and subject teacher groups as well as to the previously involved groups of experts.

The struggle to find a new concept for the general education school is based on the recurring and unsolved issues regarding structure and contents which characterized Soviet school policy-making for many decades. It centres on the problem of a system of secondary education geared mainly to courses of study in higher education and to uniform contents standards that exists alongside a vocational education sys-

tem with qualitative shortcomings, and which is not properly integrated into the education system as a whole. Until 2003, this situation led to an ever increasing demand for admission to higher education,³ while the economy has no guaranteed supply of less well-qualified workers, since the general education school has failed to focus on training for the simpler vocational occupations. It is against this background that the conflict concerning the orientation of the standard of schooling needs to be settled between those supporting traditional teaching based on the ‘fundamental principles of the sciences’, and the more reform-oriented advocates who stress basic subject competencies and key qualifications.⁴ Alongside the questions of course contents differentiation based on subject profiles and the implementation of organizational reforms for older pupils, the debate on the new and not undisputed contents for the humanities, particularly in the teaching of history and languages and literature, has erupted once again. The fact that responsibility for educational contents has largely been given back to the federal Ministry of Education runs against the concept of the autonomous school, which has been realized in many state schools and private model schools. Following the era of transition, these schools initiated educational innovations guaranteeing organizational diversity, plurality of contents, and a humane outlook, but they now regard themselves as being in the clutches of an increasingly bureaucratized administration (Lisovskaya/Karpov 2001).

The President and his government continue to express the political desire to retain their reform concepts, which are, in some respects, even more radical than their ‘Western’ models. At present, a strategy is becoming conspicuous of accepting the parallel existence of ‘old’ and ‘new’ solutions disguised as ‘pilot schemes’; it thereby takes heed of the interplay of political forces and local social acceptability. What long-term effect this will have on the school system in a country with the geographical dimensions and the political, social, and economical heterogeneity of Russia remains a matter of conjecture.

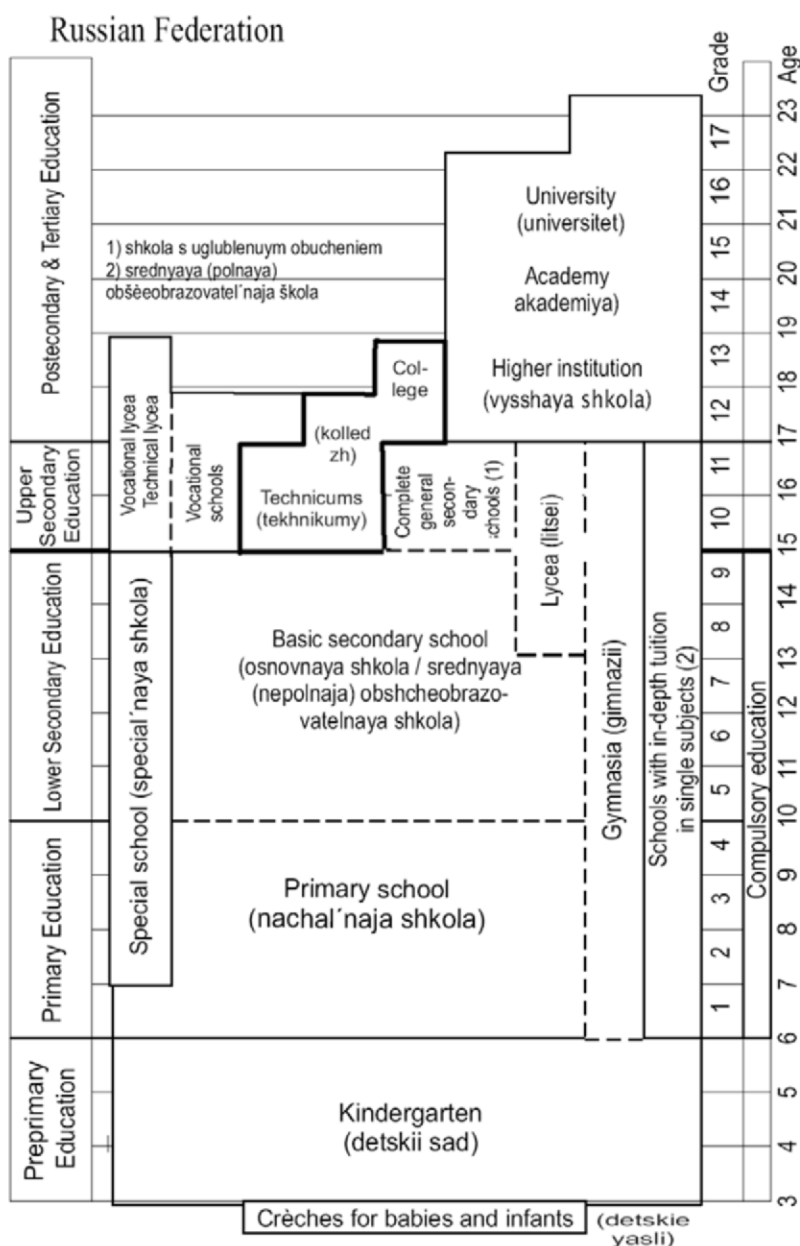
References

- Belaya kniga rossiiskogo obrazovaniya (Whitebook of the Russian Education System). Moskva 2000. (Proekt TACIS „Upravlenie obrazovaniem“)
- Centr modernizatsii obshchego obrazovaniya. <http://www.apkro.ru/?text=laba&top=laba_t> (December 2003)
- “Education for All: An Estimation 2000“. Russian Federation. – In Russian: Savel’ev, A. Ya. et al.: *Obrazovanie dlya vsekh: Otsenka 2000. Analiticheskii doklad*. Moskva 2000. <<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/Databanks/Dossiers/mainfram.htm>>
- Eklöf, B./Holmes, L.E./Kaplan, V. (Eds.): *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia. Legacies and prospects*. London and New York 2005.
- Glowka, D.: *Schulen und Unterricht im Vergleich. Rußland/Deutschland (Schools and Education Compared. Russia/Germany)*. Münster; New York 1995.

³ In line with international comparisons it is, however, considered necessary to increase the present proportion of graduates from higher education from just under 20% of an age group to around 30%.

⁴ Russia’s participation and rather mediocre results in the international comparative studies of school performance such as TIMSS and the OECD’s PISA apparently provided the impetus from outside.

- Kuebart, F.: Das russische Bildungswesen im Spannungsfeld von Kontinuität und Umbruch (The Russian Education System Between Continuity and Change). In: Höhmann, H.-H./Schröder, H.-H. (Eds): Rußland unter neuer Führung. Politik, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts (Russia under a new Leadership. Politics, Economy and Society in the Beginning 21st century). Münster 2001, pp. 216-228.
- Kuebart, F.: Rußland [Russia]. In: Anweiler, O. u. a. (Eds.): Bildungssysteme in Europa [Educational Systems in Europe]. 4th edition, Weinheim; Basel 1996, pp. 165-192.
- Lisovskaya, E./Karpov, V: The Perplexed World of Russian Private Schools: Findings from Field Research. In: Comparative Education 37 (2001) 1, pp. 43-64.
- Ministerstvo obrazovaniya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Minobrazovanie Rossii): O Kontseptsii modernizatsii rossiiskogo obrazovaniya na period do 2010 goda. Prikaz ot 11.02.2002, N 393.
<<http://www.informika.ru/text/goscom/curdoc/393.html>> or <<http://www.ed.gov.ru/industry/pravo/>> Printed version in: Uchitel'skaya gazeta 31 (2002), pp. 26-29.
- OECD: Reviews of National Policies for Education. Russian Federation. Paris 1998.
- OECD: Reviews of National Policies for Education. Tertiary Education and Research in the Russian Federation. Paris 1999.
- Rossiiskii statisticheskii ezhegodnik 2003. Moskva 2003.
- Rossiiskoe obrazovanie k 2001 godu. Analiticheskii obzor. <http://www.ed.gov.ru/obzor/html> (October 2002)
- Schmidt, G.: Kontinuität und Wandel im Bildungswesen Rußlands (Continuity and Change in the Education System in Russia). In: Die Deutsche Schule 90 (1998) 2, pp. 231-247.
- Schmidt, G.: Russland (Russia). In: PISA – Reaktionen der teilnehmenden Länder (PISA – Reactions in the Countries participating). Trends in Bildung international – TiBi 5 (2002). <http://www.dipf.de/publikationen/tibi/tibi5_russland.pdf>
- Schmidt, G./Krüger-Potratz, M. (Eds.): Bildung und nationale Identität in der Russischen Föderation aus russischer und rußlanddeutscher Perspektive [Education and National Identity in the Russian Federation from the Point of View of Russians and Ethnic Germans in Russia]. Münster; New York 1999.
- Sutherland, J.: Schooling in the New Russia. Innovation and Change, 1984-95. Houndmills; Basingstoke; Hampshire 1998.
- Tomiak, J. J.: The Russian Federation in Transition. In: Coulby, D./Cowen, R./Jones, C. (Eds): World Yearbook of Education 2000: Education in Times of Transition. London 2000, pp. 145-158.
- Webber, S. L.: School, Reform and Society in the New Russia. Houndmills; Basingstoke; Hampshire 2000.



Wendelin Sroka

San Marino

The Republic of San Marino (*Serenissima Repubblica di San Marino*), situated in the Northern part of the Apennine peninsula and surrounded by Italy, has a population of around 28,000. With sixty-one square kilometres, it is the third smallest sovereign country in Europe, after Vatican City and Monaco. The state language of the republic is Italian, and politics, economy, culture, and everyday life are strongly interconnected with Italy. This is also true for the area of education, which, nevertheless, has its specific features. The legal basis of the public school system in San Marino is formed by a number of acts, passed by the Grand and General Council (*Consiglio Grande e Generale*). Among them are the Act on Basic Norms in Instruction (*norme generali sull'istruzione*) and the Act on Cycles of Instruction (*cicli di istruzione*), both passed in 1998. Compulsory schooling covers primary and secondary education, and lasts a minimum of ten years. Administrative responsibility for the school system rests with the State Office for Public Education, the University, Cultural Institutions, Information, and Research (*Segreteria di Stato per la Pubblica Istruzione, l'Università, gli Istituti Culturali, l'Informazione e la Ricerca*).

Schooling in San Marino is structured on the basis of three cycles. The first cycle (*ciclo dell'infanzia*) covers pre-school education for three- to six-year olds. The second cycle (*ciclo primario*) comprises five years of primary education, and caters to six- to eleven-year-old pupils. Finally, the third cycle (*ciclo secondario*) covers the highly differentiated system of secondary education. In contrast to the other levels of schooling with a five-day-week, instruction at secondary level takes place from Monday to Saturday.

Pre-school education is provided free of charge by the *Scuola dell'Infanzia*. Compulsory schooling starts for six-year-olds at the *Scuola Elementare*. At the end of grade 5, pupils are awarded a primary school certificate (*Licenza Elementare*). Education at lower secondary level takes place at the *Scuola Media Inferiore* and lasts for three years. After completion of lower secondary education, schooling is organized in two tracks:

1. School-based programmes of vocational training are offered by the Centro di Formazione Professionale. These programmes usually last two years.
2. General education can, in connection with a specialization, be continued at the *Scuola Media Superiore*. Here, the programmes have two stages: the first stage, comprising two years (*biennio*), offers education with classical, modern foreign language, natural-scientific, business-economic, and technological profiles. At the end of this stage, pupils can either leave school or continue their studies for three more years (*triennio*) in their chosen profile. These programmes lead to the Diploma di Maturità, allowing pupils to take up studies at tertiary level.

In general, instruction in Sammarese schools follows the Italian curriculum. Special attention is paid to foreign-language instruction, beginning with English in grade 3 and supplemented by French in grade 6. A recent reform of school instruction in the Republic was aimed at stressing individual approaches to pupils' learning. Teachers employed in the Sammarese school system receive their initial training at universities in Italy. Successful applicants have to take a special course organized by the State Office for Public Education before they start work at a school. Currently, nearly all pupils attend school at least until the age of 18, be it in San Marino or abroad. A great number of young Sammarese people continue their secondary or tertiary level education in Italy. The government of San Marino provides financial support to these students.

The University of San Marino (*Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino*), established in 1985, offers graduate and postgraduate studies in Italian and English in a selection of subjects, including business administration, economics, engineering management, tourism, and nursing. The university also serves as an adult education centre for the Republic. To guarantee easy transition of Sammarese pupils and students into the Italian system and vice versa, San Marino and Italy signed an agreement on the equivalence of degrees in 1983. San Marino has also signed the UNESCO Convention on the recognition of studies and higher education degrees in the states belonging to the European region.

References

- Repubblica di San Marino: Norme Generali Sull'Istruzione. Legge 12 febbraio 98 n 21, 1998.
- Repubblica di San Marino - Segreteria di Stato per la Pubblica Istruzione, l'Università, gli Istituti Culturali, l'Informazione e la Ricerca: Sistema Scolastico. San Marino 2004.
- Valentini, P.: San Marino. Statement by H.E. Mr. Pasquale Valentini, Minister for Education of the Republic of San Marino to the XXVII Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children, New York May 9th, 2002.

Serbia

History of the school system

From the middle of the twentieth century to the 1990s, the school system in Serbia developed relatively successfully. In a quantitative sense, the progress reached its peak in the period after World War II, when it functioned as part of the Yugoslav education system. This period was characterized by a struggle against illiteracy, the introduction of seven years of compulsory school education, and the establishment of vocational schools, which the rapid industrialization of the country demanded. During the 1960s, compulsory education was legally extended to eight years. Achievements in education were among the most important objectives during the socialist era. Many educational institutions were established, the number of professional teaching staff was high, and education was one of the priorities of the national budget. However, several problems with regard to the conception, organization, and functioning of the school system occurred. Curricula and programmes, for instance, were prescribed by the authorities; they had to be implemented rigorously. As a result, the variety of school programmes was narrowed. In addition, the system of educational assessment and continuous evaluation was not developed appropriately.

During the war in the 1990s, different ethnic groups were fighting each other, the economy collapsed, and the standard of living deteriorated. The school system was of course also affected. When a parliamentary democracy was established in 1990, several branches of the education system were also redefined. Existing curricula and programmes were changed in order to reduce the ideological influence of the former system. Furthermore, the introduction of private secondary schools and faculties was approved. Because of the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions of that period, however, the operation of schools was fraught with difficulties; both quantitative and qualitative approaches to school reform were absent.

After the war, the Yugoslav republics formed independent countries. Serbia established a union with the Republic of Montenegro. Although Serbia and Montenegro constituted a single country until 2006, their school systems have developed independently since the late 1990s.

At the end of 2000, a new democratically elected government came into office, which initiated large-scale reforms of the economy, the political system, and education. The main goals of the education reform are based on the modernization and reorganization of the school system supporting Serbia's economic reconstruction, the development of democracy, and the country's international integration. Within

the framework of the reformed school system, pupils will obtain fundamental and transferable knowledge, skills, and literacy; develop a system of values that includes the most valuable elements of Serbian tradition; appreciate and respect diversity and human rights; be encouraged and enabled to reflect critically on social reality; and develop personal autonomy.

The school reform is based on the following fundamental principles: decentralization and democratization, improvement of the quality of instruction and systematic continuous education, increase in the professional autonomy of all the staff working in educational institutions, and improvement of the educational infrastructure.

In the years 2000-01, measures were taken to prepare the reform. At first, teams comprising Serbian specialists in education as well as experts from the OECD, UNICEF, and the World Bank analysed the present state of the Serbian education system. The latter international organizations also provided financial support for these efforts. In detailed thematic reviews, the teams produced basic guidelines for the reformed system of education, highlighting issues such as the systemic improvement of education in Serbia; teacher training; revision of the curricula, programmes, and textbooks; and co-ordination of the educational and economic sector.

Extensive consultation with all agents directly involved in the educational process has been completed. In these 'Discussions on Reform', the participants, teachers, parents, professional consultants in schools, head teachers, and members of the administrative committee presented critical views on the existing system of education as well as numerous suggestions for reforms.

In 2001 several expert teams were formed; they investigated such issues as decentralization, democratisation, education, and professional development of teachers; assessment and evaluation; and secondary vocational, adult, and pre-school education. One year later, additional teams began their work on the following topics: reform of curricula and programmes, policies of textbook publishing, and the education of both minority children and those with special needs. The expert groups' general objective was to develop strategic approaches to and new conceptions of the reform of the educational system.

At the beginning of 2003, new legislation was introduced planning a nine years structure of compulsory schooling. Based on the proposed suggestions, the revised legal provisions became effective for grade 1 in the school year 2003-04.¹ However, with the new Government in 2004, the already initiated educational reform has been stopped and the old system of an eight years structure of primary education was reintroduced.²

¹ As a result of its dynamic nature, the implementation of the reform had to take place on two levels. New strategic and conceptual approaches as well as legal regulations and programs ought to be introduced gradually; they were binding only for certain grades. The grades not yet included in the reform were taught according to the former programs.

² See below.

Socio-cultural context of the present school system

Considering the conception, organization, and functioning of the Serbian school system during the previous era, and considering especially previous teaching practice in schools, it can be argued that a 'cognitive conception of education' was the dominant model. The emphasis, in other words, was placed on teaching and learning. The development of the pupils' personality, intellectual and practical skills, and capabilities was only of secondary importance. The recent reform attempts to establish methods of teaching which are based on pupil-centred and interactive principles. The accent is placed on the pupils and their development; the entire process of education is designed rather as a process of learning than of teaching.

Information on the demographic structure of the Serbian population with respect to education was obtained in the last general survey of 2002. This data shows that 5.7% of all Serbs lack minimal educational requirements; the figure for women is 8.6%. 2% have completed only the first three grades, 14.2% grades 4 to 7, and 23.9% have finished primary school. Secondary school was completed by 41% of the Serbian people while only 4.5% finished upper secondary school. 6.5% of the population holds university degrees. Women received, in general, less formal education than men, although the differences are less marked among younger generations. The level of education is higher in urban than in rural areas. Illiteracy is more common among women (5.7%) than among men (1.08%). The total illiteracy rate is 3.45%; the majority of illiterates live in rural areas. Unemployment has increased drastically in recent years; it exceeds 30% at present. Among the unemployed, almost 40% lack qualifications or are only semi-qualified; the rest possess very diverse levels of education.

The Serbian school system includes more than a million pupils between seven and eighteen years of age and about 12,000 staff, which corresponds to approximately 20% of the total population. Those pupils who attend primary school account for 10% of the population. In recent years, the number of pupils has gradually decreased as a result of falling birth rates. On the other hand, the influx of refugees and internally displaced persons during the previous decade has decreased the effect of the reduced birth rates among Serbs.

Pre-primary programmes and services do not reach more than 32% of all children in the relevant age bracket, except for a small number of preparatory programmes which are, in certain areas, attended by over 90%. The figure for children attending compulsory primary education, at about 97%, is very high. In contrast to official statistics, however, data from various studies shows that there are problems with regard to the integration of Roma children, children with special needs, and those from underdeveloped rural areas. It has been concluded that the decline in the number of pupils is most marked among the rural population, generally in the upper grades of primary school, as well as among children from risk groups and minorities. Data illustrates that between 83% and 87% of the pupils who attend primary schools also enrol in secondary schools; of these, almost one fourth attend general schools and three fourths various vocational schools. From the total number of pupils who finish secondary school, 46% continue their education at upper secondary

schools and universities. Merely 27% of the population between nineteen and twenty-five years of age, however, enjoy education at this level. Finally, only 1% of all pupils and students attend institutions of special or adult education.

The school infrastructure is highly heterogeneous and shows different characteristics in urban and rural areas. In the latter, there is a large number of small schools in contrast to the large schools found in urban areas. The main reason for this distribution is the migration of the rural population into the cities. As a consequence, the former eight-year schools were transformed into four-year schools with combined classes, in which one teacher works with pupils of different ages and grades. On the other hand, those schools with eight grades are mainly situated in cities and bigger towns, and because of the large number of pupils, they often work in two shifts. 47% of all urban primary schools are situated in the three Serbian cities of Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Nis, and 50% of all pupils attend these schools. Both pupil-teacher ratios and class sizes depend on school type and region. This proportion is generally lower in rural than in urban areas. On average, the number of pupils per teacher is sixteen and the class size is 23.2 pupils.

Minorities account for 19.5% of the population of Serbia and Montenegro. Their right to education is legally regulated. The infrastructure of primary schools and classes in the minority languages have been developed according to the demographic distribution of minority groups and the ability of the municipalities to provide basic pedagogical services. The largest number of schools that offer minority programmes can be found in Vojvodina, the economically most developed region of Serbia. The Roma population, in contrast, is the most under-represented socio-ethnic group with respect to education. Roma children perform poorly in school. Their attendance is low, they drop out early, and the percentage of Roma pupils who pursue secondary or vocational programmes is extremely low. They live mainly in poor, underdeveloped communities and experience a social environment that does not encourage them to continue their education.

During the past decade, Serbia was confronted with a large number of refugees and displaced persons from ex-Yugoslav republics and Kosovo. The number of refugees and displaced children in 2000 amounted to over 47,000, i.e. 5.3% of the total number of primary school pupils. After the first wave of refugees entered the country, legislation was introduced which provided them with social welfare benefits, health insurance, and temporary accommodation. However, efforts towards systematic social and educational integration were not made. Support was offered by schools, humanitarian organizations, and NGOs, and included psychosocial assistance as well as the supply of textbooks and working materials.

Although the largest share of the educational budget is spent on the salaries of teachers and other employees, the figures are still smaller than in adjacent countries and greatly below the European average. The situation in this region has improved during the last two or three years, but teachers and other staff are still dissatisfied with their wages. Along with the low status of the teaching profession and of education as a social activity, the low income of teachers is one of the main reasons for the decreasing attractiveness of this profession.

Prior to the reform, co-operation between schools and parents was limited to communication regarding the pupils' performance, the implementation of various educational programmes for parents, and financial and technical support. The reform has increased the possibilities for parents to participate in schools' decision-making processes, first of all through the parents' council established in each educational institution.

Organizational context and organization of the present school system

The Serbian school system is subject to legal regulations. In the previous period, separate laws were passed for each educational level. However, a fundamental educational reform requires the revision of the laws concerning *all* levels of education. As a matter of fact in the beginning of the year 2003, a basic Law of Education was enacted, which was to delineate the foundations of pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. However, in 2004 already, the structure of primary education has been modified again by a new education act. In any case, these legal documents should regulate the general principles and goals of education; management and financing structures; the functioning of the official bodies of the Department of Education, which safeguard and improve the quality of education; the design and implementation of the educational programmes; pupils' rights and obligations; the rights and obligations of teachers and counsellors; and the supervision of the practice of all educational institutions.

The fundamental principles of the Serbian education system are the following: decentralization, democratisation, and depolarisation in education; education that meets the requirements of an information-based, technological, and global society; education as a continuous process; and equal educational opportunities for everybody.

The organization of the school system according to these principles is contingent on several factors. First, equal educational opportunities need to be accessible for everybody, including the socially and culturally disadvantaged. Second, high-quality education has to include instruction in languages, mathematics, the sciences, the arts, culture, health, ecology, and information technology; in addition, it has to take both the age and the level of education of children with special needs into account. Finally, a maximum of horizontal and vertical mobility within the school system needs to be guaranteed.

The general objectives of education in Serbia include the following: the development of pupils' intellectual capacity and knowledge in harmony with their developmental needs, abilities, and interest, and with the aim of providing an understanding of nature, society, individuality, and the environment; the fostering and development of children's health and physical abilities; preparation for work, further education, and independent learning; practice of skills enabling pupils to make decisions independently and responsibly with respect to their future life; the creation of an awareness of the Serbian nation, State, traditions and culture; incorporation into the process of European integration; the development of a conscious understanding of the importance of preserving the nature and the environment; the development of

the basic social and moral values of a democratic, humanistic, and tolerant society that respects the plurality of values and encourages individual systems of values; the development of respect for human and civil rights; the encouragement of ethnic and religious tolerance; making pupils aware of the significance of friendship and the values of living together; and the development of individual responsibility.

The administration of the education system is organized on national, regional, municipal, and school levels. On the national level, responsibility falls within the purview of the Ministry of Education and Sport as well as several other bodies. The Educational Council, for instance, is the supreme advisory institution responsible for educational policy. In addition, developmental and advisory bodies as well as research institutions exist, such as the Centre for Evaluation, the Centre for the Professional Advancement of Teaching Personnel, the Centre for Curriculum and Textbook Development, the Centre for Accreditation, the Centre for Vocational Training and Adult Education, the Centre for Artistic Education, and the Centre for the Education of People in Need of Special Social Assistance. General educational policies are also decided centrally. These include the basic strategies of the education system, educational legislation, the basis for curriculum programmes and textbooks, the annual budget and finance plans, external evaluation procedures and assistance in the self-evaluation of the schools, pedagogical supervision, criteria for the infrastructure of educational institutions, and the licensing of teachers. The administrative bodies at the school level consist of the head teacher, whose task it is to run and supervise the functioning of the schools, and the school board, which organizes the schools' operation and elects both the head teacher and the members of the parents' council. The organizational tasks performed at the school level include the administration and management of schools, the development of the schools' programmes, internal evaluation and self-evaluation, and the drafting of the development plans for institutions.

The performance of schools is evaluated, and their quality assured, by means of several instruments. First, the schools' compliance with legal regulations is supervised on the municipal level. Second, external evaluation measures, falling within the responsibility of the Centre for Evaluation, have been introduced gradually since early 2003. Third, the Ministry of Education offers pedagogical advisory services, which assist the schools in their self-evaluation efforts. Since 2003, Serbia has participated in two international projects, namely the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Both are conducted under the auspices of the Centre for Evaluation and the Institute for Pedagogical Research. Results have not yet been published. The Centre for Evaluation also plans to introduce measures to assess pupils' achievements nationally. In 2004, evaluations were carried out involving pupils of the third grade of primary school.

Public educational institutions are financed mainly from national and local budgets. It has been estimated that, during the last few years, almost 90% of the total funds have been provided from the national budget, whereas only slightly more than 10% have come from local budgets. The present processes of decentralizing the education system necessitate greater involvement of the municipalities in the fund-

ing of education; nevertheless, the government will still have to provide the minimum of material and technical resources that are necessary for the operation of all schools. The total expenditure on education in Serbia is very low; the percentage of the gross national product (GNP) spent on education decreased from 3.62% in 1990 to 3.36% in 1999. From the educational budget, 45.3% was spent on primary education in 1999, which corresponds to merely 1.46% of the GNP. The expenditure on secondary education, which is not compulsory, amounted to 0.77% of GNP. Of the expenditure on primary education, employees' salaries made up 76.8%, the cost of materials and of social services 16.9%, and funds intended for capital investment only 1.3%.

Private institutions are emerging in parallel to the state school system, as the operation of private schools has been legally regulated at all levels of education. Their total number is difficult to determine, because the work of a certain number of them has not been legalized. Indeed, they have to fulfil certain conditions for opening and functioning. For legal reasons, private primary schools were not established until 2003.

The still existing centralization of the school system is noticeable even in the sphere of design and creation of curricula and syllabi. In accordance with the general conception of education, the schools' programmes are delineated more on the basis of national guidelines than on the individual schools' capabilities. On the level of preschool, primary and secondary education curricula and syllabi are issued by the Ministry of Education and National Educational Council. Primary school curricula and syllabi are specially elaborated and structured. They also determine the annual and weekly number of lessons per subject, curricular contents classified by subjects and grades as well as teaching instructions. Both the national General Guidelines for School Curricula and the curricula for the individual grades define educational goals which include the level of knowledge, abilities, and skills that the pupils are to acquire. The emphasis of educational policy has thus changed from the implementation of a rigid curriculum, which was the dominant approach, to an education that is oriented towards results. By defining educational objectives and organizing the teaching process according to these, the interdependence of the school system and educational quality can be attained. At the same time, education in Serbia is going to be decentralized and the autonomy of schools as well as teachers with respect to curriculum development to be increased. The national curriculum provides the framework for the schools' programmes as well as educational goals. The curriculum comprises the basic subjects that are to be taught throughout primary and secondary school; these include the Serbian language, mathematics, a foreign language, and the native language for members of national minorities. In addition, compulsory and elective subjects are broken down with respect to individual grades. The subjects are, moreover, grouped into five domains:

- Social studies and philosophy;
- Languages, literature, and communication;
- The natural sciences and technology;
- Art; and
- Physical training and health education.

By integrating the subjects into domains, cohesion of the teaching process is ensured; the pupils have the chance to develop a system of knowledge and understanding. The national curriculum finally provides for a minimum and maximum number of lessons for each stage of primary and secondary school per year as well as a total number of lessons for certain subjects and domains. In addition to the basic, compulsory, and elective subjects, schools are obliged to offer optional, extra-curricular programmes and activities. The share of these activities in the curriculum increases from grade to grade; it is largest in vocational secondary schools.

The new conception of the curriculum requires methodical approaches different from those that have been used before. The stress has shifted from the process of teaching to the process of learning, to the pupils and their activities, and, especially, to their individual development. The following principles have thus been established:

- Education should be oriented towards the processes and results of learning, rather than towards presenting the content of academic disciplines;
- Education is to be based on standards, the observance and quality of which should be evaluated systematically;
- Education ought to be based on an integrated curriculum, which both horizontally and vertically connects the different subjects in the educational domains;
- The quality of education should be safeguarded not only by the teachers and schools but also by other interested groups, such as parents and the local community;
- Education is to respect individual differences between pupils with regard to their method of learning and the speed of their progress;
- Education should emphasize participation, co-operation, and methods of active learning and teaching;
- Education should respect the experiences and knowledge of pupils obtained outside of school and integrate these skills with the content of instruction;
- Education ought to develop a positive attitude in pupils towards school and education, and encourage their interest in continuous learning; and
- Education is to be a process that develops pupils' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.

The present school system

The Serbian school system is a unique system comprising several relatively independent but correlated segments, i.e. levels of education that are mutually connected; this structure ensures the continuity of education. The system consists of institutions of pre-primary, primary (compulsory), secondary, post-secondary and higher education.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education is a part of the general educational system. Its objectives include the socialization and individual development of children, acquisition of the native language and culture, and the provision of the necessary conditions for the development of the pupils' further individual needs. Pre-school also ought to prepare children for school and help them comprehend basic forms of education.

Pre-primary education comprises two stages; children up to the age of three attend nursery school and those older than three years go to kindergarten. In these institutions, children learn and play in age-based groups. Pre-school institutions provide diverse forms of education based on alternating cycles of guided and free activities. While the former include those activities that are organized by a teacher and carried out collectively, the latter emphasize individualization and free choice. In general, at the pre-primary level playing is perceived as an activity of special developmental importance. The administrative board of the kindergartens formulates the programmes for these institutions based on general principles which take into account the needs of children, parents, and the local community.

Compulsory school

Compulsory education is realized in primary school. According to the legal regulations of 2004, school education is obligatory for eight years and is organized in two stages. The first stage includes grades 1 to 4 of primary school. At this stage, the lower classes of primary school, instruction is organized on the basis of classes for which one class teacher is responsible. Emphasis is placed at this stage, on the development of basic skills, knowledge, and abilities, taking the children's individual experiences into account. The second stage comprises grades 5 to 8. In the upper classes of primary school subject teaching is usual. Beginning with natural phenomena from the immediate environment of the child, this stage introduces the natural sciences.

The age limit for entering primary school is seven years; children who are aged between six and a half and seven and a half by 1 September of the current year will be enrolled in the first grade. Admission to grade 1 is contingent on the child's intellectual, physical, emotional, and social maturity, which is tested prior to enrolment. Younger children, i.e. between six and six and a half years of age, can also enter primary school subject to approval by a special commission. These commissions are formed on the municipal level and comprise school pedagogues, school psychologists, paediatricians, and teachers.

The general objectives of compulsory primary education in Serbia, as defined by the law, are to qualify pupils actively and responsibly to participate in and contribute to economic, social, and cultural life. Moreover, its purpose is to enable children to satisfy individual needs and interests, and to develop their own personalities and potential while respecting others and their identities, needs, and interests. Primary education thus provides general education, respecting at the same time the individual needs and interests of pupils. Furthermore, the last grades of primary education has to provide vocational orientation.

In compulsory education, the syllabi of basic, obligatory, and optional subjects are centrally regulated for each school year. The schools can, however, decide how they organize the implementation, i.e. whether subjects are taught in the form of traditional lessons or in larger complexes of integrated subjects. From a list of subjects or topics, schools can choose and offer in their programmes those that they can adequately provide, and those that pupils and parents are interested in. The number of optional subjects offered in the school programme has to be at least twice as large as the number of compulsory subjects.

In the first and second grades of primary education, pupils' performance is assessed qualitatively, i.e. descriptively. In the other grades of primary education and in secondary education, both qualitative and quantitative marking strategies are used, while for the final assessment numeric marks have to be used. Descriptive marking is a new strategy in the Serbian education system. It is based on the accomplishment of defined educational results and reflects the pupils' continuous development and progress.

Evaluation as the continuous assessment of accomplished goals is contingent on explicit standards. The preparation and implementation of standards by which the pupil's achievement can be assessed has only been initiated recently. The systematic application of evaluation measures over the coming years will gradually consolidate the standards.

A new policy on the publication of textbooks has opened new possibilities. A variety of several textbooks for the same subject of the same grade can now be authorized for use and published if they meet minimal standards of quality, content, didactical arrangement, and design. Both official and private publishers are developing textbooks in parallel for the first time in 2004-05.

Secondary education

Secondary education is not compulsory. While it is not divided into stages, there are different types of secondary institutions. General education is offered in *gimnazija* which may be both general and specialized secondary schools, and thus ensure continuity of education. On the other hand, there are vocational secondary schools and (lower) vocational schools, which prepare adolescents for a career in a variety of jobs.

The programmes of *gimnazija* and vocational secondary schools take four years, those of (lower) vocational schools three or four years. With the diploma of full secondary education, pupils acquire the right to enrol in tertiary institutions (post secondary or higher education). With the completion of vocational secondary education, they acquire in the same time vocational qualifications, which allow them to take up a job or to continue their education on a higher level if certain requirements are met. With the completion of a lower secondary school they only acquire vocational qualifications for certain jobs. However, they do not have the right to enroll in higher education.

Pre-primary institutions which work with children of up to three years of age in nursery schools, employ nurses having at least completed secondary education and who have been trained in paediatrics or pedagogy. In kindergartens, children

between three and seven years of age are supervised and instructed by teachers with a higher level of formal education. In primary and secondary schools, teachers are required to have appropriate general and pedagogical training. In order to improve educational and pedagogical quality, institutions employ a variety of experts, such as pedagogues, psychologists, librarians, and, if required, speech therapists, in addition to social and health workers, teachers for special educational needs, and teachers for music, art, and physical education.

According to new legal regulations, teachers, professors, and professional consultants have to be licensed. The Centre for the Professional Advancement of Teaching Personnel issues these licences for a period of five years. The requirements for obtaining and retaining a licence include not only adequate education and qualifications, but also participation in approved programmes of further vocational training over a given period of time. By taking part in these courses in addition to their regular teaching, teachers, professors, and professional counsellors can also obtain the titles of 'pedagogical counsellor', 'mentor', 'instructor', and 'senior pedagogical counsellor'.

Children with special educational needs

Children with developmental difficulties can receive their education in special schools for mentally challenged and physically disabled children and for children with sensory disorders or disorders in their social behaviour (altogether eighty-five schools), in special classes at regular schools (seventy primary and eleven secondary schools), and in regular classes where pupils with special needs are taught together with other pupils. All children who need special attention are medically examined, assessed by a commission of experts, and consequently classified as to which type of school they ought to attend. In practice, however, there are significant difficulties in this process, which are reflected in the disproportionately large number of Roma and other socially disadvantaged children in special schools. The infrastructure of special schools and classes is unevenly distributed across Serbia; most of them are concentrated in the larger regional centres. Furthermore, as a result of the small total number of these institutions, it is necessary to separate the pupils from their families if they do not live in the vicinity of a special school. Experts have estimated that almost 85% of children with special needs do not go to school at all. While 95% of those pupils who attend special courses in primary school complete these, only about 30% of them continue their education at secondary school level. Reformed strategies for the education of children with special needs encourage an integrative approach wherever possible. In order to achieve this objective, teachers involved in integrative education efforts are to be specially trained. Moreover, the number of pupils with special needs joining the school system is to be increased, and programmes for the education of children from marginal and disadvantaged groups, as well as for talented children, are to be developed.

The education of children from national minority groups

The education of children from national minority groups is ensured on all three levels, namely pre-primary, primary, and secondary education in Serbia. Primary

and secondary education are provided in the first languages of the following national minorities: Hungarian, Albanian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak, and Turkish. Instruction is given either in the minority language, bilingually, or in the Serbian language, in addition to which both the native language and culture of the respective national minority are taught. Publishers of textbooks are obliged to print textbooks in all relevant minority languages.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The system of tertiary education in Serbia consists of programmes offered by colleges and universities. Every year, the government decides on the number of students who can enter each state university; in addition, it determines the number of students who will be financially supported from the national budget. On average, approximately 33,000 students enrol every year, half of whom are supported by the State. Each year, about 12,000 students graduate. Private universities can determine both the number of students admitted and the range of the tuition fees. 30% of students pursue degrees in the social sciences; 16% in the humanities; 12% in medicine; 7% in biotechnology; 9% in the natural sciences and engineering; 24% in engineering; and 2% in the fine arts.

Colleges offer non-university programmes of two or three years' duration. The courses provide theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for advanced executive jobs with organization, management, and other specializations.

Universities are organized into groups of faculties and academies of art; they represent the most advanced educational and scientific institutions, and thus carry out research, encourage the development of the arts, and promote the advancement of education. Universities award three academic titles: a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and a doctor's degree. In order to obtain the first degree, students have to complete four years of basic studies; engineering and biomedical faculties require five and five or six years of studies respectively. The number of obligatory examinations varies among faculties between twenty and fifty, in other words between five and ten exams per academic year. After the completion of two further years of studies at postgraduate level, a master's degree can be obtained. Doctoral studies, in contrast, do not take the form of courses; students work instead on a research project and write a dissertation, which is presented to faculty and university committees.

In the mid-1990s, the establishment of private universities was permitted. By the beginning of the present decade, only three private universities, each with a variety of faculties, had been opened in addition to two separate faculties. While the general legal regulations apply to both private and state universities, there are differences in the modes of financing and ownership.

Administrative boards at university and faculty level manage the operation of the institutions; they comprise professors and advisors. The boards are responsible for administrative activities, such as the election of the Dean, nominations and promotions, revisions of the curriculum plans and programmes, and the approval of dissertations. State universities are financed from the national budget and from their

own resources. The latter include revenue from tuition fees, research projects, and co-operation with industry or the public sector.

In recent years, major efforts have been made to reconcile the Serbian system of tertiary education with the requirements of the Bologna process. This reform aims at an increase in efficiency by reducing the number of drop-outs and the length of university studies. Furthermore, mechanisms for the control and evaluation of the teaching process are to be established. Finally, students are to be seen as partners in the education system.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The Serbian school system is presently in a process of reform. In contrast to reforms of other social activities and processes, the transformation of the education system is a very complex and prolonged process that involves several phases. After an analysis of the present state of the system in order to identify problems and difficulties, strategic solutions are to be developed, prepared, and implemented. Subsequently, evaluation measures are carried out. At present, the reform is being gradually implemented; initial results have already been assessed. These comprehensive and planned efforts will be continued over the coming years; in addition, a system for evaluating the results will be developed, concentrating on the issues described below.

Education and professional advancement of teachers

The teaching profession has been high on the reform agenda during the last two years; new systematic approaches to professional conduct and further training of teachers have been introduced. Comprehensive programmes of professional development have been developed with institutional support and have been applied to teaching practice. The next major task will be the establishment of a reformed system of teacher training. The education provided by the teacher training academies has to be adapted to the needs of the school system. The success of this process, however, is contingent on the reform of the system of higher education that has just been initiated.

Quality assurance

Since the former education system did not provide instruments to evaluate and analyse educational processes and results systematically, an entirely new system of quality assurance had to be established. During the past two years, much was achieved; the necessity and importance of evaluation was promoted and systematic, institutional solutions for the external and internal evaluation of the operation of schools were developed. The main task over the next few years will be the definition of distinct standards for the conditions, application, and quality of education. At the same time, it is necessary to develop and improve various procedures of evaluation and to train teachers and other employees in their implementation.

Administration and management of the school system and educational institutions

The administration of the education system is central to the success of the educational reform. New approaches to school management, however, depend on the functioning of the Serbian social system in general. The following measures have been initiated already: decentralization of the school system, establishment of new vocational institutions, and a reorganization of the Ministry of Education and Sport. Furthermore, the significance of planning in education has been enhanced. In the next few years, it will be necessary to implement training programmes for all employees involved in decision-making processes, especially at the school level; to establish principles for the successful operation of all new institutions; to promote a new style of school management that will ensure the development of the school as an institution; and to initiate the use of information systems in educational management.

Curriculum development

A reform of the school programmes was launched in 2003. Principal conceptual solutions were delineated; their application in the first grade of primary school has begun successfully. More detailed programmes for each grade as well as for every level and profile of education are to be developed. Moreover, new curricula and standards will be developed and their implementation prepared. Furthermore, methodological manuals and guides for teachers as well as a more efficient support system for teachers and schools that are working according to a new curriculum need to be provided. Finally, the development of educational programmes is to be brought into line with the requirements presented by financial and personnel resources.

The preparation and publishing of new textbooks is a further central objective of educational reform. During 2003, work on standards for textbooks began; it is necessary, however, to improve the quality of domestic textbook production and to establish mechanisms for the adequate selection of textbooks.

Financing of education

The financing models of the Serbian education system are to be adapted to the European framework. New mechanisms need to be developed and implemented. Particular emphasis has to be put on the issue of transparency, first of all at local and school levels.

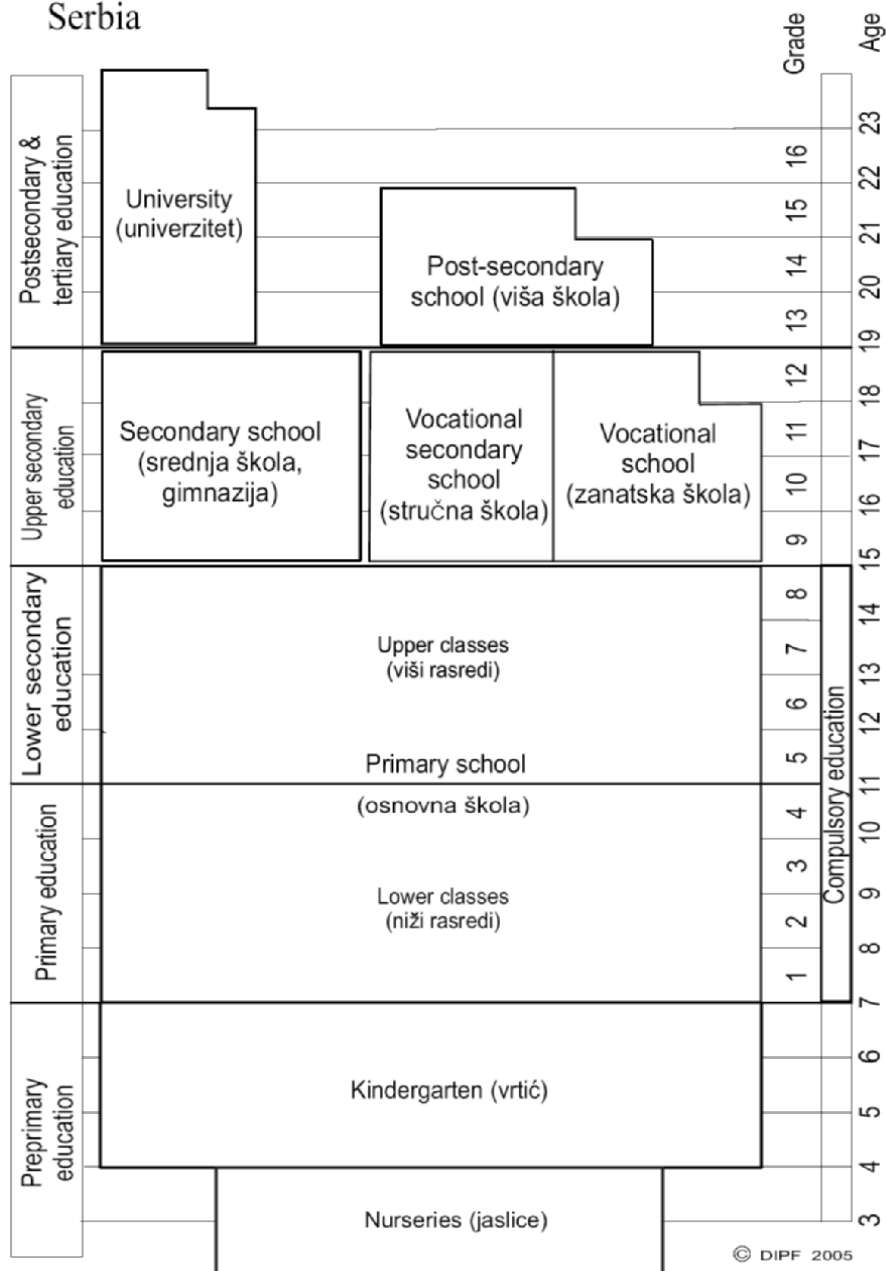
It can be assumed that the Serbian social system will develop towards more openness to reform of its subsystems. Thus, all efforts to reform the education system that have been, and will be, initiated depend on the following principles: transparency, a high level of general agreement on planned reform measures arising from comprehensive consultation procedures, the enhancement of the professional and individual responsibility of everybody involved in education, and the systematic assistance and support of those who implement the reforms.

References

- Delors, Z. (Ministarstvo prosvete Republike Srbije): *Obrazovanje – skrivena riznica (Education – A Hidden Treasure) (UNESCO: Report on Education of the International Commission for the Twenty-first Century)*. Belgrade 1996.
- Havelka, N./Hebib, E./Baucal, A. (Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta i Centar za evaluaciju): *Ocenjivanje za razvoj učenika (Assessment – A Manual for Teachers)*. Belgrade 2003.
- Ministarstvo prosvete Republike Srbije: *Strategije razvoja i reforme obrazovanja u svetu (Development Strategies and the Reforms of Education in the World)*. Belgrade 1997.
- Ministarstvo prosvete Republike Srbije: *Evropska dimenzija u obrazovanju. (The European Dimension of Education)*. Belgrade 1997.
- Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta Republike Srbije: *Kvalitetno obrazovanje za sve - put ka razvijenom društvu. (Quality Education for All – A Way for a Developed Society)*. Belgrade 2002.
- Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta: *Reforma obrazovanja u Republici Srbiji: Školski programme - koncepcija, strategija, implementacija (Commission for Curriculum Development: Educational Reform in Serbia: Curriculum – Conception, Strategy, Implementation)*. Belgrade 2003.
- Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta Republike Srbije: *Opšte osnove školskog programa. (Commission for the Development of the Curriculum and Commission for Educational Areas: General Basis of the Curriculum)*. Belgrade 2003.
- Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta Republike Srbije: *Posebne osnove školskog programa za I razred osnovnog obrazovanja i vaspitanja. (Commission for the Development of the Curriculum and Commission for Educational Areas: Separate Foundations of the First Grade Curriculum for Primary Education)*. Belgrade 2003.
- Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta Republike Srbije: *Posebne osnove školskog programa za VII razred osnovnog obrazovanja i vaspitanja. (Commission for the Development of the Curriculum and Commission for Educational Areas: Separate Foundations for the Seventh Grade Curriculum for Primary Education)*. Belgrade 2003.
- Ministarstvo prosvete i sporta Republike Srbije: *Kvalitetno obrazovanje za sve – izazovi reforme obrazovanja u Srbiji (Quality Education for All – Challenges of Educational reform in Serbia)*. Belgrade 2004.
- Prosvetni pregled: *Zajednički plan i programme vaspitno-obrazovnog rada u osnovnoj školi. (Curriculum and Syllabus of the Educational Process in Primary Education)*. Belgrade 1996.
- Prosvetni pregled: *Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja i obrazovanja dece uzrasta od 3 do 7 godina. (The Basis of the Pre-school Educational Programme for Children between Three and Seven Years of Age)*. Belgrade 1996.
- Republički zavod za statistiku: *Statistički godisnjak Srbije 2003 (Statistical Yearbook of Serbia 2003)*. Belgrade.
- Trnavac, N./Hebib, E.: *The System of Education in Yugoslavia, Educational Systems of Balkan Countries: Issues and Trends*. In: *Balkan Society for Pedagogy and Education*. Thessaloniki 2000, pp. 211-250.
- UNICEF: *Sveobuhvatna analiza sistema osnovnog obrazovanja u Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji (A Comprehensive Analysis of the Primary Education System in the FR Yugoslavia)*. Belgrade 2001.
- Yugoslav Commission for UNESCO: *Development of Education in the FR Yugoslavia (1945-95) – The report for the 45th session of the International Conference on Education UNESCO-BIE: Geneva, 1996*. Belgrade.

- Službeni list Republike Srbije: The Child Welfare Law. Belgrade 1992.
Službeni list Republike Srbije: The Primary School Law. Belgrade 1992.
Službeni list Republike Srbije: The Secondary School Law. Belgrade 1992.
Službeni list Republike Srbije: The University Law. Belgrade 1992.
Službeni list Republike Srbije: The Bases of the System of Education Law. Belgrade 2003.
Službeni list Republike Srbije: The Act on Modification and Extension of the Educational System Law. Belgrade 2004.

Serbia



Slovak Republic

History of the school education system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of schooling

The Slovak nation descends from tribes of Western Slavs who arrived in the territory of present-day Slovakia at the turn of the sixth century. In the period of the united state of Great Morava (830 to 908), the two missionary brothers, St. Cyril and St. Methodius, were invited to help in establishing an independent church province. They created the Glagolitic alphabet, translated the Bible into Old Church Slavonic, and disseminated culture. Schools on the territory of present-day Slovakia were first founded in the ninth century in cultural centres, as was the community of Nitra. In the schools, Old Slavonic (*staroslovienčina*) was the language of instruction. Great Morava disintegrated under the pressure of the East Frankish Empire and the invasion by Magyar tribes, which established the Hungarian state in the Danube area. The history of the Slovaks was thus intertwined with the history of the Hungarian Empire for the thousand years until 1918.

The development of the Western Christian Church led to the establishment of schools attached to monasteries (convent schools), parishes (parochial schools), and ecclesiastical chapters (capitular schools). The curriculum (in Latin) contained the seven liberal arts comprising the ancient trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). The development of towns led to the establishment of town schools. The educational network at this time was, however, very sparse.

The *Academia Istropolitana* was established in Bratislava in 1465, during the rule of Matthias Corvinus. The academy was modelled on the Italian University of Bologna. It offered humanistic and antischolastic programmes, but it closed down in 1491 as the result of a great economic decline. Jesuits established the University of Trnava in 1635, which was relocated to Budapest in 1777, and the University of Košice in 1657. In the sixteenth century, the Reformation spurred the expansion of Protestant schools. Guilds provided training for apprentices. During the rule of Empress Maria Theresia, practical vocational schools were founded in response to the growing importance of manufacturing production and the modernization of mining. In 1735 a secondary school of mining was established in the city of Banská Štiavnica. In 1763 the enlightened absolutist ruler, Maria Theresia, established in the same city the first school of mining in the world – the *Banská akadémia*. The *Collegium oeconomicum* in Senec was held in high repute.

Empress Maria Theresia's reform project of 1777, the *ratio educationis*, introduced new administrative and organizational principles for schooling, curricular innovation, and general school attendance for the age group between six and twelve. Slovak national awareness awakened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The

first written form of the Slovak language was officially codified (1847), and the first Slovak political programme (1848) was formulated. The great transformation of the school system in the nineteenth century was strongly influenced by the industrial revolution. The 1849 reform restructured the eight-year *gymnázia*, while the *reálne gymnázia*, the *reformné reálne gymnázia*, and the *reálky* (with a focus on natural sciences) came into being as new school types. Since Slovakia occupied a culturally deprived and economically peripheral position in the (Austro-)Hungarian Empire, no university could be set up, and teaching in Slovak was generally suppressed. After the introduction of six years' compulsory school attendance in 1868, the system of primary 'people's schools' (*ľudové školy*), intermediate schools (*meštianske školy*), and, from 1881, teacher training institutes (*učiteľské ústavy*) developed. The establishment of kindergartens grew rapidly after 1891. At the close of the century, the first lower and upper vocational schools were set up on the basis of non-academic courses in intermediate schools.

The period to 1918 was characterized by strong Hungarization. It followed the idea of a uniform state with a single language. Originally, only three gymnasiums with Slovak as the language of instruction were tolerated, and later even these were forcibly closed down. Furthermore, the only Slovak Cultural Society, *Matica slovenská*, which engaged in a variety of educational activities, was forcibly dissolved. Only a few church-run primary schools taught children in the Slovak language.

Following the end of World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Czechoslovak Republic was formed. Among the 'founding fathers' of the Republic, the most prominent of which were the Czech academics Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, the Slovak politician and General of the French Army Milan Rastislav Štefánik played a central role. The so-called Minor School Act of 1922 extended compulsory school attendance to eight years. The educational network developed rapidly. In 1919 the Comenius University (*Univerzita Komenského*) was founded in Bratislava, and in 1937 the College of Technology (*Vysoká škola technická*) was established in Košice. In the face of Hitler's threat to divide Slovakia among its neighbouring states, the Slovak Republic was proclaimed in 1939. It lasted until 1944-45. During World War II, the Slovak National Uprising (1944) was a clear rejection of Fascism and Nazism. The Czechoslovak state was restored. In the elections preceding the coming to power of the Communists in 1948, the majority of Slovaks voted for non-socialist and non-communist parties.

The School Act of 1948 introduced a uniform nine-year school and followed, especially in the early 1950s, the Soviet model. In the Slovak part of the Czechoslovak Republic, later the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, sixteen higher education institutions were established.

In 1968 the crisis of the Communist regime brought about the policy known as 'socialism with a human face', with Prime Minister Dubček, a Slovak, as its leading personality. It was, however, crushed by the army of the Soviet Union and some of its Warsaw Pact allies. Consequently, the so-called period of 'normalization' of the Czech and Slovak Republics – the unitary Czechoslovak Republic had become a (formally) federal state in 1968 – resulted in strong demagoguery and a renewal of

‘programmes of communist socio-affective education’. In 1976 the Communist Party approved a programme of extensive educational reforms under the title ‘The Prospective Development of Czechoslovakia’s Educational System’ (Ministerstvo školstva SSR 1976). The programme aimed, for example, at maintaining the existing structure of three streams of upper secondary school but with more uniform curricula, and at extending compulsory schooling to ten years. The period of ‘normalization’ gave way to democratic reforms in November 1989.

The Czech and the Slovak Republics split, and the Slovak Republic became a fully separate and independent state and a member of the United Nations. In 2004 the Slovak Republic was accepted as a member state of the European Union.

Reforms and innovations

After the ‘Velvet Revolution’ in November 1989, profound changes occurred in all sectors of society. In the education system, the most important transformations were as follows: All schools abandoned the direct inculcation of communist ideology. Private and denominational schools, non-existent for forty years, were founded (and supported by the State) at all educational levels. Minority education was extended, predominantly for the Magyar schools, and many research and development projects for Romany education were initiated. The definition of compulsory schooling was tightened, so that all citizens received formal education. The quantity and quality of pre-school education, now received by nearly 90% of five-year-old children, rose as a result of improved curricula and a growing number of university-trained teachers. Schools were allowed to determine 10% of the teaching hours in the curriculum and 30% of course subject matter. Compulsory foreign language courses and an increased number of optional courses were introduced. Bilingual instruction was introduced in an increased number of secondary schools. Alternative school curricula and textbooks (e.g. primers) were designed and introduced. Innovative (so-called alternative) programmes for pre-schools and schools were experimentally evaluated and introduced (the Waldorf School Model, Integrated Thematic Teaching, Open School, School with Humanistic Orientation, etc.). A new concept for the history curriculum was developed. General environmental and health education was strengthened. Two new qualification exams (attests) for teachers were introduced, and the programme for the continuing education of pedagogic professionals was developed to enhance their professional competencies. The inclusion of disabled pupils in regular schools was regulated by legislation. Achievement standards were set and consequently a model for the school-leaving examination was evaluated. At specialized secondary vocational schools and secondary vocational centres, innovative fields and forms of training, including a modular system, were introduced, and international co-operative projects were set up (e.g. with PHARE, the Netherlands, and Scotland). Schools acquired the status of autonomous legal bodies. Universities gained academic rights and freedoms. The credit system replaced the old scheme. Interest in higher education increased. An independent state school inspectorate was established at three administrative levels. New legislation and programmes were introduced for educational and psycho-pedagogical counselling, special school pedagogues, special teacher assistants, and school activities (extra-curricular activi-

ties, clubs for school pupils, leisure education, etc.). Slovakia was accepted into the International Evaluation Association and now participates in TIMSS, PISA, CE, SITES, etc. (Ministerstvo školstva 2001a, b, c).

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Among the greatest achievements of the 1989 Velvet Revolution was the establishment of freedom, the introduction of a democratic regime, and the opening of the country to the outside world. These changes brought with them a vision of vast possibilities and the genuine hope of rapidly altering obsolete stereotypes and dependencies, and of improving human, social, and economic aspects of life. It was also a remarkable chance for the schools. Current educational policy is strongly informed by the post-November transformations of society as a whole, and especially of the economy. This influence has manifested itself above all in a new orientation of the education system towards democracy and pluralism, and more specifically in the free choice of educational career (on the part of parents and pupils); equality of educational chances and the universal right to access to education; participation of parents in school administration; democratization of the organization of the educational system; decentralization and liberalization of decision-making in many matters; subsidiarity in educational administration; alternative (private, church, or mixed) schools; diversification of organizational forms; quality, effectiveness, and accountability in education; European citizenship; respect for individuality; learner-oriented teaching with an emphasis on creativity; learner independence, self-responsibility, and co-operation; and recognition of the need for a lifelong learning-teaching system (Švec 1999).

Educational targets and general functions of the school system

The basic aim of school education until 1989 was the inculcation of socialist/communist values in their intellectual, moral, aesthetic, vocational, polytechnical, and physical aspects. The present Concept for the Development of Education in Slovakia (Ministerstvo/Ministry 2001b) defines the goals of schooling as the development of: (1) the desire for lifelong learning and self-improvement; (2) ethical orientation and positive attitudes to oneself, others, work, and out-of-work activities; (3) self-responsibility and responsibility for others, self-regulation and self-control, and the physical care of oneself and others; (4) social conduct and social skills; (5) cognitive skills, especially in order to solve problems, orient oneself in an information society, understand and apply knowledge, and adapt to today's dramatic changes; (6) creative skills and the concept of the self and the world as open and improvable systems.

A systematic framework for global educational purposes and intentions is provided by the extension of the philosophical (and not only the Cartesian) concept of human needs as follows: I know (think and explain), act (produce and transform), value (decide and select), and communicate with and understand myself and others, therefore I am (Švec 2002). Taking the idea of human needs as a basis, it has been useful in the reform of curriculum policy to identify universal human needs and

goals for (ontological) lifelong learning, i.e. the needs and goals of (epistemological) learning to know, (praxological) learning to act, (axiological) learning to value, and (semiological) learning to communicate with and understand oneself and others.

Socio-economic context

The long-term priorities of the Slovak Republic are: to develop democracy based on a mature civil society, social solidarity, and security; to build a modern state and public administration including balanced regional development; to secure a high level of national education, a high quality of life, and the protection of natural resources. These priorities will not be achieved without more attention to the education system. In Slovak education, a paramount problem is the very low level of financing of schools and the poor (below average) salaries of school teachers. Expenditure for education and science is only 3.7% of GDP.

Since 1990, emphasis has been placed on ethnic, racial, and religious tolerance; multicultural education; and the intercultural education of pupils. The Constitution guarantees ethnic minorities the right to broad development, and especially the right to develop their own culture, to distribute and acquire knowledge in their mother tongue, and to establish minority cultural organizations and educational and cultural institutions. In Slovakia the ethnic structure is as follows: 85.7% Slovaks, 10.5% Hungarians, 1.6% Romany, 1.1% Czechs, 0.6% Ruthenians and Ukrainians, and 0.5% other ethnic minorities. Some of the minorities are large enough to be instructed in their own language at all levels of the system.

Pre-school education is provided for minorities in the Slovak-Hungarian, Hungarian, Slovak-Ukrainian, Ukrainian, Slovak-German, and German languages. Primary and secondary schools have four basic alternatives: (a) all subjects are taught in the mother tongue (with the exception of the majority language); (b) some subjects are taught in the mother tongue ('combined bilingual schools'); (c) all subjects, except for the native language of the minority, are taught in Slovak; (d) bilingual schools with alternative subject teaching. After 1990 the school network was extended. The Slovak Hungarians have their own university, the state Hungarian University of Hans Selye in Komarno. The education of the children of the Romany minority is a national and specifically socio-cultural and pedagogical problem. From 1993 to 1999, the education of Romany children was understood as the education of the Romany minority. All the educational programme documents were thus developed in this sense. In contrast, the projects developed since 1999 have aimed at the inclusion of Romany children in Slovak language pre-schools and schools, stressing communication skills, self-reliance, and personal hygiene.

The number of immigrants and refugees is increasing. However, the educational and pedagogical issues relating to these socio-cultural groups have not yet been solved.

International analysis of the PISA results shows that in the Slovak Republic (as in Belgium, Germany, and Hungary) large socio-economic inequalities in the distribution of educational opportunities exist.

The qualification of teachers and principals

Kindergarten teachers are trained as a rule at upper secondary vocational schools of pedagogy with a four-year programme of study. Qualifications for kindergarten teaching can also be obtained through a two-year post-secondary teacher education programme, and university level training is provided in some colleges of pedagogical science.

Teacher education for elementary schools is provided by a four-year course and for the lower secondary schools by a five-year course for teaching two academic subjects. Studies are completed with a State examination (*štátna záverečná skúška*). Upper secondary school teachers are trained at the various university colleges, following the specific character of their particular subject areas. The study programme lasts five years and is completed with a State Final Examination. Graduates from economic, technological, and agricultural universities can also obtain professional pedagogical qualifications through continuing education programmes at the universities.

According to Decree No. 42/1996, the training of head teachers (school principals) covers the fields of management, pedagogy, and pedagogical psychology. Training lasts two years as a rule. The defence of a final thesis and a final interview before an examination commission complete the training. In-service training includes continuous education, specialized innovations, specialized qualifications, and extended studies.

The number of prospective teachers has been decreasing in recent years. Even though the proportion of undergraduates in teacher education programmes is significantly higher in Slovakia than the average of the other EU countries, only a fraction of these graduates actually enter the teaching profession. This is especially the case for teachers of foreign languages and computer studies, and is largely the result of more attractive working conditions outside the school system. The situation is aggravated by the lack of support for education personnel, the low public status of the teaching profession, difficult working conditions with little time for recuperation, and limited prospects for career development. A new model of the professional carrier development of teachers is currently being prepared by a group made up of representatives of institutions for initial and continuing teacher education.

The social position of the teaching profession

The average wage of school teachers has recently increased, but despite the high professional qualifications required for the job, it still lags behind the national average wage by 10-22%. Salary diversification in the teaching profession relates only to the job functions fulfilled. According to public service legislation, a school principal, deputy principal, or other leader in the educational system receives an 'additional functional remuneration' (e.g. secondary school principals 10-34% of the respective salary grade, deputy principals 8-28%). Other functions (e.g. class teacher, school and career counsellor) are recompensed through a reduction of the respective basic weekly teaching load. Changes in the career advancement of teachers have now been designed. They are based not only on the work performed and the length of service, but also on the quality of job performance.

The workload of teachers depends on the type and educational level of the school, and ranges from fifteen to thirty-five hours per week. A period in academic subjects and in practice units lasts forty-five minutes, but practical classes in some vocational schools or in apprenticeships last sixty minutes. Any type of instruction or training exceeding the basic workload is considered extra work. Due to the lack of financial means, remuneration in the form of personal allowances has been minimized, and is only used in exceptional cases as a gesture of appreciation for outstanding job performance.

Many skilled teachers have left the education sector to find a job in other sectors of the economy. As a result, in basic and secondary schools a great number of subjects are taught by unskilled teachers. The age structure of the teaching profession is also unsatisfactory. Measures proposed by the Ministry in the new reform project should improve teachers' social status, increase their social and especially financial rewards, and provide them with better opportunities for taking part in continuing education abroad. The principles for personnel and social policy, and for the professional and personal development of teachers, are currently being worked out. There is also a system in place that is designed to protect teachers from excessive stress. Furthermore, regulations have been put in place to protect teachers as figures of public authority against growing aggression from pupils and parents. Empirical surveys show a low level of prestige for the teaching profession and a high level of job dissatisfaction. (Beňo et al. 2003). The Slovak Board of Parents' Associations is a nation-wide non-government organization that offers guidance to 1450 Parents' Associations at especially primary and secondary schools.

School and the role of the family

Official collaboration between school and family has a long tradition in Slovakia in the form of the Association of Parents and Friends of the School (*Združenie rodičov a priateľov školy – ZRPŠ*). The Association's activities consist mainly of periodic meetings of parents with the respective class teacher. The class teacher provides information on the achievement, social behaviour, needs, interests, and potential of pupils, as well as on other matters of school life. Contact between parents and class teachers also often takes place on an informal basis. A monthly magazine, 'Family and School', also exists. The Chairman of the Parents' Association sits on the School Board, and has the opportunity to represent and promote the needs and interests of parents, for example in curricular and instructional issues. However, although the self-assertiveness of pupils and parents improved after the Velvet Revolution, the role of the family in influencing the school curriculum and the mode of instruction has not yet reached the necessary level, and families have only negligible rights of involvement in local school issues.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, philosophy, and levels of governance

Article 42 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic states that 'every person has the right to education. School attendance is compulsory and the Education Law

determines its length. Citizens are entitled to free education in primary and secondary schools and, according to their individual abilities and the possibilities of society, in higher education institutions as well.' Several amendments (1988, 1990, 1994, 1998-2000) of the Act No. 29/1984 brought important changes: the significant amendment No. 171/1990 of the Law Code abolished the monopoly of the State in education. It also reformed the secondary general education system, enabling the establishment of eight-year academic upper secondary schools (*gymnázia*). The 1998 amendment introduced ten years of compulsory schooling. Act No. 542 of 1990 on State Administration and Self-Government in Education, amended in 1995, 1996, 1998, and 1999, introduced specialized state administration of education through the establishment of local educational authorities (LEAs). However, the 1996 amendment changed this system of educational management, abolishing the LEAs and delegating competencies back to district and regional departments of education. Act No. 279/1993, amended in 1996 and 2000, regulated kindergartens, school pupils' clubs, school centres for specific interests, youth leisure centres, youth homes, outdoor schooling of urban pupils in the countryside, centres for pedagogical prevention and care, educational counselling centres, vocational centres, and school services centres.

Act No. 386/1997 laid down the conditions and types of continuing education, and the specific conditions for their accreditation.

The Higher Education Act of 1990 and its amendment of 2002 enforced new fundamental academic freedoms, increased the autonomy of higher education institutions and their members, introduced a more democratic system of internal management by new independent bodies (Senates), set up the Higher Education Council representing the interests of higher education institutions in relation to the State, and established the Government Accreditation Commission to supervise the quality of higher education.

At present, the district authorities are responsible for kindergartens, basic schools, and the establishment of schools. The regional authorities are responsible for secondary schools, except for vocational secondary schools, and centres of apprentice training that remained the responsibility of the respective Ministries. The major responsibility for national education rests with the Ministry of Education. It is responsible for state policy, the strategy for its implementation, financing, and legislation. It defines the network of schools and educational establishments, and decides on both the integration of schools into the network and their dissolution.

Higher education institutions enjoy a large degree of autonomy, but they are partially subordinated to the Ministry of Education (except for defence and police academies), which is responsible, for example, for the allocation of funds from the state budget.

Financing of education

Public schools and colleges, including all supporting establishments and services, are financed by the state budget to a level of 88-90%. The remaining 10-12% are covered from other resources (community budgets, national and international grants, etc.). Operational costs, including wages, of church schools are covered by the state

budget, the costs for buildings and other investments by the school's maintaining body. In the case of private schools, the State provides financing for up to 70% of operational costs.

Study in state higher education institutions is free, except for part-time Ph.D. studies. Students only pay for admission interviews and for some administrative services such as syllabi, the student card, and copies of diplomas. In non-state schools and colleges, tuition fees may be charged under the conditions stipulated by law. Some non-standard services in state schools are provided on the basis of partial payment (e.g. stays in facilities designed for extra-curricular education, lessons in basic schools of art, stays in open air schools, visits of community cultural programmes, etc.). Some activities are therefore less accessible to pupils from less privileged social strata.

Successive governments have tried to solve the problem of the education budget by looking for additional sources of income and new systems of financing. The financing of schools remains, however, insufficient, in certain cases even critical. In the ongoing discussion, so-called multi-source financing is being considered.

Public and private schooling

To date, no new or additional forms of formal schooling have been considered. But the idea of home (family) instruction has been discussed. The Ministry has worked out a project for a 'school open to the (rural or suburban) community'.

Non-state schools and alternative teaching systems based on humanist educational principles include the Waldorf school, the Jena school model, the Celestin Freinet school, the Maria Montessori pre- and elementary schools, Suzan Kovalikova's innovative concept of thematic integrated teaching, an American project called Step by Step Teaching in the so called 'Wide Open School', a project called 'school as play' (*Schola ludus*), and others (Beňo 1997 and Zelina 2000).

General standards of the school system

School curricula at the national level are developed, as a rule, under the supervision of the National Institute for Education (*Štátny pedagogický ústav*) in Bratislava in close co-operation with the subject commissions, subject teachers, and teaching methodology advisers. The approval of the national curricula falls under the competence of the Ministry of Education. Particular schools may modify their curriculum to a degree. Starting with the school year 1993-94, new curricula have been developed for basic schools. As a reaction to the previous uniform curriculum, they allow some differentiation. For the first level school (elementary grades 1 to 4), three curriculum variants were worked out: one general and two others stressing sciences and foreign languages. For the upper level (grades 5 to 8), seven variants were created: one general and others for maths, science, foreign languages, physical education, technology education, art, and music. Schools may choose different options according to pupils' abilities and interests. A new development is the possibility to choose from among five foreign languages instead of only one (Russian). A crucial innovation was the introduction of ethics or religion as an elective. Computer science is also a new subject on offer. Similar changes took place in the curriculum

development for all types of upper secondary school. Optional courses and interdisciplinary subjects enriched the curriculum. Today, greatest attention is paid to the development of the so-called 'educational goals and content standards', or core curriculum. These standards are being developed for the pre-school, primary, and lower secondary school, and will also support the quality of school evaluation. The standards are intended to support the development of the pupil's ability to study in a rational way, to be creative, to overcome obstacles, and to develop social, health, and environmental protection skills. The curricula aim to regulate educational input, and the new model of the target requirements for school graduates aims to regulate educational output. Diagnostic tests should identify to what extent the target requirements defined by the standards are reached.

Quality management

The National Institute for Education in Bratislava and the National Institute for Vocational Training in Bratislava are curriculum development and evaluation institutions that also undertake theoretical and empirical research on Total Quality Control in schools. The recently founded Institute of Quality Education for Central and Eastern European Countries at the University of Nitra is working on these issues at an international level. The State School Inspectorate performs the practical task of applying educational standards and quality control in schools. It also evaluates the compliance with legislation in schools; the personnel-related, technical, and physical conditions of the educational process; and the level of efficiency in the use of materials, facilities, and other educational resources. A full school inspection is carried out as a rule once every two years. The school inspection is followed by measures corresponding to the seriousness of any identified shortcomings, including recommendations to change the school principal or even to shut down the school entirely.

Support systems

Support personnel and programmes are part of the national education system and fulfil several complementary functions:

- Pre-primary and primary teacher assistants for the special Romany pre-schools and schools;
- Extra-curricular and other leisure time activities: school pupils' clubs, school centres for special-interest activities, and leisure centres;
- Accommodation and catering: pupils' homes and school dining halls, canteens, and shops;
- Fostering of family and preventative educational care (foster homes and establishments for re-education and the prevention of educational problems);
- Professional school health care services, psychological counselling, special pedagogical counselling, and child care;
- Special-interest courses in language schools;
- School services such as centres of practical teaching, training enterprises, school economy production units, computer centres, etc.; and

- The basic schools of arts, which have a long tradition in Slovakia, and which provide special-interest education for talented children in their leisure time. They do not provide compulsory basic education in academic subjects, but rather employ a double concept of preparatory vocational training and general education in music, dance, visual arts, literature, and drama.

The current school system

General structure of the school system: overview

School attendance is compulsory for ten years from the age of six to sixteen. Pre-primary education (ISCED 0) is provided by kindergartens (*materská škola*), which are designed for children from two to six years of age. It is not compulsory. Primary and lower secondary education is compulsory and generally begins with the so-called basic school (*základná škola*) at the age of six. Education in the basic school lasts nine years. The basic school consists of two levels: primary grades 1 to 4 (ISCED 1) and the second level (grades 5 to 9, ISCED 2). It provides education up to the age of fifteen years. After grade 4, parents may decide if their child should continue attending the basic school or apply for admission to an eight-year gymnasium. This long form of the gymnasium is designed for exceptionally gifted pupils.

The following types of school provide upper secondary education (ISCED 3): The upper secondary academic school (*gymnázium*, ISCED 3 – general programme) provides general secondary education and prepares pupils above all for further study in higher education institutions. The educational programme takes four to five years (after grade 8 or 9 of basic school) or eight years (after grade 4 of basic school). The upper secondary vocational school (*stredná odborná škola - SOŠ*, ISCED 3) prepares pupils mainly for various occupations, but also for further study at higher education institutions. *SOŠ* also offer two- to three-year non-academic courses at the post-secondary level. The upper secondary apprentice centre (*stredné odborné učilište - SOU*) prepares pupils for practical occupations requiring vocational education with a duration of one to three years, as well as for more demanding occupations requiring a study period of four to five years. This latter leads to the *matura*. The conservatory (*konzervatórium*) is an artistic secondary school providing non-academic courses in singing, instrumental music, dance, and drama. The study programme lasts four or six years (or eight years in the field of dance), and leads to a certificate of upper secondary education giving access to post-secondary or tertiary education (*matura*).

Graduates from secondary schools with secondary school-leaving certificates (*vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške*) issued after the successful completion of thirteen or exceptionally twelve years of schooling fulfil the general requirements for admission to higher education institutions.

Tertiary education institutions provide study programmes at three levels:

1. The study programme leading to the bachelor's degree (ISCED 5A), which lasts three years (exceptionally four years in the fields of architecture and fine arts and design);

2. The study programme leading to the master's degree or the engineering degree (ISCED 5B), which usually lasts five years (exceptionally four years in the fields of teaching and dramatic art and six years in architecture, visual arts and design, medicine, and veterinary science; and
3. The study programme leading to the Ph.D. degree, which as a rule takes three further years and which is completed by an examination, including the defence of a dissertation (ISCED 6).

Pre-primary education

Kindergartens and special kindergartens include state, municipal, private, church-affiliated, and other non-state educational establishments offering instruction in the Slovak (majority) language or a minority language. Pre-school institutions provide systematic education for children from two to six or, in cases where the child is not ready for school, seven years of age. The importance of these institutions also lies in their provision of equal opportunities for personality development, irrespective of the child's socio-cultural background; in their early identification of developmental deficiencies; and in the preparation that they provide for compulsory school attendance (e.g. preparatory classes, including preparatory classes with the participation of mothers).

The present contents of pre-primary education were worked out and approved by the Ministry of Education in 1999. Traditional educational contents are enriched by individually determined social education, integrated environmental education, education in healthy living, basic education for marital life and parenthood, elements of music therapy, and the development of graphomotoric skills.

Primary and lower secondary education

Since compulsory schooling in the Slovak Republic lasts ten years, practically every pupil proceeds to an upper secondary school after having completed lower secondary education in the basic school with its two levels.

The current curricula of the basic school are structured in a way that allows teachers to tailor them to the conditions of the individual school and its pupils. At the first stage of the basic school (grades 1 to 4), there are two hours of optional teaching per grade, and at the second stage (grades 5 to 9) there are three different general curricula offering three to five lessons per week that schools and teachers can use to increase the number of periods of a subject or to introduce a new subject (e.g. computer studies). A further seven variant curricula (with extended teaching of foreign languages, mathematics and science, sports, etc.) allow schools to offer classes for gifted pupils. The curricula are designed in such a way as to substantially reduce central regulation and strengthen the teacher's educational position. The central, hierarchical management of education through strictly prescribed curricula has been replaced since the Revolution by framework curricula. Intensive work is being done to develop educational standards for pupils' knowledge and skills, to be adopted at certain educational levels and grades. For some subjects these standards have already been established and approved, and are available in schools. At present, achievement tests are being developed to put these standards into practice.

Upper secondary education

Academic secondary schools - Gymnázia

After 1989, the *gymnázium* was transformed into a modern type of secondary general school. In the reformed *gymnázium* curriculum, all subjects were updated and their number was reduced, and in some cases new subjects (ethics and social studies) or new subject concepts (in foreign languages, history and geography, biology, and computer studies) were introduced.

One of the most important structural changes introduced after 1989 consists of the creation of a six- or eight-year *gymnázium*. This offers education to pupils who have completed at least grade 4 of the basic school. The intention was to give particularly gifted pupils the chance to study a more advanced curriculum, but these expectations were not fulfilled: the strong interest of parents in such a schooling meant that more pupils than expected were enrolled in the eight-year *gymnázium*, and it has now essentially become an alternative to the basic school. There is thus a serious danger that the basic school will become a 'sink school' for academically less gifted pupils or pupils coming from less privileged social strata. At present there are a number of bilingual *gymnázia* with teaching in Slovak and English, German, French, Spanish, or Italian.

Upper secondary vocational schools

In the past the structure of the upper secondary vocational school was remarkably stable, as it was not so strongly exposed to the radical changes brought about by school reforms under the previous regime. Since 1989, however, this type of school has gone through a process of dynamic development that has brought about a number of qualitative and quantitative changes. The upper secondary vocational schools reacted quickly to structural changes in the labour market and to the economic transformation by modernizing the content and structure of their study programmes. Their new wide or integrated subject fields brought about a reduction in the number of narrowly designed specializations. Specialization was in general postponed to the upper grades, and post-secondary education widened its scope. Graduate profiles were adjusted and specified according to the needs of the labour market. Optional subjects were introduced. General education and foreign language teaching were encouraged, and a greater emphasis was placed on soft skills. More attention is now paid to the practical training of pupils, although there is a lack of suitable training centres. General subjects represent about 42-45% of the curricula and vocational subjects about 55-58%. The practical section takes up about 25-30% of vocational training. Schools may make their own curricular adjustments within the range of 10% of weekly hours. Up to 30% of the content of the curriculum with respect to learning time may also be adjusted.

Since 1990, basic school leavers have been most interested in studying at business academies: in terms of the availability of places, applications typically amount to 150% (200% in hotel academies, 130% in secondary nursing schools, and 135% in conservatories). New secondary schools for girls have opened. New wide-profile fields of study have been introduced: thirty newly designed fields of study have replaced the old structure of sixty-four fields. New forms of post-secondary voca-

tional training have been introduced. In the school year 1996-97 the 'Integrated Secondary Schools' project started, with the aim of improving the curriculum and rationalizing the use of the human, material, and technical resources of schools.

Upper secondary apprentice centres

The transfer of responsibility for this school type from enterprises to the Ministry of Education (or other Ministries) in 1990 had a remarkable effect on the general conditions and the practical training in these schools. An important innovation in the curriculum followed the experimental verification of step by step education in mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, technical chemistry, technical silicate chemistry, economics and management, commerce, and services. At present, twenty pilot schools are participating in a PHARE project to evaluate the possibility of integrating training in the fields of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, information technology, the building industry, the food industry, clothing, agriculture, and economics, commerce, and services.

Upper secondary apprentice centres are the basic source of skilled workers. After 1995, the demands of the labour market for graduates of these secondary schools declined substantially, and enrolment decreased as a result. The upper secondary apprentice centres reacted to the new conditions of the labour market by changing the structure of study fields in favour of service professions and four-year study courses, which provide the *matura* school-leaving certificate. This type of course became quite popular. New courses were also introduced, such as enterprise in agriculture, commercial transport law, marketing, mechatronics, and others. Schooling for apprentices is also offered in the so-called integrated schools with three levels of qualification under one roof. In some fields of post-secondary education, the duration of study was increased with the aim of improving the quality of the graduates. However, the above changes did not substantially increase the interest of pupils in upper secondary vocational apprentice centres.

Special education

There is an advanced network of special schools which provide differentiated education for children and adolescents with impaired hearing or sight, physical and mental deficiencies, communication disabilities, autism, behavioural disorders, disturbances in psychic and social development, or multiple deficiencies. The schools provide a system of education and training whose main aim is to achieve the maximum vocational and social integration allowed by the kind and degree of handicap. Special schools, except for those for the mentally handicapped, use the curricula and syllabi of ordinary schools with slight modifications. Inclusion of special education pupils in regular schools is offered at all levels of education, from kindergartens up to the university level. Today, this integration is carried out through different forms of integration of individual pupils into standard classes (without barriers, and with modified curricula, individualized educational programmes, special aids, and support services for special teachers or other staff); and in special classes for the handicapped in ordinary schools (kindergartens and basic and secondary schools). These classes are legally part of the system of special schools and the teaching process is

organized in the same way as in the respective special school, although there is also the possibility of offering some subjects jointly with pupils from regular classes of the same grade.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

General or vocational upper secondary schools (ISCED 3A) may also provide programmes of technical and vocational education which correspond to post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4 – *pomaturitné štúdium*). The upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*matura*) from all types of secondary school allows school leavers to apply for admission to post-secondary (ISCED 4) and tertiary education (ISCED 5).

The Act on Higher Education of 2002 defines the mission of tertiary education institutions in the following way:

- To contribute to the development of education, science, culture, and health in a manner that benefits the whole society;
- To produce professionals with the best possible education, high moral principles, and civil and social responsibility;
- To educate in a spirit of democracy, humanism, and tolerance, promoting in students self-esteem and creative, critical, and independent thinking;
- To foster through education the understanding, preservation, propagation, and cultivation of both the national cultural heritage and other cultures in a spirit of cultural pluralism;
- To engage in public discussions on social and ethical issues and on civil society;
- To construct theoretical models of the development of society, the economy, culture, and art, particularly for the needs of state bodies and government units;
- To co-operate with bodies of the state administration, communities, higher self-government units, and the institutions of cultural and economic life; and
- To develop international and particularly European co-operation through the promotion of joint projects with higher education institutions and other institutions abroad, the exchange of academic staff and students, and the mutual recognition of study programmes and diplomas.

In the Slovak Republic there are twenty-six higher education institutions: twenty public universities, one state-owned public health university, two national defence academies, one state police academy, and two private higher education institutions.

Introduced as early as 1990, the new Higher Education Law represented a milestone in the democratization of higher education in Slovakia. It redefined the position of higher education institutions, and established basic academic rights and freedoms, namely, the freedom of scientific research and the publication of its results, the freedom of artistic creation, the right to teach and to study freely, the right to elect academic self-governing bodies, the right to hold diverse philosophical views, the right to profess and disseminate religious beliefs, and other rights. Academic Senates were established as self-governing bodies of higher education institutions and their departments. Recently, a concept for further changes in tertiary education

to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century has been worked out (Plavcan 2001, pp. 130-31).

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

In spite of all the positive developments in the education system, there are a number of problematic areas which still need improvement: The educational level of the population is not as high as anticipated in the policy projects. The proportion of the economically active population with tertiary education is still low. The participation in tertiary education (25.5% of the respective age group) is below the EU average. Moreover, the percentage of graduates from upper secondary schools (69%) is low. The portion of pupils in *gymnázia* as compared to those in secondary apprentice centres and upper secondary vocational schools is not satisfactory (only 16.8% in contrast to 37.4% and 44.0% respectively). There is a disproportionately large number of pupils in six- and eight-year *gymnázia* (39.8% of all pupils in *gymnázia*). Non-university higher education (professional higher education) is not well developed. The percentage of students in technological fields of study is twice the EU average. In sum the structure of educational fields at secondary and tertiary levels is not balanced and does not correspond to societal and regional needs and interests in either national or international terms.

Serious shortcomings are still present in curricula. Curricula and textbooks are burdened with unnecessary information, which leads to an overload of pupils and teachers. Course contents are too extensive in all kinds and types of school. Thus, a worryingly high percentage of pupils leave school without the knowledge, skills, and attitudes demanded by the labour market, and as a result add to the number of unemployed and frustrated young people (Ministry 2001b).

The most problematic aspect of Slovak education is financing. Expenditure on education and research is approximately half of the EU average. The average wage in the education sector is the second lowest (after the agriculture and forestry sector) and is 13-17% lower than the national average wage. A public debate on a new proposal for the Act of Primary and Secondary Education is in progress (Ministry 2001c).

The National Programme for the Development of Education (Ministry 2001a) has designated a number of acute priorities for educational reform:

1. To modernize core curricula according to the needs of a learning and knowledge society. A National Curricular Council must be created and its functions must be defined. Thirteen tasks for curriculum changes have been specified and must be implemented at national, regional, community, and institutional levels.
2. To construct and sustain a reliable and effective system for the financial governance of school and college education, and of instruction and training in other organizations under constantly changing social and economic conditions. Nineteen tasks in this context have been formulated.
3. To substantially improve the social position, career prospects, and systematic education and training of teachers. A number of policy initiatives in this area have been elaborated.

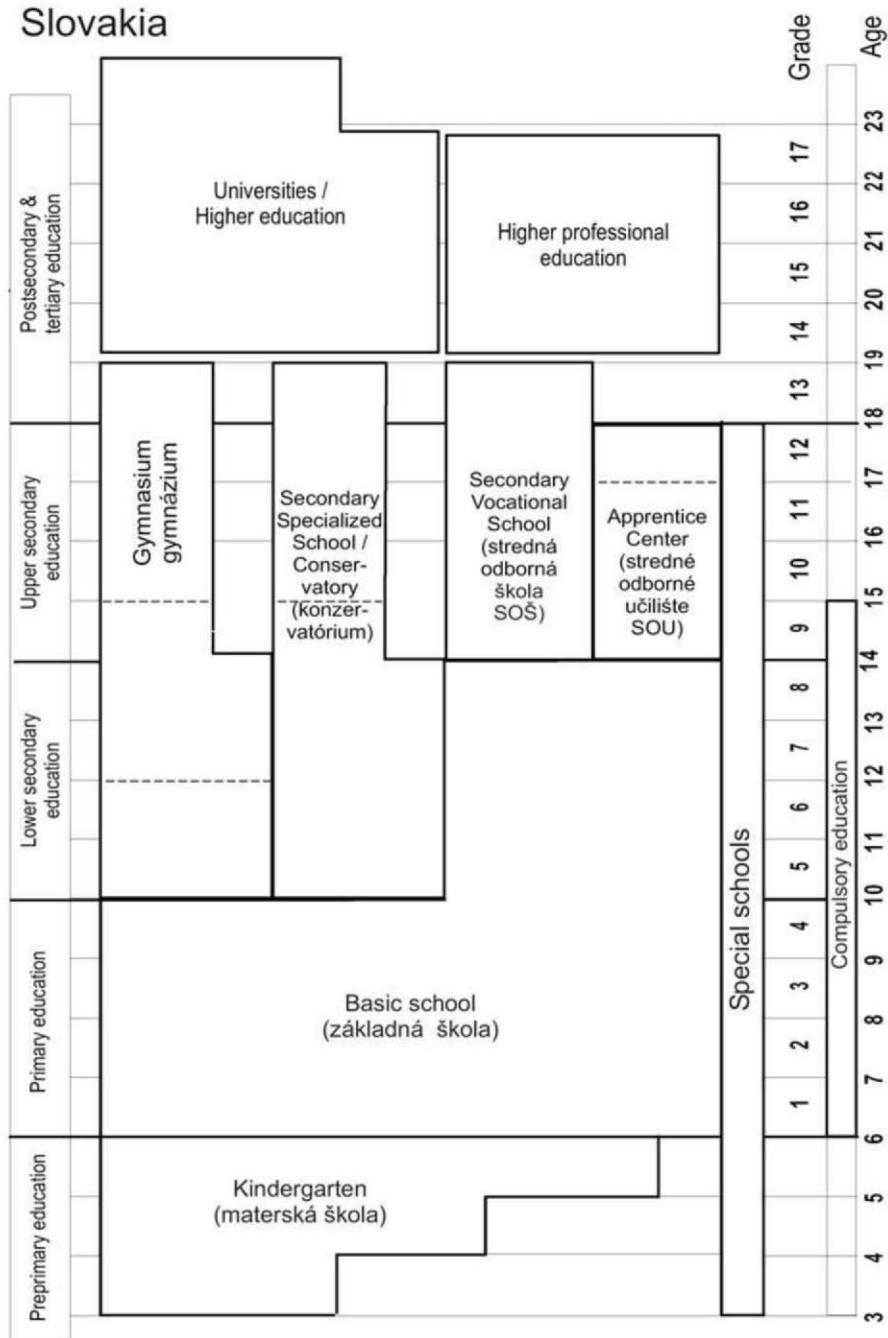
4. To secure higher levels of quality and effectiveness in all of the reformed structures of the educational system. Three areas of possible improvement have been defined.
5. To foster links between the education market and the vocational market.
6. To intensify international co-operation in general education and professional training.
7. To implement the Ministry's twelve projected goals for educational change (2001a). A top-down concept of school reform dominates at the moment; this needs to be replaced by a bottom-up policy.

References

- Association of Alternative Programmes in Education: Declaration of Freedom and Responsibility in Education in the Slovak Republic. Bratislava 1999.
- Beno, M. et al. (Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva): Slovenská škola na prahu 3. tisícročia. (Slovak school on the threshold of the 3rd millennium). Bratislava 1997.
- Beno, M. et al. (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education): Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Bratislava 2003.
- Ferencicova, A. (Ed.) (Ústav školských informácií): Separáty ročenky školstva SR 2003. 6 vols. (Concise statistical yearbook of the educational system in the Slovak Republic). Bratislava 1999. See also <http://uips.sk/statis>
- Hrabinská, M. et al. (Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic): The Development of Education: National Report on Education. Bratislava 2002.
- Hrabinská, M./Pribišová, A. (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education): Higher Education and Recognition Practices. Bratislava 1999.
- Ministerstvo školstva SSR: Další rozvoj česko-slovenskej výchovno-vzdelávacej sústavy. (Prospective development of Czech and Slovak education system). 2 vols. Bratislava 1976.
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Slovak Republic: Project of "Constantine": The national programme for education. Bratislava 1994.
- Ministry of Education of the SR: Higher Education in the Slovak Republic. Bratislava 2000.
- Ministerstvo školstva SR: Program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania. (Programme for educational development). Bratislava 2001a. <http://www.education.gov.sk>
- Ministerstvo školstva SR/Ministry of Education of the SR (Comenius University and IRIS Publishers): Národný program výchovy a vzdelávania v SR – Milénium/The national programme of training and education in the SR – Millenium. Bratislava 2001b. <http://www.education.gov.sk>
- Ministerstvo školstva (Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva): Slovenské školstvo na križovatke tisícročí. Vývoj v rokoch 1989-1999. (Slovak education at milleniums crossroads. Development in 1989-1999). Bratislava 2001c.
- Plavcan, P.: Riadenie vysokého školstva v Slovenskej republike (Governing of higher education in Slovakia). Bratislava 2001.
- Plavcan, P. (ŠPÚ): Súčasnosc' a perspektívy vysokého školstva v Slovenskej republike (The present and future of higher education in Slovakia). Bratislava 1998.
- Rosa, V.: Education and science. In: Mesežnikov, G./Ivantyšin, M. (eds.) (Institute for Public Affairs): Slovakia 1998-1999. Bratislava 1999.
- Švec, Š. (Ed.) (Comenius University Press): Humanization of Education. Paedagogica 14: Collection of Studies of Comenius University. Bratislava 1997.

- Švec, Š.: Transformation of adult education system in Slovakia. In: International Review of Education - Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft - Revue Internationale de l'Education 44 (1998) 4, pp. 379-391.
- Švec, Š.: Reforming general education and teacher training in Slovakia. In: East-West Education Journal (USA) 19 (1998-2000) 1&2, pp. 73-84.
- Švec, Š.: Princípy premeny národnej sústavy školstva (Principles for transformation of national system of education). In: Pedagogická revue 51 (1999) 1, pp. 3-14.
- Turek, I./Zeman, M./Jakubcová, E. (Metodické centrum): Návrh systému vzdelávania pedagogických pracovníkov v SR (Proposal for innovation of continuing teacher education). Bratislava 1999.
- Zelina, M. (IRIS): Alternatívne školstvo (Alternative schools). Bratislava 2000.

Slovakia



Jože Mlakar

Slovenia

History of the school system

Cornerstones of the historical development of schooling

To understand today's education system in Slovenia, it is necessary to explain the geographical, historical, and political situation of Slovenia. The country comprises 20,000 square-kilometres and has a population of two million. The capital is Ljubljana and the second largest town is Maribor. The Slovenian GDP amounts to 12,273 euros of which 5.6% is spent on education. The unemployment rate in the year 2004 was about 10%, and affected mostly unskilled or semi-skilled workers.

Slovenia has gained its independence in 1991. Until 1918, the Slovenes lived for centuries under German or Austrian rule. From 1918 until 1991, Slovenia was a part of Yugoslavia. After World War II until 1990, a communist regime ruled Slovenia. All this time Slovenia was never allowed an independent education system. The last big changes in the education system took place in Yugoslavia in 1958. Since 1995, a complete change of the education system is taking place. According to the Act on the Organization and Financing of Education (*Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja*) from 1996, the whole education system from the kindergartens to the universities is undergoing great change.

The history of the countries where Slovenes were living can be divided in three periods. The first and the longest is the period that ended in 1918. During this period, Slovenes could only be recognized as a Slovenian-speaking group living in German-speaking states. The second period is the time of Yugoslavia, from 1918 until 1991. The third is the period after 1991, when the Slovene education system could develop in an independent state. The year 1991 is therefore the beginning of the absolute autonomy of the Slovene education system. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are marked by constant attempts to gain an independent education system. At first, efforts were aimed against German nationalism inside the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then, after 1918, endeavours were aimed against Yugoslav-Serbian centralism.

The first traces of education among the Slovenes can be traced back to the time of Charlemagne in the eighth and ninth centuries. The transmission of knowledge or the teaching to read and write took place at the same time as Christianization. The oldest known written documents in Slovene are the so-called Freising manuscripts (*Brižinski spomeniki*) from the tenth century, which probably are transcripts of ninth-century originals. From the twelfth century onwards, when the first schools (convent and parish schools) on Slovene territory were founded by the Church until the time of Empress Maria Theresa and Emperor Josef II in the eighteenth century, the educational objective was to gain eternal life. However, the intent to teach practical aspects as well was represented by medieval town schools. A very important

impulse for the Slovene identity was provided by the Protestants, especially by Primož Trubar (1508-1586), who wrote the first Slovene books in 1550 and had a translation of the Bible printed. Further progress was achieved by the reforms of Maria Theresa (1717-1780) and Joseph II (1741-1790). They wanted to enable all their citizens irrespective of sex or class to achieve a general education and hence promoted common schools (*Volksschulen*). A law was passed in 1774 according to which attending school became compulsory. In Austria, the German language was the same denominator in all schools in Austria, so that the different peoples in the State could communicate in one common language. Slovene was taught from the Catechism, which was written in Slovene.

The Slovene bishop Anton Martin Slomšek (1800-1862), who was considered a defendant of Slovene rights and encouraged people to speak Slovene not only in their private but also in public life, was of great importance for the development of the Slovene culture and education of the lower classes. A turning point in the Slovene history of schools is the founding of the first Slovene grammar school (*gimnazija*) in Šentvid near Ljubljana (*Škofijska klasična gimnazija Šentvid*) in 1905. After the downfall of Austro-Hungary in 1918, the Slovenes, the Croats, and the Serbs united in one state, which was at first named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, but later changed its name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During that period (1918-1941), the education system in Yugoslavia was strongly centralized.

Reforms und innovations

During World War II partisans organized schools in the freed territories. The teaching was determined by strong patriotism and involved massive propaganda for the partisan movement and the new socialist order. Many of the elements introduced in the partisan schools were later applied to the whole education system. According to revolutionary communist doctrine, all private schools that were owned or managed by the Church were closed or nationalized. Religious education was abolished. Generally, it can be established that in the years 1945 to 1990 the education system underwent constant changes. That is obvious, especially with the following changes: the abolishment of bourgeois schools, which were partly transformed into lower grammar schools; the reduction of compulsory education from eight to seven years in 1946 and then back to eight years again in 1958 (at the same time the humanistic grammar schools (*klasična gimnazija*) with Latin as an obligatory subject were abolished); and the constant changing of the *matura* or final exam (at certain times it was possible to leave grammar school just by handing in a seminar paper).

Usually those changes were based on political intentions. One example of this is the introduction of 'oriented education' (*usmerjeno izobraževanje*). According to the Act on Oriented Education from 1980 (*Zakon o usmerjenem izobraževanju*), grammar schools were abolished and changed into specialized, i.e. job-oriented secondary schools. A specialized school trained their pupils for defined categories of jobs. Hence, in the years 1980 to 1990 there were in Slovenia science, technical, pedagogical, and other job-oriented schools. The required guidelines for the educational reform were passed at the congresses of the Yugoslav and Slovene Communist Party. The idea leading to that reform was that grammar schools were educating

only the elite and it was therefore supposed to be more difficult for pupils from vocational schools to obtain a higher education. The system of 'oriented' schools was strongly opposed and criticized throughout society, especially by the younger generation. Therefore, when the regime changed in 1990, they were abolished without further discussion.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

To abolish 'oriented' or targeted education, which was a souvenir from Yugoslav times, a change in the legislation was required. In 1995, the Minister for Education, Science, and Sport passed adequate guide-lines and the white paper on 'Education in the Republic of Slovenia' was published. This white paper claims that the theoretical basis for the education system has to be based on human rights and a state abiding by the rule of law. The principles are proximity to the citizens, as well as autonomy and equal possibilities for all. Every person has the right to an education. Elementary education is free of charge. Parents have the right to choose the form of education for their children. Hence, it is the State's duty to sponsor private schools and to provide them with equal legal conditions. According to the white paper, private schools may educate children according to certain religious and ideological beliefs of their parents. State schools abide by the principle of ideological neutrality and that the education of all children should be determined by human rights.

With the official publication of the 'The Development of Education' by the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport in 2001, the goals of the education system reform have been designed so as to preserve the existing high-quality of educational solutions. At the same time, the new education system should address a number of wider social changes and development trends:

- Ageing of the population: The issue of the need for and development of human resources is aggravated by a decreasing birth rate and the ageing of the population;
- Transition to a post-industrial stage of development: In recent years, the share of the population employed by service industries in Slovenia has rapidly been approaching 50%. This undoubtedly indicates that the country has embarked on the transition to a post-industrial stage of development;
- Economic, social, and political transition: The transition of the economic, social, and political systems is based on the country having opted for market economy; human, and social rights; the rule of law; and political democracy, leading to changes in the society's institutions. As a result, individuals' responsibilities for their economic, personal, and social situation are increasing;
- Threats to the environment and natural resources: As a result of its location, Slovenia cannot be spared the threat of global environmental degradation. On the other hand, the country takes part in international environmental protection efforts; and

- Slovenian political independence and the integration into the European and global economy and communications.

Equal educational opportunities with regard to nationality

Education in areas where Slovenian nationals live together with members of the Italian or Hungarian minority (and which are classified as ethnically and linguistically mixed areas) are part of the uniform education system in the Republic of Slovenia. It is therefore upgraded and modified at the same time as the rest of the school system. In the ethnically and linguistically mixed area of *Prekmurje*, along the Slovenian-Hungarian border, bilingual pre-school institutions, elementary schools, and a secondary school with Slovenian and Hungarian as the languages of instruction are attended by the children from this area. Classes are mixed and the languages of instruction are Slovenian and Hungarian. In addition to their mother tongue, children of both minorities learn each other's language and the history and culture of both nations. In the ethnically and linguistically mixed area of Slovenian Istra along the Italian border, pre-school institutions, elementary schools, and a secondary school offer Slovenian or Italian as the languages of instruction. Pupils in schools where the language of instruction is Slovenian must learn Italian as the second language and children in schools with Italian as the language of instruction must learn Slovenian as the second language. They also learn about the history, culture, and natural heritage of both nations.

Special standards and criteria apply to the formation of classes for Roma children. Thus, the standard for the formation of an elementary school class attended by Roma children only is sixteen pupils per class. If there are at least three Roma children in a mainstream class, the standard is twenty-one pupils per class. The attendance of schools by Roma children is most often accompanied by problems related to different cultural habits of Romany children, their irregular attendance, and the relatively poor co-operation of parents.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

The legal framework of the Slovene education system is the Act on the Organization and Financing of Education (*Zakon o organizaciji vzgoje in izobraževanja*). The act regulates the education from the kindergarten to professionally oriented higher education. It also defines the work in boarding schools, music schools, and adult education. The law determines the norms for minorities and children with special needs. Every part is further regulated in fuller detail by other laws.

Financing

State and private schools may be financed from various sources. The State or the local authorities provide the means needed for everyday work as well as for investments in state schools. The means are granted based on certain criteria. Private schools are entitled to state financing for salaries and 85% of the material expenses only. The founder must provide for school equipment and facilities. For additional programmes or a higher standard of equipment, local authorities, companies, and

parents may contribute on a voluntary basis. Many schools have a school foundation (*šolski sklad*) to which parents and other sponsors may donate money for school equipment.

State and private schools

The public service (*javna služba*) in education is provided by the schools and kindergartens, which are enclosed in the public network. The national government determines the extent of this network. Private schools are also included in this network, provided they have a licence issued by the State. Private schools or kindergartens have the same rights and duties as state schools. They are 100% financed by the State, but they must abide by the same rules and guidelines as state schools. On the other hand, there exist in Slovenia private schools that act without a licence. They are entitled to 85% financing by the State. The conditions for those schools are in general the same as for state schools, but they have the right to educate children according to their principles and beliefs, such as confessional schools. Currently there are four confessional grammar schools, one non-confessional, and one school, which follows the pedagogical principles of Steiner. State kindergartens, elementary schools, and music schools are provided at the discretion of local authorities, secondary schools of various types and polytechnics are provided by the State. However, with the permission of the State, grammar schools may be with founded by local authorities as well.

Quality management of schools

The management of schools differs in state and in private schools. State schools on all levels are the responsibility of the Minister for Education, Science, and Sports (*minister za šolstvo znanost in sport*). Important levels of governance are:

a) Councils of Experts:

The highest panel in various spheres of the education system are the Councils of Experts (*strokovni sveti*), whose members are appointed by the government:

- The Council of Experts on general education (*strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za splošno izobraževanje*);
- The Council of Experts on vocational and technical education (*strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za poklicno in strokovno izobraževanje*); and
- The Council of Experts on adult education (*strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za izobrazevanje odraslih*).

These Councils of Experts have a wide range of responsibilities, among other things they confirm:

- Curricula of state schools and kindergartens;
- Subject syllabi;
- Test catalogues for the external state exams on different levels;
- Textbooks; and
- Curricula of private schools (which they also control).

b) School councils:

School councils (*šolski svet*) are the administrative bodies of individual state schools; their members are the representatives of parents, teachers, the founder, and local authorities. In secondary schools, the representatives of pupils are also members of the school council. The mandate of the council is four years. Its most important duties are:

- Appointing and dismissing the director (manager) of the school;
- Confirming the yearly plan;
- Deciding on complaints by pupils, parents, and staff.

c) Head teacher, teaching staff, and class teachers:

The head teacher is the pedagogical and managing director of a school. Among others his tasks are:

- Organizing and managing day-to-day work;
- Preparing the programme for the future development of the school;
- Preparing the yearly plan and meeting it;
- Establishing pupils' rights; and
- Employing teachers and other staff.

The head teacher (*director*) has a deputy, whom he or she chooses from among the teaching staff. The *director* is appointed or dismissed by the school council. His or her appointment must be approved by the Minister. The mandate is for five years. The teaching staff decides about disciplinary measures in the case of severe violations of school regulations and functions as the head teacher's council. Class teachers (*razrednik*) deal with problems in the class or with pupils' problems. Class teachers also decide about smaller breaches of regulations.

d) Parents' council:

The members of the parents' council (*svet staršev*) are elected by the parents of each class, and they have following tasks:

- Suggesting and appointing additional programmes for the school;
- Voicing their opinions about the yearly plan and the further development of the school;
- Discussing parents' complaints; and
- Electing their representative to the school council.

e) Supervision and self-responsibility:

Two independent organizations supervise schools. The expenditure is controlled by the National Agency for Finance (*Računsko sodišče Republike Slovenije*), whereas work done in schools is supervised by the Inspectorate for Education (*Inspektorat Republike Slovenije za šolstvo*). Self-responsibility is mostly applied to controlling the quality of classes. The highest instance controlling the quality is the head teacher. He or she has a certain amount of money at their disposal (2% of all salaries); hence, he or she can reward teachers for exceptional work with premiums. The head teacher also manages activities and projects that involve the quality of the school. Furthermore, there are individual schools or groups of schools involved in projects aiming at self-evaluation.

The issue of school autonomy

As there are no exact criteria to evaluate school autonomy, it is, in the case of Slovenia, possible to identify some positive and negative developments:

- Schools have the right to freely appoint their teachers;
- Schools are free to organize activities not included in the curriculum;
- They may freely acquire and use means from different sources (parents, local authorities, or sponsors);
- Private schools can be founded if they follow the guidelines of the law;
- Under certain conditions, private schools have the right to 85% financing from the State;
- The curricula, syllabi, schoolbooks, and the school calendar are still determined by the school authorities;
- Typical pedagogical relations between teachers and pupils are defined by numerous regulations issued by the Minister (e.g. educational and school regulations);
- On all levels (from elementary school to the *matura*) there are external exams, conducted by state institutions;
- Head teachers have a five-year mandate (this was previously four years). The head teacher is appointed by the school council and approved by the Minister;
- Religious activities in state schools are forbidden by law; and
- The inspectorate has only a supervising role with no counselling or evaluation authority; and
- There are more paragraphs in the educational legislation that determine, demand, and forbid than those which allow, recommend, and suggest.

Qualification of teachers and head teachers

According to the law, teachers and other persons involved in the education of children or adults (head teachers, pedagogues, school librarians, and counsellors) are obliged to have a university degree in pedagogy or adult teaching with the title 'univ. dipl. prof.' After finishing their studies, future teachers are expected to pass a qualifying period which is completed by a state exam. During their career, teachers can be promoted according to certain criteria and obtain the following titles: mentor (*mentor*), advisor (*svetovalec*), or councillor (*svetnik*). The demands for head teachers are:

- At least five years of employment after the state exam,
- The title *svetnik* or *svetovalec*, and
- A leaving certificate from the school for head teachers.

The role of the school for head teachers (*šola za ravnateljce*) is defined by law. The current programme comprises 144 hours in six modules. Those modules encompass themes such as 'management and education', 'the theory of organization and management', 'planning and decision-making', 'the head teacher as a pedagogical leader', 'people in an organization', and also 'legislation in education'.

The current school system

General structure: overview

At this time, education (*vzgoja in izobraževanje*) in Slovenia encompasses:

- Pre-school education (*predšolska vzgoja*),
- Basic education (*osnovnosolsko izobraževanje*),
- (Upper-) secondary education (*srednješolsko izobraževanje*),
- Higher education (*visoko izobraževanje*),
- Professionally oriented higher education,
- Academic higher education, and
- Postgraduate education (further specialization, master's studies, or doctoral studies).

This list encompasses adult education and music schools. Children with special needs (*otroci in mladostniki s posebnimi potrebami*) are usually integrated in schools together with other children.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education is not compulsory. It takes place in kindergartens and special units in elementary schools for children at the ages of one to six. Children who opt for the eight-year elementary school attend the so-called 'little school' as a preparation for school one year before entering school. The 'little school' is being abolished in favour of the nine-year elementary school. In the last ten years private kindergartens, which follow certain pedagogical guidelines (Waldorf, Montessori, Freinet) or are confessional (e.g. Catholic kindergartens) have developed. General educational themes are music, art, and healthy nutrition. Pre-school education is regulated by the Act on Kindergartens (*Zakon o vrtcih*) from the year 1996.

Basic education

The new legislation, implemented in 1996, has prolonged compulsory education from eight to nine years. In practice, this is realised with the introduction of the new nine-year elementary school (*devetletka*), which has started in 1998-99 as an experimental project at forty-two schools. It has been introduced throughout Slovenia in 2002-2003.

Eight-year elementary school (osemletka)

Until now, eight-year elementary school has been subdivided into two stages:

- Class stage (*razredni pouk*), from first to fourth grade, and
- Subject stage (*predmetni pouk*), from fifth to eighth grade.

At class stage pupils are usually taught by only one teacher, although physical education, music, and art may be taught by a music or art teacher. At subject stage, every teacher teaches a different subject. Each class has its class teacher, who deals with the pupils' problems. It is possible to enter an eight-year school after the child has reached the age of seven and has attended 'little school' for one year. At the end

of the eighth year, pupils may voluntarily sit an exam in Slovene and mathematics. The exams are carried out according to unified national criteria by the school authorities. The results are added up with the results of the report card (expressed by a number of points), and therefore each secondary school lists the most successful pupils if the number of candidates exceeds that of available places. Otherwise, the only condition to advance from elementary to secondary school is a positive report card following eighth grade.

Nine-year elementary school (devetletka)

Due to the abolishment of the 'little school' in kindergartens, elementary school is prolonged for one year. Children enter the *devetletka* at the age of six. The *devetletka* is subdivided into three periods:

- First cycle, from first to third grade;
- Second cycle, from fourth to sixth grade; and
- Third cycle, from seventh to ninth grade.

According to the international classification ISCED, the first two cycles, i.e. grades 1 to 6 belong to primary school and the last cycle, grades 7 to 9 are classed as secondary school.

Teachers

The first grade is taught by a class teacher (*razredna učiteljica*) and assisted by a pre-school teacher (*vzgojiteljica*). The class teacher guides and teaches the children up to the third grade, and he or she may stay on as class teacher until the sixth grade, but from year to year he or she will teach fewer subjects. In grades 4, 5, and 6 the number of subjects taught by subject teachers increases gradually. The pre-school teacher stays only in the first grade. In the third period (cycle) all subjects are taught by subject teachers, nevertheless, the class teacher still has an important role to play.

Advancing to the next class and differentiation

In the first period pupils receive just a descriptive assessment of their achievements in school; in the second period they receive, in addition to the descriptive assessment, a report card with marks which range from 1 (inadequate, *nezadostno*) to 5 (very good, *odlično*); and in the third period there marks are only expressed numerically. In the first two periods, all pupils advance to the next grade; in the third period, they have to obtain a positive mark in every subject in order to advance. Pupils with unsatisfactory marks can take a re-examination. If they do not pass those examinations, they have to repeat the class. In the eighth and ninth grade, pupils may choose within subjects like their native language, mathematics, and foreign languages different levels of complexity. Therefore, pupils from the same class are separated and divided into different groups in those subjects. The most able pupils are expected to choose the most demanding level in order to receive a better basis for their further studies, especially for their grammar school education.

Each period or cycle is concluded by national tests. At the end of the first and second periods the test result do not influence the pupils' transition to the next grade, they are solely intended to inform parents and teachers of the children's pro-

gress. Participation in the tests in the first and second periods is voluntary. At the end of the third period, there are compulsory final tests. These are tests in the native language, mathematics, the foreign languages, one scientific subject, and one social science. Only by passing this exam is it possible to complete elementary school. Afterwards the children can choose to continue their education in secondary or grammar schools. Pupils who do not pass this final test may end their education after grade 10 of elementary school.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the nine-year elementary school is divided into the compulsory programme (*obvezni program*) and the expanded programme (*razširjen program*). The compulsory programme comprises compulsory and elective subjects as well as class lessons (*razredna ura*). In the third period, pupils can choose two or three subjects from a wide range of subjects. Those subjects may be divided into two groups: a social and humanistic and a scientific-technical category. It is obligatory for all schools to offer their pupils non-confessional religious education with ethics (*nekonfesionalni pouk o verstvih in etika*), foreign languages, and rhetoric. For pupils between the first and sixth grade, the expanded programme comprises for supervision before and after class (*podaljšano bivanje*), additional lessons (*dodatni in dopolnilni pouk*), and various voluntary activities (*intresne dejavnosti*).

Secondary school education

The reform of the secondary school is not yet concluded. In the years 1980 to 1990 there existed the so-called Oriented Education in secondary schools. The main idea was that every school should be able to offer vocational training and prepare their pupils for further studies as well. Therefore, schools with different programmes had the same general education, which followed a unified scheme. Every school taught three hours of Slovene and mathematics per week. This was rather strange, especially in comparison to Slovene minority schools in Italy or Austria, where pupils were taught five hours of Slovene. The loss of grammar schools in particular was felt most strongly. After the political changes of 1990, the system of oriented education collapsed and 'pure' grammar schools (*gymnasiums*) were reintroduced. In the transitional period (lasting until 1997), it was possible to finish grammar school by two means: with the finishing exam (*zaključni izpit*) or with the *matura*. Since 1999, it is only possible to complete grammar school with the *matura*. The intention of the pure grammar school is to prepare pupils for university studies and academic qualifications. The re-introduction of the pure grammar school has led, on the other hand, to pure vocational programmes, where pupils could finish school by passing different forms of finishing exams. At the time the condition for an academic qualification was the *matura*, therefore those pupils who had finished a vocational school could not enter a university. To solve this problem several solutions were found:

- Pupils who are not able to pass the *matura* may be trained for a profession by attending a one-year vocational training (*poklicni tečaj*),

- Four-year technical or vocational schools may be finished by a vocational *matura* (*poklicna matura*) and pupils can thus enter university, and
- Pupils who do not have a grammar school education (*gymnasium*) may follow a special course (*maturitetni tečaj*), pass the *matura*, and enter university.

Secondary schools offering general education (gymnasium)

Secondary schools offering general education comprise grammar schools (*splošne gimnazije*) and specialized professional grammar schools (*strokovne gimnazije*), which enable pupils to study at a university. Pupils who belong to the Italian or Hungarian minority and who speak Italian or Hungarian may use their native language in grammar school as well. The only condition to enter a grammar school is a successfully completed elementary school. If there are more candidates than places, the grammar schools must accept its pupils according to their academic attainment in elementary school. Grammar schools may conduct additional assessment procedures to complement the profile of the school e.g. additional tests in classical or foreign languages or they may test talents (sport, art, etc). Grammar school programmes take four years. Children advance to the next grade on the condition they have a positive mark in each subject. They may, however, take re-sits in not more than three negatively marked subjects and thus have the opportunity to advance to the next grade.

Grammar school education is completed with the *matura*, the school leaving examination. The school authorities strictly control the whole examination process. The *matura* exams are partly external and partly internal. 80% of the marks are derived from the external part and 20% from the internal. The *matura* comprises exams in five subjects: the native language, mathematics, and one foreign language are compulsory, whereas two elective subjects are chosen from a wide range of possibilities. The results of the *matura* are important. To have passed that exam does not only mean that the grammar school education is concluded but it is also the 'entry ticket' to university. There are no assessment procedures at the universities. Students are accepted based on their *matura* results. The national examination centre (*Državni izpitni center*) supervises the entire procedure of the *matura*.

Curriculum

The grammar school curriculum comprises a compulsory part, i.e. regular lessons and activities in which pupils take part voluntarily. The compulsory part is established by the Council of Experts for General Education (*Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za splošno izobraževanje*). In the case of private schools, it is established by the founder and has to be approved by the Council of Experts. The first foreign language in Slovenia is usually English; the second can be German, French, Spanish, or Italian. Grammar schools and even individual classes can emphasize certain subjects or parts of education, e.g. science, (more lessons in mathematics, physics, and biology etc.); humanistic subjects (another foreign language or Latin), or sport (additional periods of physical education). The additional programmes contain activities in which pupils participate voluntarily. These activities are excursions, com-

petitions, or performances, etc. Parents are usually expected to sponsor those activities.

Private schools

In the second half of the nineteenth century, after the authority over the education system has been given to the State, private schools in Slovenia were forced into opposition to state schools. The educational policy of the State of that time virtually ignored them. In the Austro-Hungarian State, the founders of private schools had to fulfil certain conditions. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the State prohibited the founding of new private schools in 1929 and communist officials abolished all private schools after World War II. Following the political changes of 1991, the attitude of the State towards private school education has changed for the better. In various documents, private schools are considered an addition to the education system. The constitutional right of parents to choose an education in accordance with their beliefs is supports this development. In spite of the positive legal conditions, the possibilities to found a private school are at the moment not good. The main problems are: the State only provides the means for salaries and 85% of the material expenditure. The State does not provide the means for investments or equipment of private schools. Private schools that are sponsored by the State are not allowed to make a profit; therefore, it is not very appealing to found a private school. Consequently, there is currently only one private elementary school, which follows the principles of Steiner. At secondary-school level, there are a few private schools for vocational education and there are six private grammar schools.

Special education schools

New educational legislation, passed in 1996, mentions pupils with learning difficulties or children with special needs who are physically or intellectually disabled as well as those who are extraordinarily talented. Schools are obligated to organize special lessons for those children, if necessary even with the help of specialists. These pupils attend regular schools and attain the same attainment targets as their peers.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Professional grammar schools

Specialized professional grammar schools are the link between general educational schools and professionally oriented schools. In these schools, certain subjects are taught which enable pupils to enter a certain professionally oriented higher education or a university on defined conditions. Currently there are in Slovenia professional grammar schools of various kinds, e.g. economic, technical, or artistic grammar schools. Pupils may also choose their elective subjects at the *matura* from among those specialized subjects. In technical professional grammar schools machine construction, electrical engineering, and similar subjects are taught.

Technical and vocational education

Technical and vocational education forms a fully-fledged and coherent system. It includes several aspects. The most important are:

- Short-term vocational education, which admits applicants who have successfully completed elementary school or who have completed a modified education programme for children with special needs, as well as applicants who attended elementary school for eight years, but who may have failed one or more years;
- Secondary vocational education is offered in the dual system or in the school-based system. The core curriculum includes a minimum of theoretical knowledge and practical skills regarding the type of vocational school. This programme lasts three years or, exceptionally, four years;
- Secondary technical education lasts four years, or five, exceptionally. The weekly schedule contains a minimum of general knowledge, technical education, and practical skills; and
- Vocational-technical education has been developed as an upgrade of vocational education programmes and leads to educational qualifications at the level of a secondary technical school. It lasts two years (after finishing the vocational school).

Professionally oriented higher education (višje strokovno izobraževanje)

Professionally oriented higher education has been introduced only recently. The first schools were founded in 1996. The curricula emphasize practical education. The aim is to provide a link to the productive world, therefore a considerable part of the education takes place in businesses. Those schools are institutionally separated from technical universities and universities. Students usually enter higher professional schools (*višje strokovne šole*) after a *matura* or a *matura* at specialized professional grammar schools. The study takes a minimum of two years and is completed with a graduation exam (*diplomski izpit*). Graduates from higher professional schools may work in certain vocational fields or they may continue their studies at the university and finish with doctorate.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives of development

The reform of the Slovene education system, especially the introduction of the nine-year elementary school, has received some criticism. The project was introduced by left-wing parties; hence, most of the critical comments were issued by conservative groups. The so-called Citizens' Forum for a Humane School (*državlanski forum za humano šolo*) has been established. The forum organized a few round-table discussions, where a number of known Slovene intellectuals expressed their opinions. The forum has also published a series of articles on this subject.

The second field of the current discussion centres on upbringing. It is possible to establish two quite different concepts, one liberal, and one traditional. The guidelines of the liberal concept are:

- Neutrality of ideas: the educational aim is reached exclusively (or mainly) by teaching. The young person comes to know the moral values based on knowledge;
- Common European values: these are determined in the Bill of Human Rights; and
- Tolerance, which is considered the foundation of post-modern society.

The traditional concept is based on the following:

- Education to improve mutual relations in the family, especially between parents and children and in school, between friends, schoolmates, and teachers;
- Education must be based on general human values, which comprise moral values from various groups (this thesis is known as the anthropological accession);
- The aim of the traditional concept is to enhance moral sensibility, moral values, moral motivation, and to shape the moral character of a young person.

The liberal concept is supported by the liberal-democratic government, and receives therefore immense support in state schools. The traditional concept is being followed mainly in Catholic schools and kindergartens. Unsurprisingly, the political discussion is characterized by a tense atmosphere.

References

- Bela Knjiga o Vzgoji in Izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport. Ljubljana 1995.
- Ciprle, J./Vovko, A.: Šolstvo na Slovenskem skozi stoletja, Slovenski šolski muzej. Ljubljana 1987.
- Človek in Kurikul. Družina. Ljubljana 2000.
- Döbert H./Geißler G.: Šolska avtonomija v Evropi. Družina. Ljubljana 2001.
- Družina-Šola, Družina, Pedagoški inštitut. Ljubljana 1998.
- Enciklopedija Slovenije I, Mladinska knjiga. Ljubljana 1987.
- Etični Kodeks Društveni Kodeks Društva Katoliških Pedagogov. Ljubljana 1996.
- Grafenauer, I.: Kratka zgodovina starejšega slovenskega slovstva, Mohorjeva družba v Celju 1973.
- Izhodišča za Pripravo Izobraževalnih Programov Nižjega in Srednjega Poklicnega Izobraževanja ter Programov Srednjega Strokovnega Izobraževanja, Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje. Ljubljana 2001.
- Key Data on Education in the European Union, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Luxembourg 1999.
- Pedagoška Enciklopedija I, Šolska knjiga. Beograd 1989.
- Pedicek, F.: Ob prenovi šole. Jutro. Ljubljana 1998.
- Pedicek, F.: Edukacija danes. Založba Obzorja. Maribor 1994.
- Slovenska Šola in Njen ČAS. Družina. Ljubljana 1995.
- Srednješolsko Izobraževanje v Republiki Sloveniji, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport. Ljubljana 1996.
- Šolska Zakonodaja, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport. Ljubljana 1996.
- The Development of Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Ljubljana 2001.

The State and the School: Some European Perspectives, Slovenian Forum on Educational Administration, St. Stanislav's Institution. Ljubljana 2001.

Vzgoja in Izobraževanje v Republiki Sloveniji 2000, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport. Ljubljana 2000.

Vzgoja v Javni Šoli, Sodobna pedagogika. Ljubljana 1999.

Zasebno Šolstvo, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport. Ljubljana 1996.

Zbornik Brižinski Spomeniki, Znanstveno raziskovalni center SAZU. Ljubljana 1996.

María Jesús Martínez Usarralde

Spain

History of the school system

Cultural context and cornerstones of the historical development of schooling

The cultural context has come to be reflected in the principles found in legal documents that serve as indicators, which preserve the direction of Spanish educational policy. Though preceded by several constitutional provisions (1812) and other educational plans and rules, the first global regulation to consolidate the Spanish education system was the Public Instruction Act of 1857 (*Ley de Instrucción Pública, o Ley Moyano*). Its influence was such that there was no other general act regulating the Spanish education system until 1970. To summarize, Spanish education has moved through three significant stages since the second half of the nineteenth century: The First Republic (1873 to 1874) introduced the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE), promoted by Giner de los Ríos, which was followed by the Modern School (*Escuela Moderna*) by Ferrer y Guardià (1901-1906); next, General Primo de Rivera's coup d'état in 1923 put an end to the reformist and innovative spirit of the Restoration; and, finally, the Second Republic, proclaimed in 1931, advanced the promotion of a general, free, and compulsory education, as well as the search for laicism and freedom of education.

During the 1936 Civil War, education became the vehicle to transmit the new ideology and socialization patterns of General Franco's dictatorial regime, an education of a traditionalist, patriotic, and Catholic nature. In the 1950s, certain signs of opening were appeared, which were consolidated in the 1960s with an education system that pretended to be tied to the need for economic development. The rapid changes that took place during this decade led to the total reform of the education system, carried out by the General Act on Education of 1970 (*LGE - Ley General de Educación*), often referred to as the Villar Palasí Act after the Minister of Education and Science at the time, Jose Luis Villar Palasí. This Act intended to serve as a socio-pedagogical response to the new times and needs through proposals of pedagogical modernization. The LGE generalized education from the age of six to fourteen, paid special attention to the quality of teaching, and tried to bring the labour market to the system of vocational training (*Formación Profesional*).

The legal proposals of the 1930s revealed that the educational system was deeply deficient in Spain and the State delayed taking responsibility for education. The combination of an inhibited state, a lack of schools, ideologization, and indoctrination, sustained until the 1960s, finally came to be modified by the proper socio-economic transformation of Spanish society. However, along with this, the characteristics of education could also be changed by the demand to increase the level of school attendance and raise the quality of education.

Reforms and innovations

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 had considerable ramifications for the education system. The division of the State into municipalities, provinces, and Autonomous Communities (*Comunidades Autónomas*, CCAA) was recognized by the Constitution, yet education was also strongly affected by these changes. In summary, the 1970s can be characterized by the principle of instructional liberty, which was driven by democracy and which demanded economic maintenance from the State. The modernization of the educational system was, therefore, pursued above all in the network of schools sustained by the State (public schools and government-subsidized private schools). This enabled the legitimization of the right to education and ensured respect for instructional liberty, guaranteeing ideological neutrality and respect for the democratic principles co-existence. It was with the laws of 1985, the Act of Right of Education (*Ley Orgánica de Derecho a la Educación*, LODE) and, later, in 1995, with the Act of Participation, Evaluation, and Government of Educational Centres (*Ley Orgánica de la Participación, la Evaluación y el Gobierno de los Centros Docentes*, LOPEG), that these principles became enshrined in the laws that reformed the educational system and initiated new systems of participation in order to guarantee these laws and protect instructional liberty (as dictated by article 27.1 of the Spanish Constitution).

In the 1990s, following the dramatic socio-economic transformations experienced in the preceding twenty years, a global reform of the educational system was initiated. As a result, education was organized in a comprehensive way that was compatible with progressive diversification, which provided for diverse student interests. A number of initiatives secured a culture of growth and equal opportunities, such as the fight against inequality through compensatory measures, the reduction of social injustice, and the integration of special education. All these define the educational culture that was established with the help of the Law.

Today, Spanish education experiences a new wave of change, justified by an increasingly global context, which focuses educational achievements on efficiency and competitiveness. Now, with the recently passed Act of Educational Quality (*Ley de Calidad Educativa*, LOCE, 2002), other educational interests are promoted, such as a culture of quality, strength, and evaluation. The challenge of maintaining a culture of quality is one which Spain tackles with efforts aiming at a profound transformation of its political and economic structures. These will hopefully improve the conditions of development and social welfare. A culture of strength marks another premise, one that values exigency as a basic condition of successful learning. Finally, a culture of evaluation ensures that the preceding cultures are safeguarded by the rigours of objective assessment.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and the general function of schools

According to the new democratic principles and the rights and duties established by the Constitution, the LODE established the reform of educational aims while the

LOGSE laid down the particular objectives for the compulsory stages of education. The following are the educational objectives for the various levels of education:

Infant or pre-school education (<i>Educación Preescolar o Infantil</i>)	To contribute to the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development of the child. Of a preventive nature, this level of education helps compensating for possible deficits related to the child's social, cultural, and/or economic environment, while allowing the pupil to know, discover, and act more independently. Furthermore, this level helps pupils observe and explore their environment and enables them to evoke and represent different aspects of reality.
Primary education (<i>Educación Primaria</i>)	To provide all children with a common education that allows them to acquire basic cultural skills and knowledge relating to oral expression, reading, writing, and arithmetic, besides attaining progressive independence within their environment.
Compulsory secondary education (<i>Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, ESO</i>)	To transmit the basic elements of culture to all pupils, train them to assume their duties and exercise their rights, and prepare them for active life or to gain access to specific higher vocational training.
<i>Bachillerato</i>	To improve the students' knowledge of basic sciences, help them choose a career, and provide them with the intellectual skills necessary for higher education.
Vocational training (<i>Formación Profesional</i>)	To acquire the vocational skills pertaining to each qualification and to understand the organization and characteristics of the productive sector and the mechanisms of integration into working life. Finally, to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, vocational maturity, and identity to encourage them to pursue further learning and permit them to adapt to possible changes in the required qualifications.
Higher education (<i>Educación Superior</i>)	To prepare the student for professional activities that require the application of knowledge and scientific methods.

Socio-economic context

In the last few years, Spanish society has experienced increased immigration. This is a new phenomenon, which is changing the profile of residents and, by extension, that of schools. To some extent, this new reality is being approached with a degree of perplexity, since Spain has traditionally been a country of emigration. Immigration has transformed Spain into a European Union nation with major population growth. As in other countries, the birth rate of immigrants is higher than that of the native population.

These statistics allow us to see that we live in a society that becomes every day more pluralistic, adding a new international dimension, which necessitates a solidarity of education across the various communities. In this sense, education has a number of important functions: to develop a dialogue between cultures and to contribute

to overcoming ignorance, misunderstanding, insecurity, and a lack of both communication and solidarity.

The tendencies that affect the foreign population in Spain could be summarized by the following list: a dense concentration in large cities (Madrid, Cataluña, and Andalucía are the provinces with the highest numbers of registered foreigners); considerable diversity in terms of nationalities (Moroccans are the most numerous, followed by Ecuadorians, Colombians, the Chinese, Peruvians, Romanians, Cubans, Argentineans, Algerians, Filipinos, Pakistanis, and (North-)Americans); a double migratory flow where, on the one hand, an economic immigration from the south to the north is taking place, and, on the other, there is the immigration of pensioners, retirees, and highly qualified workers who come from more developed countries than ours; there are many people in an irregular situation; and, finally, we can observe a certain feminization of immigration, which represents a desire to reunite families (above all, this affects immigrants from the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Peru, etc.).

The majority of immigrants tend to occupy positions considerably below those for which their academic and/or professional qualifications have prepared them. The most recent statistical data available to us, corresponding to the 2001-2002 academic year, counts a total of 201,518 foreign students in our country (MEC 2002). This statistic almost doubles that of barely two academic years earlier, 1999-2000: 107,301. As for schools, 80.9% of immigrant pupils attend public schools, while only 19.1% pursue their studies in private schools. Spain does not employ only one model of intervention with respect to immigrant or refugee students who require special educational resources. Although every CCAA has chosen a particular model, the most important, i.e., those that occur most frequently, are as follows: Classroom bridges: foreign pupils matriculate, upon arrival to the country, into a designated school where they acquire basic linguistic competence. Once a basic level is attained, the pupils are assigned to a school where they continue their studies normally. Andalusia, for example, has opted for this model. Projects, programmes, and actions of educational compensation. These are employed by schools that educate a significant percentage of foreign pupils. Human resources and additional materials are available to pupils who need them. This model has been adopted by the region of Valencia.

Services of Itinerant Protection of Immigrant Students (*Servicios de Apoyo Itinerante al Alumnado Inmigrante*, SAI). These are intended to support instruction in Spanish and integrate immigrant pupils in schools that do not rely on outside support. They are formed by diverse professionals who provide whatever aid has been requested by these schools. The Madrid region is considering this model.

Social position of the teaching profession

As Esteve (1995) claims, having analysed the social image of Spanish teachers in the press, two dramatically contradictory but coexisting discourses can be found: the ideal image of the teacher and of instruction and the stereotypical image of a cold vision of the reality of instruction: 'The image of the Spanish teacher can be compared to oscillating between two stereotypes: on the one hand, feeling that the social

and professional function is important, while, at the same time, seeing it undervalued by society.' Against this perception, a number of inquiries recently launched by the Centre of Sociological Investigations (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, CIS) have produced evidence that city populations value education strongly (87% assert that studies play an important role in their lives). Indeed, 88% of the parents value their children's teachers' professional work as satisfactory or very satisfactory. In the same vein, following a study conducted by the National Institute of Quality Education (*Instituto Nacional de Calidad Educativa*, INCE) in 1995, more than 80% of all parents valued the work of their children's teachers as being satisfactory or very satisfactory.

School and the role of the family

The basic mechanism for parents to participate formally in their children's high school is the School Council (*Consejo Escolar*), present in public schools and in government-subsidized private schools (not in entirely private schools). Teachers, parents, students, and non-educational personnel are represented on the Council. It fulfils functions as significant as agreeing the school's administration budget. The participation of parents of children who attend compulsory primary schools stands at 20%, and for parents of secondary-school students, the number is 7% (Pérez Díaz et al. 2001, p. 229). Parents who have some personal experience with the School Council, judge the performance of their Council very positively, that is, 61% consider it to be very good or good. The other organs of participation are the Associations of Parents and Students (*Asociaciones de Padres y Alumnos*, APA). These are organizations in which parents indirectly participate in school government and cooperate voluntarily to provide services to its members. In an evaluation performed by INCE in 1997, 65% of parents of fourteen- to sixteen-year-olds belong to their school's APAs. Of those who are members and attend their APAs' gatherings, 57% express a sufficiently positive attitude toward their APA.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

Castilian Spanish is the official state language according to the Spanish Constitution, although other languages are spoken in the different Spanish regions (CCAA's): Catalan, Galician, Basque (*Euskera*), and Valencian. In those CCAAs where two languages coexist, both are considered compulsory teaching languages on every level of education, except in universities. Their use as a teaching language will depend on the linguistic policies implemented in each region and how widespread the autonomous language is.

The Spanish legal framework, which regulates and directs the education system, is formed by the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (Section 27 establishes the educational principles) and six Acts that develop the principles and rights established in the Constitution. These basic legal acts are the Act regulating the Right to Education of 1985 (LODE), which guarantees the right to education and the freedom of teaching, promotes the participation of society in education, and rationalizes the supply of

educational establishments financed by public funds through a network of public establishments and state-subsidized establishments. The Act on the General Structure and Organization of the Education System of 1990 (LOGSE) sets out a new structure and organization of the non-university education system, reorganizing the levels of both General and Special Education. The Act on the Participation, Evaluation, and Administration of Educational Establishments of 1995 (LOPEG) expands on the provisions in the LODE concerning the participatory nature of schools and completes aspects related to the organization, supervision, and operation of governing bodies in publicly-funded schools to adjust them to the provisions in the LOGSE.

The Act on Universities of 2001 (*Ley Orgánica de Universidades*, LOU) regulates the structure and organization of the education system at university level. Based on the constant search for quality improvement and excellence in the university system, it repeals the former Act on University Reform of 1983 (*Ley de Reforma de Universidades*, LRU), although it does not modify the organization of studies (Eurydice 2003). The new Act promotes action on the part of the state administration in the structuring and ensuring the cohesiveness of the university system, heightens the educational powers of the CCAAs, increases the degree of independence of universities, and establishes the necessary channels for enhancing the reciprocal links and relations between the universities and society. The Act on the Quality of Education (*Ley Orgánica de Calidad Educativa*, LOCE) affects the legal framework regulating the non-university system from 2002 and partially modifies LODE, LOGSE, and LOPEG. This Act proposes a series of measures that at compensating for the deficiencies of the present educational system and their measures focus on enhancing the quality of the system and on its convergence with European Union educational priorities. Among the measures, which are basically to affect compulsory secondary education, are those intended to: foster pupils' academic success, enhance the roles of the management teams and the autonomy of educational establishments, provide effective support for the teaching staff, reinforce the teaching of career studies, improve school organization, and respect cultural diversity so as to facilitate the academic and social integration of foreign pupils. The Act on Vocational Training Reform and Professional Qualifications from 2002 (*Ley de Reforma de Formación Profesional y Cualificaciones*) has the purpose of ordering into one single system the three present subsystems of vocational training: regulated vocational training (at schools), occupational vocational training (for unemployed people), and continuing vocational training (for workers' re-training and continuing learning). At the same time, the Act strengthens the role of the Institute for Vocational Qualifications, which proposes the establishment of a national system of vocational training and qualifications with the goal of developing regulated vocational training of quality to enhance its professional dimension. The National Catalogue on Professional Qualifications becomes the institutional head of the system. Its aim is to ease integration and ensure compatibility between vocational training and the labour market as well as lifelong learning, workers' mobility, and labour market unity.

Levels of governance

The educational administration, like the rest of the public administration, has undergone substantial transformations in order to adapt to the principle of decentralization that forms the state organizational structure as 'a State of autonomies'. For this reason, the educational administration is structured on three levels according to the different administrative structures responsible: The central administration is carried out by the Ministry for Education and Science (MEC). The State reserves the following areas of competence: the promulgation and implementation of basic guidelines concerning the fundamental principle of the right to education, the general regulation of the education system, the definition of the minimum requirements to become authorized educational establishments, the establishment of the duration of compulsory schooling, and the regulation of the conditions to be satisfied so that academic and vocational qualifications are recognized as valid throughout Spain.

The autonomous administration is carried out by Education Councils or Departments (*Departamentos or Consejerías de Educación*), which operate with devolved educational powers within the CCAAs. They take over all the regulatory and executive responsibilities not included in the State's exclusive area of competence. They have the power to develop state regulations and to regulate non-basic elements of the education system, as well as the executive and administrative powers which allow them to administer the education system within their own territories.

Local administration is carried out by city halls or other municipal services. They assume the responsibilities that directly affect their interests, such as the provision of building sites for public educational establishments; the preservation, repairs, surveillance, and maintenance of pre-school and primary education establishments; and the surveillance of the fulfilment of compulsory education and the performance of the educational service.

Financing and public-private schooling

Concerning the financing of education, two aspects must be emphasized. On the one hand, there is the decentralization of education funding, which has evolved in parallel with the CCAAs' educational decentralization. On the other hand, there exists the possibility for private establishments to apply for public financing as long as they meet the minimum requirements stipulated by the educational administration. Therefore, there is a mixed network of educational establishments according in terms of how they are financed. The LOGSE recognizes three types of educational establishments: pre-, primary, and secondary schools. There also exist private schools, which may integrate all levels or combine some of these with others not mentioned here. Therefore, we find public schools (publicly owned and funded), subsidized private schools (*concertados*, privately owned but publicly funded), and non-subsidized private schools (privately owned and funded). As a general tendency, public expenditure on education has suffered a slight decrease in Spain. Yet, the increase in expenditure rates has been higher in Spain than in most of the European Union countries during the last two decades (OECD 2000).

General standards of the school system

The LOGSE and, more recently, LOCE, have introduced changes in the curriculum of compulsory education. The new curricular model (Eurydice 2003) involves: The transition from a technological model of the prescriptive curriculum to a contextual model in which teachers participate in its development, adapting it to the students and the school. It further involves the transition from a closed curriculum, exclusively drawn up by the Ministry of Education and the CCAAs, to a more flexible, decentralized one. The new curriculum includes three levels: first, the prescriptive curriculum, consisting of the minimum core curriculum requirements established by the State (*enseñanzas mínimas*) and a percentage of educational requirements established by the respective CCAA; second, the development, sequencing, and adaptation of the prescriptive curriculum to the corresponding educational establishment through Curricular Stage Projects undertaken by the Teachers' Assembly; and, finally, the adaptation of these projects to the class or group, which is undertaken by the teacher. The new curriculum introduces two principles: 'comprehensiveness' and 'diversity'. This involves guaranteeing a common education for all pupils, establishing measures of attention to diversity (resulting from capacity, culture, or socio-economic background, etc), and the promotion of options from the second stage of secondary education onwards.

The reform of the methodology introduces the following changes: first, there is a change in the psychological approach to the curriculum (from an evolutionary approach focused on teaching to a constructivist approach more focused on learning), second, there is the provision of a greater amount of material and human resources in order to achieve real attention to diversity and individualized teaching. Some of the methodological features of the different levels of education are set out below:

Pre-school education	This is considered to be a preventive stage, provided that it helps compensating for possible deficits in terms of to the pupils' social, cultural, or economic environment. There must be a match between the family's and the school's educational role. Explorative and representative strategies prevail.
Primary education	Methodology is global and interdisciplinary. Areas must be related to and strengthen each other within an integrating approach. The learning process lies in the principle of 'learning to learn'. Play activities are a suitable resource at this stage.
Compulsory secondary education	Teaching methods must adapt to the particular characteristics of the student, fostering pupils' ability to learn and work in a team. Students must be initiated in the knowledge of reality according to scientific methods. There is an emphasis on the functionality of learning.
Post-compulsory secondary education	General branch: Methodology should foster pupils' ability to learn individually, work in a team, and apply appropriate methods of research. It should emphasize the relationship between the theoretical aspects of subjects and their practical application.

	Vocational branch: Teaching methods must encourage pupils to form a global and co-ordinated view of the productive processes in which they will participate. It should also foster pupils' ability to learn individually and work in a team.
Higher education	Universities have the authority to establish the structure and organization of academic life. University departments are the bodies in charge of organizing, structuring and co-ordinating research and teaching within their field of knowledge.

The LOGSE introduced very significant changes in relation to assessment, linking it to pupils' progress. Assessment used to be comprehensive in primary education (the pupil was moved to the next stage if he or she had developed the skills required for that stage, without taking into account the various areas of subjects) and integrated in the ESO (the pupil was moved to the next stage if he or she had developed the skills required in each subject area). According to this approach, educational assessment is not reduced to an evaluation of the pupil's educational progress and results, but it includes an evaluation of the teachers' performance, as well as the curricular project undertaken, the programmes implemented, and the real development of the curriculum. Currently, the philosophy of assessment is undergoing change: the LOCE establishes that those pupils who pass to the next stage with a negative assessment in one or several subjects will receive suitable help or support activities in order to catch up with his or her peers. In lower-secondary education, decisions related to students' progress between stages will be carried out at the end of each school year (at this level), and students are allowed to repeat each graded only once.

Quality management

Spain has participated in the recent Programme for International Student Assessment study (PISA, cf. OECD 2001). Spain ranks eighteenth, twenty-first, and nineteenth, respectively, giving it a medium-low position. The interpretation of the results is more flattering if we consider the progress realized by Spanish pupils and students in recent years. In similar samples gathered by the IEA TIMS study halfway through the 1990s in forty-one countries, Spain ranked thirty-first and thirty-second in mathematics. The progress achievement in these few years has thus been considerable.

Returning to the PISA study, we can infer that while the Spanish educational system has advanced in a sustained way between 1995 and 2000, progressively improving finances and objective conditions in the system in accordance with the possibilities of our developing economy, pupils' knowledge is situated at the bottom of the median of the OECD in reading comprehension, math skills, and science skills: in Spain, only 25% of students attain fourth- and fifth-level reading comprehension, and 16% do not understand what they read. The causes of these limited results perhaps reside in the necessity of more investment in education as a prerequisite for the development of high-quality training, attention to students' socio-economic and cultural setting, and identification of factors that most directly influence

academic efficiency (an academic climate, relations between teachers and students, motivation, or teachers' compromise, for example). It has also been recognized by this study that the Spanish educational system guarantees a similar level of efficiency to that of other countries, as long as there are few differences in the results across the various types of schools (although public high schools attain poorer results). Additional interesting data supported by this account is that the Spanish educational system is one of the most compensatory in its category. Compared to Finland, Korea, and Japan, Spain can boast the least discrepancy between students of high and low achievement levels.

The current school system

Overview

In 2003, there were 8,352,709 pupils in Spain, 23,787 more than in the previous year, breaking the recent trend of decreasing student enrolment (MEC 2003). This stabilization is fundamentally linked to a growing number of foreign pupils and a surge of the birth rate, which account for an increase in the number of children in infant education. The 2002 Act on the Quality of Education (LOCE) organizes the system of pre-schools, schools, and higher education.

Pre-primary education

In Spain, the first level of non-compulsory education is pre-school education (*Educación Pre-escolar*) (ISCED 0). It is divided into two stages: for children from nought to three years of age and from three to six years of age. Its importance has been proved by an manifest contribution to stimulate development, whilst understanding development as a continuous and progressive process. With LOCE, the aim is to gradually provide free education from three to six years of age, ensuring that the teachers who impart this level must possess a specialization in pre-school education, have a superior technical preparation for pre-school education, or hold another suitable professional qualification.

Primary education

After the completion of the second stage of pre-school education, compulsory and free-of-charge schooling begins in Spain with primary education (*Educación Primaria*) (ISCED 1), for pupils from the ages of six to twelve. This first level of basic education is divided into three two-year stages. Among the aims of this level are: the acquisition of basic skills, improving and securing them, and the introduction of more complex tasks. With LOCE, the aim is to introduce the study of a foreign language during the first stage (six- to eight-year olds) and to teach basic computer skills at the second stage of this level (eight- to ten-year olds). With the actual LOCE, certain subjects at the primary level change names. For instance, 'natural, social, and cultural environment' will be re-named 'science, geography, and history'; likewise, 'religion' will become 'society, culture, and religion'. The latter presents two options: one with a confessional and another with a non-confessional

character. With respect to the system of advancing in this level, on the completion of each of the three stages, the tutor decides whether a pupil moves to the next stage or not. If the pupil's results are not satisfactory, he or she may remain in that stage for one more year (this may only happen once during primary education).

Lower-secondary education

Compulsory Secondary Education (*Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*, ESO) (ISCED 2) corresponds to ages twelve to sixteen (the latter is considered the minimum legal working age). It stands out mainly because of its terminal nature, since compulsory education ends with this level. But at the same time, it has a preparatory function, for it prepares the students for the step into post-compulsory education. The level is divided into two stages: in the first stage (twelve to fourteen years of age) a common core of subject areas prevails, whereas the second stage (fourteen to sixteen years of age) introduces a higher degree of optionality (reaching up to 25-30% of the school timetable). Such optional elements allows students to focus their interest on scientific, socio-linguistic, artistic, or technical fields. One of the main aims of LOCE consists of increasing the pupils' possibility of choosing, at the age of fourteen, from among three different paths: vocational and technical, scientific, and humanistic. The second measure establishes that the last year of compulsory secondary education will be designated as a Post-Compulsory Academic and Vocational course (*Curso para la Orientación Académica y Profesional Post-Obligatoria*, COAP), after which pupils will have to face a final examination (*Prueba General de Bachillerato*, PGB). The measures that will be adopted in compulsory secondary education (ESO) as part of LOCE refer to the reform of the minimum core curriculum for both stages and are expected to reinforce compulsory subjects at the expense of optional subjects. The reform of the humanities within ESO and the *Bachillerato* involves reinforcing subjects such as history, philosophy, and the classical languages. At the end of the first stage and at the end of each year of the second stage, the team of teachers which is responsible for the same group of pupils decides whether a pupil will advance from one year or stage to the next. The decision must be taken collectively. A pupil who does not meet the requirements stipulated by the stage or fails more than two subjects, he or she may be asked to repeat one year, as long as he or she has not already repeated a year in the previous stage. Pupils will not be able to repeat more than two years during compulsory secondary education.

Upper-secondary education

After completing compulsory education, pupils may access post-secondary levels, as long as they are sixteen or older. Two trajectories of upper-secondary education are recognized: *Bachillerato* and vocational training (FP) (both ISCED 3).

The *Bachillerato* constitutes the academic or general branch. It lasts for two academic years and contains the following option streams: arts, science and technology, and humanities and the social sciences; its implementation will start in the academic year 2004-2005. The LOCE establishes, as capacities to be developed within the *Bachillerato*, the reinforcement of self-motivation as well as the habits of reading, studying, and discipline as essential conditions for maximizing the learning process

and as means of self-development. In addition, the LOCE targets the reinforcement of an enterprising spirit, together with a number of the attitudes: creativity, flexibility, initiative, self-confidence, critical sense, teamwork, and a spirit of innovation. Pupils who have failed in more than two subjects at the end of the year are obliged to repeat that year. The maximum period a pupil may take to complete the *Bachillerato* is four years. Pupils who have passed all subjects will receive the *Bachillerato* certificate (*Título de Bachiller*), entitling them to access higher-level vocational training; non-academic professional studies such as art, visual art and design, music and dance, languages, and other studies to acquire the qualification of sport manager; or, after having passed an entrance examination, university studies.

Vocational training: The reform of vocational training constitutes one of the most remarkable novelties introduced by the LOGSE. It is structured into two levels:

- Basic vocational training (*Formación Profesional de Base*, FPB) within the ESO, which enables all students to acquire the basic skills needed to enter working life in the future and
- Specific vocational training (*Formación Profesional Específica*, FPE), within post-compulsory education. This is divided into two stages: intermediate-level vocational training (*Formación Profesional Específica de Grado Medio*, FP) (ISCED 3) which lasts for two years and it is divided into training stages, and higher-level vocational training (ISCED 5b).

The aim of new Act of Vocational Training is complementary to LOGSE and considers the three possible systems of vocational training: regulated vocational training (*Formación Profesional reglada*), occupational vocational training (*Formación Profesional ocupacional*), and continuing vocational training (*Formación Profesional continua*).

The intermediate and higher levels are structured into 136 training stages, which are further divided into vocational modules (*módulos profesionales*) of theoretical and practical training. These modules are grouped in twenty-two vocational families. There are two ways to advance from intermediate- to higher-level vocational training: direct access or indirect access. In the first case, a *Bachillerato* certificate will be required (in any of its option streams). The second way of access requires being eighteen years old and includes an ability test. In order to complete the training stage successfully, the progression system in at the intermediate level of vocational training requires that the pupils obtain a positive assessment in each of the vocational modules included in the stage. On successful completion of intermediate *FP*, students receive the qualification of Technical Specialist (*Técnico*). Those who obtain this qualification may access the *Bachillerato* (through the corresponding validation), enrol in non-academic professional studies, or sit a university entrance examination as long as they are eighteen or older. In addition, students must also complete whatever studies a particular CCAA deems necessary in order to attain the maturity and vocational skills certified by the qualification of *Técnico*. Finally, other alternatives of upper-secondary education are: adult secondary education, the international *Bachillerato*, and non-academic professional studies.

Special education

The principle of equal opportunities in education implies paying special attention to certain groups that find themselves in a disadvantaged situation due to their personal and/or social circumstances such as rural areas, no previous access to schooling, cultural minorities, and immigration. The LOGSE puts forward a policy integrated within the system by means of organizational and curricular plans of action. One of these plans involves awarding study grants and allowances with the purpose of providing economic resources to those who lack them. Many changes have been introduced both in the regulation and in the conceptual approach to educating pupils with special educational needs. These changes range from providing welfare assistance to guaranteeing systematic educational intervention. Under the LOGSE, special education is governed by the principles of normalization and integration. Furthermore, the Act introduces the notion of 'special educational needs' as an alternative for 'disabled'.

Thus, the LOGSE provides both ordinary and exceptional channels of attention to diversity at all educational levels, seeking an appropriate attention to all pupils through the adoption of a flexible and open curricular model. Alternative solutions proposed range from increasing optional subjects throughout the stage to introducing curricular modifications, or a possible curricular diversification in the last stage of the level. Furthermore, Social Guarantee Programmes (*Garantía Social*), now called Programmes of Professional Introduction (*Programas de Iniciación Profesional*) in LODE, have been proposed as extra measures. These programmes have been designed for those who abandon the educational system before turning sixteen, with the aim of offering young people a basic minimum of vocational training to enable them to enter working life.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Higher or tertiary education (*Enseñanza Superior o de Tercer Nivel*) covers university and non-university education. University education (*Enseñanza Universitaria*) (ISCED 5a) involves several types of studies. These studies will be structured into courses comprising only the first stage, courses with two stages without an intermediate qualification, courses with two stages that lead to an intermediate qualification, courses consisting of the second stage only, and courses with three stages (the third corresponding to a doctorate (*Doctorado*) (ISCED 6)). Again, these are structured into option streams: humanities, experimental and health sciences, the social sciences and law, and technical studies. Non-university education (*enseñanza no universitaria*) encompasses several types of institutions. Four categories of studies can be distinguished:

- Studies which are officially equivalent to university studies but the qualifications are not awarded by a university (higher art education and higher military education);
- Higher-level vocational training, structured into training stages;
- Studies to acquire the qualification of Higher Sport Manager (*Técnicos Deportivos Superiores*); and

- A group of studies regulated by specific statutory instruments, offering qualifications that are not equivalent to those delivered by general mainstream education system.

With respect to progressing through higher-level vocational training, the student will need to obtain a positive assessment in each of the vocational modules. The qualification of Senior Technical Specialist (*Técnico Superior*) allows the student to access the labour market or a university. In order to enter university studies, students must have passed the entrance examination. After completing the required number of academic years and on successful completion of his or her university studies consisting of one stage only (or the first stage of studies in the case of two stages with an intermediate qualification), the student receives the qualification of University Graduate (*Diplomado*), Technical Architect (*Arquitecto Técnico*), or Technical Engineer (*Ingeniero Técnico*). A student is awarded with the qualification of Bachelor/University Graduate (*Licenciado*), Architect (*Arquitecto*), or Engineer (*Ingeniero*) on successful completion of the second stage of university studies. Finally, the qualification of doctor (ISCED 6) is obtained on completion of the third stage of university studies and after having passed the Diploma of Advanced Studies (*Diploma en Estudios Avanzados*, DEA), an examination that takes into consideration the results of the Research Project and the marks received in the doctorate modules taken.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives an development

Questions that emerged following the implementation of the LOGSE

Since the 1990s, a series of social, political, and economic changes has taken place that has transformed Spanish society in its entirety. These changes had an indubitable influence on education, too. To sum up, the educational Act through which Spain has come closer to the envisaged ‘European dimension of education’, in the wider sense, has meant an improvement in education and teaching methods. Educational innovation has materialized through the active principles of ‘equal opportunities’, ‘integration’, ‘comprehensiveness’, and ‘constructivism’, all of which have been applied to the various levels of education. Among the innovations introduced, it would be worth emphasizing the proposal for a new structure of the education system, the attention to students with special educational needs, the reform of vocational training, the responsibilities and autonomy conferred to schools and teachers in relation to the development of the curriculum, and the requirement to evaluate the whole education system as a whole.

However, the aforementioned innovations should not be an impediment to acknowledge that the education system has revealed a series of manifest weaknesses during this period of enforcement. These are:

- The slight impact the LOGSE has had on improving pupils’ and students’ results in comparison to the previous Act, the LGE. Indeed, comparative studies between pupils from the previous study plans for general basic education (*Educación General Básica*, EGB) and current primary education (LOGSE) have not

- shown any significant difference between them, except in the area of language (INCE 2001; the effects of LOCE have not been evaluated yet);
- The high rates of dropouts, especially in post-compulsory secondary education. At this level of education, pupils' academic achievement is less satisfactory than that of pupils aged fourteen, provided that only 22.5% of them, against 30% of fourteen-year-olds, reach the standards considered to be 'acceptable without reservations' (INCE 1998). This confirms that one fifth of the pupils fail to achieve the minimum requirements, which leads to high repetition rates (one out of three students has to repeat the third year of the ESO or does not obtain the corresponding qualification);
 - Another level of education that continues to require greater attention, despite the reforms already implemented on its behalf, is vocational training, in which very few students are enrolled in comparison to other areas of education. The need for giving prestige to this level has to become a major strategic priority (Martínez 2001);
 - The situation of the teaching staff. Despite the reforms undertaken, several studies show signs of discontent and despondency among teachers with regard to their perceived societal value and the expectations of the school and the pupils (Benavente 2001; Marchesi/Monguilot 2001); and
 - Finally, there is university education. Its quantitative growth has not been matched by adequate qualitative requirements. As a consequence, it has been losing prestige, which led to a gradual reduction of the young students' professional expectations on entering the labour market (Lázaro 2001). This is accompanied by organizational lacks: excessive specialization and atomization of knowledge, difficulties in the organization of teachers and timetables, and shortage and inadequacy of optional subjects, among others (Michavila/Calvo 2000).

It is hoped, therefore, that new educational laws which equally affect compulsory levels (LOCE) and the level of vocational education as well as university students (LOU) will alleviate significant problems to a certain extent. Of the three, the LOCE has been the most successful. Its impact has been the greatest, introducing important modifications of compulsory and post-compulsory education to existing forms of educational organization. With it, an attempt has been made to address educational problems across educational levels. At the least, a culture of academic prowess and a culture of evaluation are considered fundamental, as was previously indicated. Furthermore, the LOCE supports autonomous schools, advocating discipline and making the system flexible by introducing training alternatives.

Although it is perhaps too soon to predict the results of this educational Act, it has come to provoke continuing debates (that are not free from criticisms) among different members of the school community (parents, students, syndicates, and professors). Among the most significant are the financial imbalance between public schools and government-subsidized private schools in favour of the latter; a lack of sensitivity to problems (faculty, educational failure, and lack of resources); the glaring absence of values and procedures in the educational establishment; and, perhaps the most enduring criticism, dualization of the system and the proposal for segrega-

tion initiated at the age of fourteen (this is based on ideas of innate capacity and of the inevitability of social inequality). As a background, it has come to be identified with 'the philosophy of a strong neo-liberal and neo-conservative character, which demonstrates the lack of pedagogical training and ignorance of investigations conducted in this area' (Digón 2003).

Future challenges in education

As a conclusion, the following is a list of several challenges that have not been explicitly contemplated in the aforementioned acts. These should be tackled under the guidelines of effective educational policies (Marchesi 2001; Marchesi 2002; García Garrido 2001):

- The challenge, present and continuous, of the pairing of quality and equity in all levels of education. It is worth adding here that in spite of having obtained a medium-low evaluation in reading and writing capacity (PISA study), Spain is one of the countries that has demonstrated superior equity indexes, as has been noted above;
- The influence of the information society, which constantly present in education and training contexts, as well as the strategic impact of new technologies on education;
- The need for enhancing the autonomy of educational establishments so that these can draw up their own projects to become more demanding and sensible to communal contexts. To achieve so, it is necessary to reach agreements with the central administration, which establishes the basic regulations of education.
- The essential need for fostering policies to support the teaching staff (from pre-school education to university), such as active policies aimed at providing incentives to heighten their professional prospects and expectations, stabilizing the teams, promoting research and experimentation activities, spreading 'good practice', and consolidating firm training policies;
- The social and educational integration of several groups represents a real challenge to move towards an authentic multicultural education: immigrants, pupils with learning difficulties, and other disadvantaged sectors. Exponential growth comparable to that of Italy and France has already been hinted at. The challenge, in this sense, is concentrates on the consolidation and stabilization of the teaching staff, the contact with other educational establishments or institutions within the sphere of education (universities, associations, and NGOs), and the improvement of support and counselling services; and
- University politics that run counter to the common European space of higher education (EEE) mark another area that requires attention. Spain continues to work at a national level through the National Agency of Evaluation of Educational Quality (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de Calidad Educativa, ANECA) in every university by means of innovative projects. European reforms, from which Spain benefits, prompted by the TUNING (2001) project, are formulated around the consideration of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). This precedent mainly proposes to modify the notion of credit that prioritizes hours of learning and not hours of instruction, which would transform

teaching philosophy in a notable manner. Last, but not the least, comes the promotion of the appealing option of non-university higher education, which offers practical careers and ensures flexibility within the labour market.

References

- Esteve, J. M.: Las expectativas de la sociedad y la imagen social de los profesores. In : *Psicología Educativa* 1 (1995).
- Benavente, J. M.: Mitos de la reforma educativa de los noventa en España. In : *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* 27 (2001), pp. 77-98.
- Digón, P.: La Ley Orgánica de Calidad de la Educación: análisis crítico de la nueva reforma educativa española. In: *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa* 5 (2003). Retrieved April 2003 from <http://redie.ens.uabc.mx/vol5no1/contenido-digon.html>.
- Eurydice-Eurybase: The Education System in Spain. The Information Database on Education Systems in Europe. 2003. Retrieved November 2002 from <http://www.eurydice.org>.
- García Garrido, J. L.: Perspectivas de la Educación en Europa en el siglo XXI. In : Lázaro, L. M. (Ed.): *Problemas y Desafíos para la Educación en el Siglo XXI en Europa y América Latina*. Valencia 2001, pp. 29-46.
- INCE: Diagnóstico del sistema educativo. La escuela secundaria obligatoria 1997. Madrid 1998.
- INCE: Evaluación de la educación secundaria obligatoria 2000. Datos básicos. Madrid 2001.
- Lázaro, L. M.: La educación superior en Europa: el desafío pendiente de la equidad. In: Lázaro, L. M. (ed.): *Problemas y Desafíos para la Educación en el Siglo XXI en Europa y América Latina*. Valencia 2001, pp. 59-90.
- Marchesi, A.: Presente y futuro de la reforma educativa en España. In: *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* 27 (2001), pp. 57-76.
- Marchesi, A.: *Controversias en la educación española*. Segunda Edición. Madrid 2002.
- Marchesi, A./Monguilot, I.: *La opinión de los padres sobre la calidad de la educación*. Madrid 1999.
- Martínez, M. J.: *Formación Profesional Comparada*. Valencia 2001.
- MEC: *Datos Básicos de la Educación en España en el Curso 2001/2002*. Madrid 2002.
- MEC: *Las cifras de la Educación en España*. Madrid 2003.
- Michavila, F./Calvo, B.: *La universidad española hacia Europa*. Madrid 2000.
- OECD: *Education at a glance*. Paris 2000.
- OECD: *Knowledge and skills for life. First results from PISA 2000*. Paris 2001.
- OCDE: *Una mirada sobre la educación: indicadores de la OCDE*. Paris 2003.
- Pérez, V. et al.: *La familia española ante la educación de sus hijos*. Barcelona 2003.

Tobias Werler and Silwa Claesson

Sweden

History of the school system

Cultural context and cornerstones of the historical development of schooling

The economic and political developments in Sweden during the first sixty years of the twentieth century provide the foundation of the present educational system: industrialization and commercialization of the economy, the mechanization of farming, the rapid development of the telecommunications system, population growth and urbanization, transition of from a class-conscious society to a society determined by social factors, labour movement, the emancipation of women, democratization, and the construction of the welfare state. It is possible to characterize this time period by naming these few essential elements. The centrally organized Kingdom of Sweden can look back on a long period of national tradition. Gustav Vasa (1523-60) aided the country in gaining supremacy in the north, which lasted up to the nineteenth century. Finland was also a part of Sweden's national territory (until 1809) in addition to its overseas colonies. Moreover, Sweden pursued a policy of union with Norway between 1814 and 1905. Due to the agrarian underdevelopment of vast parts of the country, about 1.1 million people emigrated to North America, mostly between 1840 and 1914. It was not until initial industrialization at the beginning of the twentieth century that this trend was halted. The positive economic development during the 1920s created the basis for the political and social projects of the *folkhem* ('people's home'). This is reflected in the subsequent welfare state. A very distinguishing characteristic of Sweden is its long state of peace, which has remained intact since 1814. During the two World Wars the country was not attacked. Sweden is also characterized by the ethical and religious influence of Protestantism: there is a strong sense of unity among the various social groups. An era of almost fifty years of social democratic government has, with few interruptions, strongly determined the country's ideology, particularly in the area of education.

Like all countries in the north of Europe, Sweden was Christianized in the ninth century. Nevertheless, the old Germanic faith held its own for a long time. By the time of the Riksdag's Assembly of Västerås (1527), both the Swedish State Church and the Reformation were established. Every Swedish citizen became a member of the State Church at birth; this law was abolished in 1995. A recession during the 1970s followed on the heels of a seventy-year period of constant economic growth. Between 1950 and 1970, the BNP doubled, while the consumer prices increased by approximately 80%, and the extension of the public sector increased by roughly 170%. Upper-level school attendance increased as well, as did the number of university students. The world oil crisis of the 1970s also affected Sweden. Inflation and deceleration of the productivity rate were the consequences of this development, which was followed by decreasing real wages, high national debt, and increasing

unemployment. The subsequent economic upturn during the 1980s was characterized by rapidly rising prices that were due to the deregulation of the currency market. The bank crisis of the 1990s inaugurated the next recession, which was also marked by high unemployment, increased national debt, and the reduction in public expenditure. In 2004, 5.2% of the population were unemployed.

The zeitgeist of the 1970s was determined by optimism and a belief in the future of the welfare state. A phase of unease, unrest, fear, and pessimism followed with the 1980s. Through the deregulation of the markets, the national income structure changed: income differences became greater. While private industry carried out luxurious projects, the questions was asked: how could these glamorous and costly projects be realized so fast when, at the same time, schools in the capital were becoming increasingly dilapidated?

Reforms and innovations

After the Second World War, basic reforms to the construction and standardization of the school system were carried out. In 1946, a school commission was set up. The task of this group was the radical rebuilding of the Swedish school system. Schools, which were founded in the nineteenth century, were to be united in one school form. These were, on one hand, the compulsory school, consisting of the *folkskola* (primary school), *fortsättningsskola* (secondary school), *högre folkskola* (upper-primary school), *kommunala mellanskola* (municipal secondary-modern school), and, on the other hand, school preparing for upper school: *realskola* (secondary-modern school).

The introduction of the compulsory nine-year *grundskola* (basic school) was decided in 1962. A prerequisite for this were different reform suggestions and school experimentation, with a common school for all pupils of school age. By doing this, the duration of compulsory education was lengthened from seven to nine years. These reforms also started the nationwide comprehensive school (*enhetsskola*). In the following period the *gymnasieskola* (1964), a general two-year grammar school, which is an extension of the *grundskola*, was introduced. With the integration of the *yrkesskola* (vocational school) and the *fackskola* (technical college) into the *gymnasieskola* (1968), the endeavours to standardize the educational system were strengthened. However, due to the reforms in the school system, numerous adults felt confronted by well-trained school-leavers. Remaining educational gaps were lessened by a reform (1967) of community adult education (*komvux*), making it possible for all adults to compensate for their lack of a degree from the *grundskola* or the *gymnasieskola*.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the humanistic educational ideal was the focus of higher education in Sweden. The dominant principle of education was learning ancient languages. The slightly differentiated secondary school (*differenterade gymnasiet*) was introduced in 1927. It was divided into a sciences programme (*reallinje*) and a Latin programme. In 1953 the *allmänna linjen* (general programme) was established as a broader programme. Three different types of secondary schools were found in 1960: general, technical, and secondary trade schools. About 20% of the relevant age group attended these university preparatory schools.

The three-year *gymnasiet* was introduced as a result of a further reform phase (1964). It was divided into five programmes (humanities, economics, the social sciences, science, and mechanics).

In parallel to this, a two-year *fackskola* (professional technical college) was developed. It showed that the same differentiations and professional qualifications could be attained. Moreover, vocational schools (*yrkeskola*) still existed in the voluntary school sector. However, the integration of these types of schools into an integrated type of school, which qualified one both professionally and for university (the *gymnasieskola*, 1968), still needed to be reformed. Numerous school dropouts and break-offs proved this last point. A new reform cycle for the *gymnasieskola* was undertaken in 1990. The cycle was completed by the introduction of sixteen double qualifying national programmes (*profiles*) in 1994. In 2001, the number was increased to seventeen. In order to support and integrate as well as improve national standards for education, municipal adult education (*komvux*) was introduced (1968). The large and ineffective educational committees of the 1960s were replaced by small, fast, and effective committees during the 1980s and 1990s, which accomplished many objectives. At the end of the 1960s, all essential tasks and reforms were established. It therefore became necessary to adjust the existing school system due to changing environmental conditions. This development was followed by an intensification of educational research, which was connected to the belief in 'the art of social engineering' during the 1960s and 1970s. Numerous school tests have been carried out since then. Since 1971, the office for school evaluation and observation (*skolöverstyrelse*, SÖ; since 1991: *skolverket*, Swedish National Agency for Education) became responsible for evaluation. An annual report on the school system has been presented to the Riksdag since that time. One result of this strategy demonstrates that since the 1980s, mathematics, English, and Swedish are stressed more and earlier at the *grundskola* than before.

The implementation of a successful comprehensive school was combined with the introduction of a new national curriculum in 1962, which was revised in 1969. It is characteristic for these new documents that they supported more strongly intra-educational differentiation, and therefore made possible the creation of a comprehensive *grundskola*. The curriculum of 1980 focused on enabling the unhindered organization of lessons by teachers and pupils. Thematic studies and project work were encouraged and, on the completion of these studies, pupils were introduced to practical work every year. The latest curriculum (1994) represents, on the one hand, not only the continuation, but also the natural consequence of the altered basic conditions. Revision had become inevitable. The new curriculum is now comprised of the entire compulsory school system, including special education schools. Unlike its predecessors, the curriculum does not contain objectives and guidelines for the lessons. Moreover, parents have the right to choose a school.

The last decade of the twentieth century was noticeably marked by active political participation. Numerous dropouts at the grammar-school level were observed at the end the 1980s. In order both to stop this development and strengthen the integration between general and vocational education, numerous reforms were carried out. A new system was introduced for the *gymnasieskola* in 1992. This new system is

distinguished by the replacement of the former sections. They were replaced by sixteen national programmes (in 2000, there were seventeen), which may be differentiated still further. There was also a discussion on the expansion of compulsory education in this context. Nonetheless, this was rejected because of its high cost. Almost every Swedish boy and girl had, on a voluntary level, attended *förskoleklass* (pre-school class) since 1975. However, now the pre-school class was established as a part of the school system. The new compulsory school is designed for six-year olds up to sixteen-year olds. Every municipality is obliged to set this type of school up, though attendance is voluntary.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and the general function of the school

One of the most essential objectives of Swedish educational policy is the provision of a national school system that offers every pupil equal access to teaching without regard to gender, place of residence, or social/financial background. Every school must have the same standard nationwide. Lessons are carried out with the objective of imparting knowledge and skills to pupils in co-operation with them. They are to become responsible people and members of the community. All education at school emphasizes the equality between the sexes and the avoidance of racist behaviour. In Sweden, an extended concept of equality means that men and women possess roughly the same duties, laws, and opportunities, and they have the same chances to take part in working life, political, technical, and social work. Schools share a part of the responsibility for this belief. Equality is an essential basis and component of the Education Act, teaching curriculum, and scheduling for the school today.

In the Education Act equality of opportunity is emphasized in addition to gender equality: 'All children and young people are to have the same access to education in the public school system independent of gender, geographical origin as well as social and economic conditions' (Skollag, Kap.1, § 2). In practical execution this means that the various prerequisites for boys and girls regarding access to natural science and technology must be considered already at the academic planning stages. To all pupils the possibility of acquiring new technology must be offered. In addition, this aspect requires that problems regarding equality and equality of opportunity must be considered early in a teacher's education. Still, even if the Education Act emphasizes equality in Sweden, there is an ongoing discussion. In 2005, the new national feminist party was formed.

Socio-economic context

Due to the country's overall geographical area of 450,000 square kilometres and a north-south axis of approximately 1600 kilometres, Sweden is one of the largest countries in Western Europe; however, the population density amounts to only about 20 inhabitants per square kilometre. In 2004, the Swedish population was 9.3 million. About 16% of the country's entire landmass is located north of the Polar Circle. The majority of the population lives in two southern regions concentrated in the urban centres of Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö. The Sami (17,000) and Finns

living in the northern regions of the country are the national minorities. Immigrants from crisis areas are new minority groups: in the year 2004, 12.2% of the population were born outside the country. In 1998, the export amounted to 45% of the GDP. More than the half of this was exported to the European Union. However, Finland and Norway are also essential trading partners. Besides the traditional raw-material sources of iron and wood, the metal processing industry (motor vehicles, aeroplanes) as well as the high-technology sector (telecommunications, pharmaceuticals) have gained in importance. The relatively high participation of public services in the economy is very characteristic of Sweden. The expansion of the public sector led not only to the creation of new workplaces, but also to the high employment rate for women. In conjunction with this, the institutions for public child support are of special interest.

Social position of the teaching profession

Sweden has had state-run teacher training since 1862. Usually, this education took place at teacher-training seminars, with the original responsible body being the Church. Up to 1952, teachers were not employed in Swedish schools if they did not belong to the Church. Since 1977, teachers are trained at universities or colleges of higher learning (*högskola*).

Teacher-training programmes for the *grundskola* last between 3.5 (140 points) and 4.5 (180 points) years depending on the subjects chosen. A teacher-education reform was conducted in 2002 and it included all kinds of teachers. The reform was yet another effort to connect different kinds of teachers to each other so that, in the end, it should provide support to pupils' learning. Students who intend to teach adults are, in this new teacher education, in the same group of students as those who, for example, are going to teach children in pre-school. For a eighteen months, all kinds of students attend the same courses independently of what type of teacher they wish to become. During the remainder of teacher education students have a choice from a very wide range of subjects. They are free to combine any of their subjects in their teacher exam. Equipped with this education, every teacher can return to teacher training at a later stage to study more subjects, and by doing so they can, if they wish to, move from pre-school to upper-school teaching qualifications without attending a new course. Since 2001, a teacher-training certificate entitles one to teach at either the *grundskola* or *gymnasieskola* levels, provided that the overall course result amounts to at least 180 points.

In general, teachers at the *gymnasieskola* have studied at least three subjects at the university level and achieved a minimum of 180 points. For all prospective teachers practical training is included as part of their education. This practical training is closely connected to teacher-courses at university and conducted by teachers with work experience and scientific or technical qualifications.

The core curriculum allows and calls for co-operation and teamwork, and so schools are able to offer interdisciplinary lessons. Pre-school teachers and after-school educators are being increasingly employed by communities to carry out the care/support strategy of various schools.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The Riksdag and government take responsibility for the educational system in Sweden. These two institutions define the general objectives of and guidelines for schools. Decision-making is decentralized to a great extent. Almost the entire educational system is under the supervision of the Ministry: the *förskola* (nursery school), *förskoleklass* (pre-school class), *grundskola* (nine-year compulsory school), *sameskola* (saami school), *särskola* (special school for mentally disabled children), *specialskola* (school for pupils with impaired hearing/vision and physical disabilities), *gymnasieskola* (comprehensive upper-secondary school), *komvux* (municipal adult education), as well as all universities. The exceptions are the Rural University, job re-training programmes, and military and police academies.

The central administrative authority (*skolverket*) serves and evaluates the school activities. Furthermore, *skolverket* contributes to school development, teacher education, and higher education. The institution passes statements and reports on to the Riksdag and the government. Statistical information (e.g.: number of pupils, relationship between pupils and teachers, budget, or costs etc.) about all schools is regularly collected by the *skolverket* to make both internal comparisons and quality control possible. At selected schools achievement tests and quality reports are carried out (costs, results, organizational conditions, and service). The tests in Swedish, English, and mathematics may be carried out in the fifth form, but they must be carried out in the ninth form.

The Swedish State can look back on a long tradition of community self-administration. Sweden is divided administratively into twenty-one counties (*lane*). Twenty of these have a county council (*landsting*). Political decisions regarding education are made at the municipal level. The 289 municipalities are responsible for local *förskoleverksamhet* (nursery school activity), *skolbarnomsorg* (support of school age children), as well as for the *förskoleklass*, *grundskola*, and *gymnasieskola*. Every municipality has a decision-making executive body, the *kommunfullmäktige* (municipal council). The *landstingsfullmäktige* is the corresponding authority at the regional level.

The *skollag* (Education Law, cf. Skollag 1997) and the curriculum for the compulsory school, pre-school classes, and after-school programmes form the basis for all educational activities in the school system. Decentralization of the decision-making levels means that every municipality acts as the employer for the school staff and is also responsible for their further education.

The task of the municipal council is to design a school schedule. This plan must contain the development and academic schedule of the local school(s) on the basis of the national curriculum. In addition, measures by which the *kommun* intends to accomplish the nationally pre-defined objectives must be shown. Every school is obliged to draw up an individual working schedule: this determines the schedule and organization of everyday school activity. Teaching objectives are determined in cooperation between teachers and pupils. Individual needs and studying/learning prerequisites form the base for these objectives.

The financing of the schools is shared between the State and municipal levels. A state subsidy is at the municipalities' disposal for self-administration. This subsidy, which forms the municipal tax benefit, must be used to ensure the upholding of school standards (buildings, teacher salaries, or materials etc.). The state subsidy is not dependent on the organizational form of a particular school. Only in cases where the *skollag* has been violated, is the State authorized to interfere. There are special subsidies awarded by the State for the further education of the school staff, measures to help trainees, as well as assistance for certain privately-run schools. Every municipality is obliged to support financially government-approved private schools (*grundskola, gymnasieskola*).

The *grundskola* as well as the *gymnasieskola* are free of charge. This also applies to all private schools, since their financing is underwritten by the *kommun*. For pupils at the *grundskola*, studying includes school meals, medical supplies, transport, as well as Swedish lesson for immigrants, all of which are free of charge. This also applies to most *gymnasieskola*. In the *förskoleklass*, there are 525 hours which are free of charge. The parents have to assume costs for transportation and meals. The participants in *komvux* must cover costs for any materials, which they may thereafter keep. Pupils at both the *gymnasieskola* and *folkhögskola* (adult boarding schools) receive financial assistance in from the ages of sixteen to twenty.

Independent schools

In Sweden there are a number of independent schools. They must be approved by the *skoleverket*; therefore, rules were developed for this approval by the Riksdag and the government. A school is to be closed down if it does not correspond to these rules. The conditions of the school law and the curriculum (values, objectives) must be fulfilled. As pointed out before, it is up to parents (and pupils) to choose a school form if it is physically possible, which best serves compulsory education. Every local community is obliged to pay for the school attendance of a pupil at an independent school; for resource distribution the taximeter principle is used. If the financial and organizational expenditures are considerable, financing may be refused. All independent schools may collect school fees, but they must be adequate. However, independent schools pursue strategies of new education, and the concepts of Montessori or Steiner are widely used.

General standards of the school education system

There has been a new national curriculum in Sweden since 1994 (Lpo 94). The curriculum is in force for the *grundskola*, the *sameskola*, the compulsory *särskola*, as well as for the *specialskola*. Since 1998, Lpo 94 also comprises the *förskoleklass* as well as the *fritidshem*. The curriculum defines the basic national values and describes basic school objectives and guidelines. Furthermore, the curriculum declares that the major objective of the school is to impart those values on which Swedish society is based.

These values are the inviolability of human life, the liberty and integrity of the individual, people's equal worth, the equality of women and men, as well as solidarity with those who are in need of protection. The objectives and guidelines consist of

objectives that must be both worked towards and accomplished. Objectives, which must be met, determine both the work and quality of school development. It is the responsibility of school organizers (municipality, teacher and head teacher) to accomplish these aims.

Regarding individual subjects, national curricula are determined by the *Utbildningsdepartement*. They contain the goals of the subject in principle as well as the objectives for the fifth and ninth grades. Teacher and pupils determine suitable teaching methods. For the *grundskola*, a schedule describing guaranteed lesson time in units of sixty minutes exists. These sixty-minute units, however, do not determine the organizational framework of the lessons themselves. About 9% of the guaranteed time may be chosen by the pupils to consolidate specific topics which are of special interest to the pupil. They normally choose classes in music, culture, natural science, languages, and sport. In connection with this it is fair to add that every school does not have a wide range of topics, instead each school has its own profile, narrowing down the choice for their pupils. In the context of these electives and by the increase or reduction of the time for certain other subjects (+/- 20%), it is possible for every *grundskola* to develop an individual profile. Distribution of single lessons during the nine-year school period is recognized to be a responsibility of the school. On the basis of the profiles, which are noted in the local school scheduling plan, parents are able to choose an appropriate school for their child. For families in big cities this is a reality but, as pointed out before, Sweden is sparsely inhabited, which means that in reality most pupils cannot choose between schools. In the *grundskola*, Swedish, mathematics, and English are particularly emphasized. English is the first compulsory foreign language. The introduction of English lessons is determined by the municipality. One third of all municipalities start English instruction when pupils enter elementary school. Second foreign languages offered are German, French, and Spanish. Learning a third foreign language is optional. During the last five years Swedish pupils tended not to choose a third language, and research shows how that young Swedish people are preoccupied with mastering English. Sami and Finnish are offered as alternatives. As a second foreign language pupils may opt for receiving instruction in either their non-Swedish mother tongue or in sign language. Apparently, it is the intention of these options to offer pupils with immigrant backgrounds the opportunity to learn their mother tongue more deeply, to attain a bilingual language understanding, and to make themselves familiar with their own cultural background. In order to give pupils access to their culture, teachers insist that it is not sufficient to talk, so, in reality, lessons appear to be dominated by reading and writing. However, the right to receive this kind of instruction is limited to seven years.

Every school is obliged to inform both pupils and their parents about the development (of the pupil) over the course of their compulsory education. In order to initiate this contact, dialogue is undertaken between teachers and parents. In this parent-teacher conference (*utvecklingssamtal*), the development of the pupil, including his or her knowledge; the social level of competence; and the goals he or she has to accomplish are discussed. On parental request, a written statement may be presented. Since 1995, results and learning results from the eighth to the ninth grade

are marked twice a year (*terminsbetyg*). A scale of four steps is used: fail, satisfactory, good, and very good.

At the end of compulsory education, a leaving certificate from the *grundskola* (*slutbetyg från grundskolan*) is awarded. This is given if either compulsory education ends or the pupil has finished the ninth form satisfactorily. Almost all marks are awarded either on an interdisciplinary basis or by individual subject teachers. As a basis for this, criteria are formulated in the course schedules. All pupils at the *grundskola* move automatically to the next form in the following school year. There is also the possibility for the head teacher to move a pupil up or down. National final examinations ensure that comparable results in Swedish, English, and mathematics are achieved across the entire country. They also provide the basis for the leaving certificate (*slutbetyg*), which entitles the graduate to attend secondary school (*gymnasieskola*). A leaving certificate may also be supplemented by attendance in *komvux*. The aims and guidelines for the *gymnasieskola*, the *gymnasiesärskola* (special grammar school), *komvux*, as well as *särvux* are defined in the *Läroplan för de frivilliga skolformerna* (LPF 94), the curriculum for voluntary school forms. These aims are the following:

- Imparting a broad field of knowledge, development of analytical abilities, and appropriation of scientific modes of operation;
- Developing the abilities and skills needed in professional life as well as during the pupil's entire lifespan;
- Developing an understanding of the Nordic languages, including Sami; and
- Imparting the essential elements of Western cultural heritage.

In accordance with educational laws, a point system is applied that determines the distribution of the core subjects and programme-specific subjects. Furthermore, a specific number of points is needed for the successful completion of *gymnasieskola*. The school's duration is three years. However, pupils have the opportunity to extend or shorten their time at school depending on the number of points achieved. Pupils with an immigrant background have the right to choose Swedish as a second native language instead of regular Swedish lessons. Similar to the *grundskola*, these pupils may be taught at the *gymnasieskola* in their native language. About 6% of all Swedish pupils speak another native language other than Swedish. The grading system of the *gymnasieskola* essentially corresponds to the aims and guidelines of the curriculum. The system distinguishes four standards: fail, satisfactory, good, and very good. These standards are fairly new and there is an ongoing debate in the press as well as in the education system because pupils who leave school in 2004 have significantly better marks than those who left school in 2000.

If a pupil does not pass an individual course in the programme, he or she must repeat that course. Even so, it is also possible to repeat an entire year. A final examination does not take place at the end of school. Every pupil receives the *Slutbetyg från gymnasieskolan*, the school-leaving certificate. This document shows the pupil's summarized results according to the course schedule as well as any attained marks. To receive the certificate, both an educational programme and any project work must be completed. If pupils have taken more courses than are necessary for

graduation, then they decide themselves which course marks will appear on the leaving certificate. The completion of a programme serves as admission to higher education. Almost all university courses take a pupil's specialization at the *gymnasieskola* for granted.

The current school system

General structure: overview

Almost every fourth inhabitant of the country took part in an educational process organized by education laws (1999 data). Of these, there were 1.8 million children and young people, with roughly 400,000 persons taking part in adult education. In the *förskoleverksamhet* sector there were 372,000 children (1999). This corresponds to a ratio of three to four. 93% of all six-year olds (in 1999 the number of children was 112,000) attended the voluntary *förskoleklass*. Parallel to this, 72% of this age-group attended after-school programmes (*skolbarnomsorg*). The *grundskola* represents the greatest organizational school unit, having approximately one million pupils. Nearly 99% of all pupils (between seven and fifteen years of age) attend the *grundskola*. About 35,200 of all school-age pupils attended private schools. In 1999 the *gymnasieskola* was attended by 306,000 pupils. Nearly all pupils (98%) who had completed the *grundskola* continued their education at a secondary school. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, this interest in secondary education was approximately 80%. An offer in *voxenutbildning* (municipal adult education, *komvux*) was attended in 1998-99 by 6.5% of all people aged between twenty and sixty-four. In 1996, the percentage of people intending to take post-degree education was only 4.4%. There were 262,000 actively engaged either on the teaching staff or in after school programmes (1999). Approximately half of them worked in *skolbarnomsorg*, and 5% were active in the *komvux*-sector. Additionally, another 62,000 persons were engaged in service-related activities. The voluntary attendance of a *förskola* (nursery school) for children less than six years old forms the first step of the Swedish education system. However, the municipality is obliged to establish a one-year *förskoleklass* (pre-school class) for six-year-old children outside the compulsory education sector. This is followed by the public school system. It consists of the *grundskola*, the *sameskola* for children in the Sami minority, the *särskola*, and the *specialskola*. This is followed by secondary education. The *gymnasieskola* is either a general or educational-vocational secondary school. In both the compulsory and voluntary school systems, private institutions can be found.

Pre-primary education

Although nursery schools have existed in Sweden as long ago as the nineteenth century, their broad social implementation changed during the 1970s. Various legal settlements provided improved integration between the elements of the nursery school and the *grundskola*. The municipality was obliged to submit educational support for one- to five-year-old children on two levels: in the context of nursery school activities (*förskoleverksamhet*) and in the context of extracurricular child support (*skolbarnsomsorg*). The realization on both levels should accompany the

development of the child and provide the foundations for future study in the form of group activities. Educational support is carried out in co-operation with parents. This may offer them the opportunity to continue working, and they do not need to give up their parenting role. The *förskoleaktiviteter* are usually carried out by the *förskola*. The offers may thereafter be offered to parents by the *öppen förskola* (public pre-school), the *familjedaghem* (family day nursery), the *fritidshem* (after-school recreation centre), or by the *öppen fritidsverksamhet* (open after-school recreation centre). The *läroplan för det obligatoriska skolväsendet* (curriculum for compulsory school) was extended in 1998 to the nursery school (without *familjedaghem*) in order to safeguard the connection between the *grundskola* and the nursery school with regard to lifelong learning. The vast majority of six-year olds in Sweden attend the free *förskoleklass*. This is a voluntary form within the public school system. A place is at the disposal of each six-year old up to the beginning of their compulsory education. The *förskoleklass* offers at least 525 hours of educational support and care. Since the municipality takes the responsibility for this class or school, it is also included in the local school scheduling plan (cf. Skollag 1997, chap. 2b, § 1, § 2).

The initial paragraph (*portalparagraf*) of the Education Act also applies to the *förskoleklass*: equal access must be maintained, and the opportunity for harmonious development must be offered. To fulfil the curriculum, it was also extended to the *förskoleklass*. Its application is meant to safeguard the integration between *förskoleklass*, the compulsory school system, and the *fritidshemmet*. The principle of proximity (*närhetsprincipen*) applies to the *förskoleklass*: the place in a *förskoleklass* must be as close as possible to the parents' home.

Primary education and lower-secondary school

The *grundskola*, the *sameskola*, the *specialskola*, and the *särskola* are part of the compulsory school system of Sweden. The *grundskola* comprises all children between the ages of seven and sixteen according to compulsory education, which means both the right and the duty for education at the public- (or private-) school level and recognized by the State. A flexible beginning of the school term is possible. At the request of parents, municipalities must register children at school at the age of six. A postponement of this registration for one year may be granted. The internal structural differentiation of the *grundskola* into lower, middle, and upper steps was abolished in 1995. It is the task of the school to determine the teaching and learning conditions as well as class size by definition of the school structure; for example, mixed age-groups or special interest groups may be set up in place of regular classes.

Some pupils receive their lessons during the complete compulsory school phase at the same *grundskola* while others have to move to another school when they are thirteen years old. In those schools where the pupils are at the same school during ten years, it is possible for a form teacher to be responsible for study groups. He teaches the pupils in either nearly every subject or project work. At the higher levels, lessons may be taught by several teachers. Due to the fact that the form and weekly workload are not fixed, lessons may be topically oriented, project-oriented, or even interdisciplinary. Learning objectives are defined only for the fifth and the ninth

forms. Lesson content must be organized in relation to these two factors. Teachers, pupils, and parents may determine the planning of the lessons. During the school day, pupils in particular influence the organization of their lessons. However, during the last years, teachers have had to work and plan in groups with other teachers, which, to some extent, has challenged the pupils' influence. As they get older, pupils are continually given more responsibility for their own learning and working at school. The integration of different pedagogical cultures in and alongside the school (*förskoleklass, fritidshem*) corresponds to the needs and prerequisites of the pupils. In order to complete one's compulsory education, it is possible to attend independent (private) schools for either pedagogical, cultural, or religious reasons.

Sami school

The Sami, a national minority living in the north of Sweden, may choose between the *grundskola* or the *sameskola*, a specially designed school for the Sami. In a number of municipalities some lessons are provided in the Sami language. The *sameskola*, where all subjects are taught in Sami, lasts from the first to the sixth forms. Teaching in Sami is offered in the integrated version during the school day. The curriculum for the *sameskola* intends for the pupils to be made familiar with Sami cultural heritage. They also learn to read, write, and speak Sami. *Skolverket* as well as the state authority for the *sameskola* are responsible on the administrative level. The State assumes the costs for facilities and maintenance of the school, pays teacher salaries, transport, and accommodation for the pupils at boarding school. However, on the other hand, the pupils' local community is obliged to pay compensation for the approximate costs of the lessons at a *grundskola* to the State.

Upper-secondary school

The secondary school system consists of the *gymnasieskola* and centres for (municipal) adult education (*komvux*). Adult education for the mentally disabled (*särvux*) as well as Swedish lessons for immigrants (SFI) are also part of adult education. Both pupils and adults are to be given the opportunity to take either vocational education or university preparatory studies. Similarly to *grundskola*, the *gymnasieskola* is also an integrated comprehensive school. According to the Education Act, every municipality is obliged to offer classes at a *gymnasieskola* to pupils who have completed the *grundskola* and not yet turned twenty-one years of age. The prerequisite for attending this school is that exams in Swedish, English, and mathematics at the *grundskola* level have been taken and passed.

Older pupils (that is, those above twenty) may take part in community adult education (*komvux*). About 98% of *grundskola* graduates continue on to the *gymnasieskola* in the same year they receive their degree. A *gymnasieskola* may be established either by the municipality, *län* (province), or private organization. Every municipality has the right to establish one (or more) *gymnasieskola*. The local school committee as well as the head teacher are responsible for this establishment. The number of pupils at a *gymnasieskola* may vary between 300 and 1500. All education at the *gymnasieskola* is organized into seventeen national programmes. In addition one may find individual programmes as well as 'learning in working life'-courses.

All national programmes are divided into one or several areas, which consist of three blocks, eight core subjects, and programme-specific subjects. Individual scheduling is also possible. Core subjects include science, art, sport and health education, Swedish (Swedish as second language), mathematics, English, community education, and religion. In 2008, history will be added as a core subject. Furthermore, all pupils have to take part in project work. About 12% of the courses may be selected by pupils from among certain other subjects (for example, a second foreign language or courses from other programmes). An individual programme may be offered to pupils with learning difficulties. In collaboration with the pupil, schools develop an educational programme for the pupil's entire school career. Temporal restrictions are not imposed. Every *gymnasieskola* is given the possibility of organizing educational offerings freely due to the system of programmes and the lack of a national schedule.

Special education

The first special education schools were introduced in Sweden in the middle of the nineteenth century. The *särskola* was based on philanthropic activities in 1860. Since 1889 lessons for deaf and mute pupils are possible at a *specialskola*. The first school for blind men was started in 1896. With the increasing prosperity of the welfare state, attempts were made to integrate physically or emotionally challenged pupils into the general school system. The *Utbildningsdepartement* has been responsible for all special education since 1985.

Both the Education Act (§ 5) and teaching curriculum (Lpo 94, p. 10) designate special measures for pupils with learning difficulties. The school (in particular the headmaster) is responsible for these pupils. They must help them pass the exams in the 5th and 9th forms. The measures necessary for this instruction are not defined by the State, but they must be offered. Forms of assistance may vary, from technical instruments to teachers trained especially to work with pupils who are visually impaired or otherwise physically disabled. However, there are many pupils who fail and in 2004 the largest upper-school-programme was a programme specially designed for helping pupils who had earlier failed in many subjects. According to the Education Act, school healthcare (free of charge) is to be offered. To fulfil this stipulation, a doctor and a nurse must be employed for a part of their working time in each school. The aim of healthcare is to provide both physical and psychological protection during a pupil's time at school. The idea that pupils are to feel well at school is at the forefront. Additionally, preventative measures may also be found.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Almost one-quarter of all pupils at the *gymnasieskola* start with a two- to five-year period of higher education. At the universities and university colleges, students may choose between single courses or programmes (BA or MA). The courses (programmes) are distinguished by their duration. Two-year programmes are completed with the *högskoleexamen* (university diploma, for which eighty points are required). Three-year programmes can be completed with the *kandidatexamen* (bachelor's

degree, 120 points are required) depending of the choice of subjects and for how long time each subject has been studied. Courses longer than four years can be completed with the master degree (160 points). The combined courses are completed by successfully passing the *yrkesexamen* and receiving the professionally-oriented high-school-leaving certificate.

Admittance to universities and university colleges happens in principle with the leaving certificate from the *gymnasieskola*. If the number of places is limited, the result of a voluntary national university test is consulted in addition to the leaving certificate. Approximately 140,000 persons take these examinations every year. The study programmes' relevant qualifications are tested. To improve the national educational standards, a government programme (*kunskapslyftet*: 'knowledge initiative') was initiated in 1997. In the context of *komvux*, 100,000 places were financed by the State. This helped unemployed persons to obtain a valid leaving certificate from the *gymnasieskola*. However, the knowledge initiative was an one-off event and has been discontinued. In the year 1999-2000, 332,000 persons took part in municipal adult education, most of whom (282,000) attended courses leading to the degree of the *gymnasieskola*; courses leading to the *grundskola* degree were attended by 42,273 people.

Since 1992 there are, on the local level, several adult education courses, which are offered to make up for both *grundskola* and *gymnasieskola* degrees. Courses that lead to professional qualifications besides those provided by schools may also be offered. Every citizen has the right to take courses at the *grundskola* level. However, they are not guaranteed the right to take courses at the *gymnasieskola* level. Community adult education is in principle free of charge. Courses must be organized in a manner that makes it possible to participate in them in addition to working full-time.

Current problems discussion and perspectives for development

The government has recently initiated a pilot project for long-distance learning. It is to help students combine courses at their *gymnasieskola* with those offered at other institutions. New forms of IT-supported long-distance learning are being developed under the guidance of *skolverket*. This nationwide co-operation will be made possible between communities and their schools.

All essential educational reforms were completed at the beginning of the new millennium. Therefore, only the occasional adjustment to these must be carried out. Debates on the influence of modern communication technology, the protection of the environment, and strengthening of science and basic values of the Swedish school have emerged instead. Three major debates are ongoing in the fields of competence development as well as quality and equality in school. There is also a strong need for long-term solutions for immigrants to safeguard their integration in school and society. In 2005 the government will start a discussion on changes and adaptations in the *gymnasieskola*. It is highly likely that changes in the programme and grading system will be carried out. The reform will be accomplished in 2007. At present, high priority has been granted to educational research conducted by the Swedish research council. Relevant problems are (in general) to be solved through

co-operation between *skolverket*, researchers, and experts in the field, although *skolverket* does not have any means to provide educational research.

It was determined that in the first decade of the new millennium, work practice is to become a research subject. Research is to show conditions for these processes and samples as well as their effects on the results. Furthermore, the leadership quality of local organizations is being examined.

References

- Anderson, L. G./Persson, M./Thavenius, J. (Eds): *Skolan och de kulturella förändringarna*. Lund 1999.
- Bengtson: *Population, Economy, and Welfare in Sweden*. Berlin 1994. (= *Population Economics*)
- Dahllöf, U.: *Timplaner för folkskola och grundskola*. In: Wallin, E. (Ed.): *Från folkskola till grundskola. Tio forskare vid Pedagogisk institutionen, Uppsala universitet, belyser utvecklingen under 150 år i anslutning till folkskolejubiléet*. Uppsala 1992, pp. 63-83.
- Drakenberg, M.: *Compulsory School Development in Sweden. A Three-dimensional View*. Helsinki 1995.
- Ekholm, M.: *Steuerungsmodelle für Schulen in Europa. Schwedische Erfahrungen mit alternativen Ordnungsmodellen*. In: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 4 (1997), pp. 597-608.
- Erikson, R./Jonsson, J.O. (Eds): *Education and Social Class. Sweden in a Comparative Perspective*. o.O. 1996.
- Henningsen, B.: *Der Wohlfahrtsstaat Schweden*. Baden-Baden 1986. (= *Nordeuropäische Studien*, Bd. 2)
- Isling, Å.: *Det pedagogiske arvet. Kampen för och mot en demokratisk skola*. Stockholm 1988. (= *Kampen För Och Mot En Demokratisk Skola*. 2)
- Isling, Å./Mattson, I./Rudvall, G.: *En skola för jämlikhet. Debattbok och studiematerial*. Stockholm 1984.
- Isling, Å.: *Kampen för och mot en demokratisk skola. 1. Samhällsstruktur och skolorganisation*. Stockholm 1980.
- Klinge, M.: *Aspekte nordischer Individualität*. In: Graubard, St. R. (Ed.): *Die Leidenschaft für Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit. Essays über den nordischen Wohlfahrtsstaat*. Baden - Baden 1988, pp. 41-62. (= *Nordeuropäische Studien* Nr. 4)
- Marklund, S.: *Skolan förr och nu. 50 år av skoleutveckling*. Stockholm 1984.
- OECD (Ed.): *OECD Reviews of National Policies for Education. Sweden*. Paris 1995.
- Ödman, P.-J.: *Kontrasternas Spel. En svensk mentalitets- och pedagogikhistoria*. Stockholm 1998.
- Richardson, G.: *Svensk utbildningshistoria. Skola och samhälle för och nu*. Lund 1999.
- Roth, H. I.: *The Multicultural Park. A Study of Common Values at School and in Society*. Stockholm 1999.
- Skolverket: *Läroplan för förskolan*. Lpfö 98. Stockholm 1998.
- Skolverket: *Democracy in Swedish Education*. Stockholm 2000.
- Skolverket: *Gymnasieskolan*. Stockholm 2000.
- Skolverket: *Bedömning och betyg*. Stockholm 2001.
- Skolverket: *Invandrar – och flyktingelever*. Stockholm 2001.
- Svenska Institutet: *Tatsachen über Schweden. Gymnasialschule und Erwachsenenbildung*. Stockholm 2001.
- Utbildningsdepartementet: *Läroplan för de frivilliga skolformerna*. LPF 94. Stockholm 1994.
- Utbildningsdepartementet: *Skollag*. Stockholm. 1985 (SFS nr: 1985:1100)
- Utbildningsdepartementet: *Skollag*. Stockholm. 1997 (SFS nr: 1997:1212)

Utbildningsdepartementet: A School for All. On the Government's Pre-school and School Policies. Stockholm. 1999.

Web-based sources:

[Http://utbildning.regeringen.se](http://utbildning.regeringen.se)

[Http://www.csn.se](http://www.csn.se)

[Http://www.komvux.se](http://www.komvux.se)

[Http://www.kunskapslyftet.gov.se](http://www.kunskapslyftet.gov.se)

[Http://www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)

[Http://www.si.se](http://www.si.se)

[Http://www.si.se](http://www.si.se)

[Http://www.sih.se](http://www.sih.se)

<http://www.skolverket.se>

<http://www.virtualsweden.net>

<http://www.skolutveckling.se/>

Sweden

		Grade													Age														
Postsecondary & tertiary education	Universities and university colleges högskole													13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23							
	Secondary education	General or educational/vocational secondary school (gymnasieskola)													10	11	12	17	18										
Primary education	<i>public</i>	Primary education and lower secondary school (grundskola)													10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18						
	<i>private</i>	Independent (private) schools (private grundskola)													1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9						
Preprimary education	Pre-school class - voluntary attendance (förskoleklass)													Compulsory education						7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Nursery school (förskola)													3	4	5	6	7											

Switzerland

History of the school system

The basic structures of the Swiss education system came into being in the nineteenth century. Whereas the central ideas, developed from the body of thoughts of the French Revolution, were conceptualized during the Helvetic Republic of 1798-1803, they were only marginally put into practice at that time. It was only after 1830 that these ideas began to influence significantly the development of the education systems of the cantons: education for all, admission to higher education based on performance, abolition of class or birth privileges in the education system, as well as the orientation of the school along the lines of the scientific canon instead of religious-confessional dogma. The school systems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, characterized by great contrasts between towns and rural areas and by a strong interweaving of State and Church authorities as well as by great differences based on social origin and gender of pupils, slowly became secular and were brought into a legal framework and organized at canton-level. It must be noted, though, that these developments showed many regional differences as well as differences in pace (Criblez et al. 1999). Expansion and differentiation of the system are the basic immanent development processes, which describe the long way of the 'schooling' of society, which, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, does not seem to be completed.

Attempts to introduce a unified education system during the time of the centralized Helvetic State (under a French protectorate) failed. In 1803, the cantons took over again the official control of the education system. On this basis, the education systems were developed at canton-level, under mutual scrutiny, but not based on common consultation. This remained the case even after the foundation of the federal State in 1848, as only a small minority lobbied for a central-state solution. After the revolutionary upheavals of the early 1830s, each one of the cantons rapidly established their cantonal education system, which were generally divided into five parts: primary school, secondary school, teacher training, grammar school, and university. After the guilds had been abolished for economic reasons, there was no more systematic vocational education in those years. Yet, the development of the basic structure of the 'modern' school system was already complete around the middle of the century.

The development of the Volksschule

The implementation of compulsory school attendance was attempted as early as in the first three decades of the nineteenth century (in those cantons that were industrialized) as a socio-political measure against the employment of children in factories. While school attendance had been declared mandatory in the revised federal consti-

tution of 1874, this succeeded country-wide only in the first half of the twentieth century. School attendance time was slowly expanded: first from winter school to the whole year, while the number of years of attendance increased at different paces in different cantons (yet for girls not as quickly as for boys). In individual cantons, the municipalities were given administrative leeway to extend compulsory attendance, but they were not obliged to do so. Only after the decree on the lowest age limit in 1938, which fixed the age limit for starting work at the age of sixteen, the cantons introduced compulsory schooling for nine years, in order to close the gap between the end of compulsory education and the beginning of vocational life or the start of an apprenticeship. The federal constitution of 1874 provided that primary-school teaching be adequate, compulsory, free of charge in public schools, and under the control of the State. Public schools had to be attended by all children independently of their religious denomination. The federation had the option to take appropriate measures against those cantons that did not fulfil these obligations. In 1882, in the first referendum after the introduction of the right of referendum in 1874, the attempt failed to introduce a federal school inspector (*Schulvogt*), who was supposed to document the development of the schools in the cantons. After this, the cantons kept relative autonomy in determining their school systems. The introduction of federal subsidies to primary schools in 1902 (abolished in 1985) changed nothing because the subventions were handed out by the federation without any substantial requirements. Only the introduction of educational examinations of conscripts (*Pädagogische Rekrutenprüfungen*), where the general education of young male adults was tested with regard to language, mathematics, national geography, history, and civic studies, created a competition between the cantons because they were put in a situation of regional comparison for the first time in history (Lustenberger 1996).

After 1830, secondary schools, built onto the primary schools, were created in the cantons under a variety of names. Mostly, they were called *Sekundarschule*, but also *Bezirksschule* (district school) or *Realschule*. In many places, the secondary schools remained single-sex schools until the 1960s. The teaching programmes were different because the vocational choices were different according to gender, girls had been prepared for the tasks as housewife and mother. With the establishment of vocational education in the 1880s, the function of the secondary school of continuing general education was complemented by the function of preparing for vocational life. The gradual extension of the compulsory school-attendance time brought about an upper-primary level. At the lower-secondary level emerged a hierarchical and functional three-tracked school system, comprised of longer-term grammar school, secondary school, and upper-primary level (*Oberschule*) with the functions of preparing pupils for the Swiss general qualification for university entrance, for a vocation, and for the integration into working life.

The development of the upper-secondary school system

Since the 1830s, the upper-secondary system was restructured in the context of the re-design of the entire education system. The grammar schools (*Gymnasien*) were primarily based on the neo-humanistic educational model. A debate on the principles

of humanistic or realistic education in the 1820s led, however, in various cantons to the creation of the first vocational-training institutions at the upper-secondary level with an emphasis on the natural sciences or vocational orientation (industrial schools and trade schools). As a result of the progress in the natural sciences and in technology, the pressure increased, especially in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, to expand the basic subjects on offer in schools. Natural sciences also gained in importance in the *Volksschule*. Schools called *Realgymnasium* were created or replaced the industrial schools. In the 1880s, the federation pushed through the recognition at national level of the Swiss general qualification for university entrance and thereby of free access to universities with a recognized federal university entrance qualification (Vonlanthen/Lattmann/Egger 1978). Thus, a national educational space had emerged for higher education.

Next to the grammar schools, schools of commerce were established, which at the beginning of the twentieth century slowly divided themselves into university entrance sections and diploma sections. For future employees of the state-run enterprises of the federation (such as railways or postal services), so-called *Verkehrsschulen* (traffic schools) were created. Both school types, schools of commerce and traffic schools, were positioned as full-time schools leading to a vocational qualification, ranging between those of the vocational schools and of the general-education middle schools.

In order to supply the schools with qualified teachers, teacher-training seminars were opened, starting with 1822, when the first teacher-training seminar in the Canton of Aargau was created. Before then, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, teachers were being taught a minimum of qualifications in courses during the school holidays in the summer. In the 1830s, the teacher-training seminar model asserted itself for the training of primary-school teachers against a training-on-the-job-model and was established later as a training model for other categories of teachers, after the first seminar for kindergarten teachers had been founded in St Gallen in 1873. For female vocational teachers and home economics teachers, course systems were built up step-by-step and became fully-fledged training courses at seminars or schools for women's work. The training of *Volksschule* teachers remained at first reserved for men in many cantons. Only some cantons (Berne, Vaud), introduced women teacher seminars, already as early as the 1830s. It was not before the turn of the twentieth century that higher institutions of education largely opened access to women. Since the 1860s and 1870s, secondary-school and grammar-school teachers were generally trained at universities.

Next to the University of Basle, founded in a humanistic spirit in 1460, and radically reformed at the beginning of the nineteenth century along the lines of a neo-humanistic model, new universities were founded or the old advanced education schools transformed into universities after the revolutionary upheavals of the beginning of the 1830s in Zurich (1833) and Berne (1834). They primarily had the mission to supply the liberal State with adequately educated personnel. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the French-speaking cantons followed the transformation of the old academies into universities in Geneva (1872), Lausanne (1890), and Neuchâtel (1909). The only Catholic university of Switzerland was founded in

Fribourg in 1889. The universities are still cantonal institutions; since 1966, however, they receive federal funds (Lerch 1971).

Since the time of the foundation of the federal State in 1848, the federation has had the legal right to create a university and a polytechnic. Nevertheless, a national university was never accomplished. The federation was able, however, to open a federal polytechnic institute in Zurich in 1855 (today called the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, *Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule* or ETH), which has also been present at another location, namely in Lausanne, since 1969. Over the years, this school developed into a kind of elite school of higher education. The School of Commerce (*Handelshochschule*) founded in 1898 in St Gallen, experienced a similar development.

The development of vocational education

The traditional organization of vocational education was dissolved with the suppression of the guilds at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was only during the great economic depression of the 1870s and 1880s that measures were taken to revive vocational training. These measures were supported by the budding trade associations and by federate subsidies for vocational training since 1884 for vocational training in trade and industry, since 1891 for training in commercial professions, since 1893 for training in agricultural skills, and since 1895 for home economics. In 1908 the federation was assigned the right by constitutional amendment to issue regulations on vocational training in industry, trade, commerce, agriculture, and domestic science. This constitutional article laid down the basis for a national educational space in the field of vocational training (even if limited along the divisions of the various vocational sectors, vocational training was the responsibility of the cantons until the end of the twentieth century) as well as for the first act on vocational education, passed by the federation in 1930. Vocational training sought the pragmatic proximity to employment and therefore was expected to take place mainly in everyday vocational practice and less within a school context. As from the 1880s, the vocational training system was therefore gradually turned into a dual system. Next to these learning institutions, young people attended further training and craft or trade schools (Tabin 1989; Wettstein 1987; Wettstein et al. 1988). The further training schools of the various vocational sectors (today: vocational schools) were at first maintained by professional associations, sometimes also by municipalities. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that the cantons gradually took over the maintenance of the vocational schools.

Already during the last decades of the nineteenth century, higher technical vocational training began to be established. In the course of the promotion of vocational education, at a time when the state museums were initiated in the ambience of the world exhibitions, it became clear that there was a lack of training programmes for middle-grade technicians for industry and the manual trades. In Winterthur (1874), Bienne (1890), Burgdorf (1892), Fribourg (1899), Geneva (1901), and Le Locle (1903) the first schools for this purpose were opened. These were at first mostly non-tertiary education institutions best characterized as a mixture between trade school and college.

Expansion and differentiation after 1950

The great lack of young professionals, whose negative consequences on the economy were increasingly felt about the end of the 1950s, as well as the socio-political call for more equality of educational opportunities, lead in the 1960s and 1970s to an opening of higher education and to a strong expansion of the education system. The expansion was strengthened because of the baby boom of the war- and after-war years, by classes becoming smaller, by longer stretches of time spent at school by individual pupils, by the expansion of the educational-institutions on offer. This expansion accompanied the school system through the economic crisis of the 1970s and beyond, and has been in place since (Criblez 2001). In order to be able to cope with this development, the education administration was also given a boost and complemented with education planning positions.

The institutional effects of the expansion of the education sector were, amongst others, strongly increasing attendance rates at kindergarten; the transfer of the kindergartens from private into public responsibility; further differentiation of the lower-secondary level, followed by the attempt to integrate the schools into comprehensive schools; the introduction of the higher education entrance certificates in modern languages and economics in 1972; the introduction of new types of middle school (diploma middle schools or *Diplommittelschule* and vocational middle schools); the decentralization of the middle-school locations; the distinctions made within vocational training between basic training (*Anlehre*), apprenticeship, and vocational middle school; the creation of higher technical schools in various areas; the gradual shift of teacher training into the tertiary education sector; the strong expansion of the universities and of the further education sector. The foundation of new universities was expected to help cope with the large inflow of students to the universities. However, these projects could only be realized in the 1990s. The education college planned in Aargau never existed but on paper.

The expansion of the education sector encouraged formal equality between the genders, yet without removing the discrimination of children and young people from the lower social strata and from families with a foreign cultural background. As a whole, the education system expanded without essential reforms being appropriately realized, especially in the areas of lower-secondary level, grammar school and teacher training. Only in the 1990s could the 'reform logjam' be relieved thanks to the introduction of the vocational and technical higher-education qualifications (*Berufs- und Fachmaturität*) as leaving certificates, the creation of colleges (*Fachhochschulen*), the reforms of grammar school and vocational education, as well as the re-definition of teacher training.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Since the liberal upheavals of the 1830s, the school type covering the period of compulsory schooling is called the *Volksschule* ('people's school'). Here, the word *Volksschule* is not meant to distinguish it from advanced education, but rather means that the school, which imparts the education to all young people that they need to deal with life in society, business, politics, and culture, does so independently of

their birth or social status. Advanced education, in conformity with this understanding, is accorded to those who have qualified themselves by their performance. These basic beliefs intrinsically characterize Swiss public education, even if at regular intervals one realizes that the real state of affairs only partly corresponds to democratic ideals. Education was considered and is still considered in this land-locked country without any raw materials to speak of as a fundamental factor of the prosperity of the country.

Switzerland saw itself since its constitution not as a nation united in culture, but as a 'voluntary nation'. On a limited, over-populated space (nearly 7.5m inhabitants in 2004),¹ on a landscape where the Alps and the Jura prevail, Switzerland developed a multicultural self-image. The country is characterized by the co-existence of different language groups (since 1938, there have been four national languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansh), different denominations (in 2000, 41.8% were Roman Catholics, 33% reformed Protestants, 4.3% Muslims, and 11.1% without a declared denomination) and people of different regional characteristics. Thus, mechanisms furthering tolerance, balance, consensus-finding, and minority protection anchored in the rule of law had to be developed. This small-scale educational federalism has always been justified by this cultural diversity. Today in Switzerland, 63.7% of the population speak German, 20.4% French, 6.5% Italian, 0.5% Romansh, and 9% another language. The proportion of foreigners among the population is, with 20.6%, rather high in international terms (Lüdi/ Werlen 2005).

Early foreign-language instruction in one of the other national languages was, up until now, considered not just a part of general education, but also as the contribution of the education system to national understanding. This tradition, however, is now put into question in view of the economic necessity to promote English as the international lingua franca. This leads to demands that in future, two foreign languages are introduced at primary-school level, that is, a second national language as well as English from the second or the fifth primary-school grade. Since many municipalities and community centres today have to deal with a high proportion of students with a foreign mother tongue, various problems resulting from this demand are emerging. The demand that English be taught already at primary level shows that schools, especially the schools of the lower-secondary level, have always tried to meet the needs of the economy. At the point of transition from school to work, the 'dual system' of vocational education, which assigns enterprises a major part of the training, is of major importance. However, various problems result from the quick changes in the world of work. Meanwhile, the primary employment sector sank to a level of 3.7%, the secondary vocational sector moved to 23.9%, and the service sector reached 72.4%. With the shift in jobs, the need for qualifications also changes. In view of information technologies, the need for a highly skilled workforce increases. Up until now, the reaction to this has been a reform of the Act on Vocational Training (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*) and the introduction of the vocational-school leaving certificate (*Berufsmatura*). Even though youth unemployment (among fifteen to twenty-four-year olds) is, at 7.7%, rather low in Switzerland in

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all statistical data (as of April 2005) has been supplied by the *Bundesamt für Statistik* (Swiss Federal Office of Statistics); cf <http://www.admin.ch>

international terms (2004), as is general unemployment (at 4.3%), young people leaving school are increasingly experiencing difficulties in finding an apprenticeship, and especially an apprenticeship corresponding to their wishes. Many school leavers who do not attend an upper-secondary general school seek, therefore, a temporary solution in the so-called tenth school year.

The position of the teaching staff

Since the period of the expansion of the education sector in the 1960s, the social position of teaching staff has never before been so secure. Their salaries correspond, at least for teachers of the lower- and upper-secondary level, to that of middle managers in private businesses and therefore teachers' wages make up the major part of education expenditure. The attractiveness of the teaching profession, however, has sunk, more so that of positions in the *Volksschule* and less of positions in grammar and vocational schools. It has diminished with the increasing education level of the population, with the diminished authority of the school as an institution, but also with its esteem within the implicit hierarchy within education. Though in the middle of the twentieth century teacher training was still considered one of the most attractive courses of study, today, with more people studying at university, many professions are more attractive than the teaching profession from the point of view of training, of the remuneration to be expected, and of the stress level. Those in the field of education policy and the teachers' associations have responded to this problem with various measures aimed at making the teaching profession more attractive (Criblez 2005).

Nearly 6% of those employed in Switzerland are active in the area of teaching. In Switzerland, there are as many teachers as never before; a fact, which certainly has repercussions on the attractiveness of the profession. The teaching profession is, furthermore, characterized by other major changes. The proportion of women in all categories of teaching positions has increased. The degree of feminization, however, decreases from school level to school level: at pre-primary level, 99% of teachers are women; at primary level, 71%; at lower-secondary level 40%; in the general education schools at the upper-secondary level, 39%, and in vocational schools, 28% (*Bundesamt für Statistik* 2000, p. 42ff.). Moreover, the teaching profession is increasingly becoming a part-time profession. More and more teachers at the *Volksschule* only teach part-time (*Bundesamt für Statistik* 1997). Finally, there is a tendency for teaching activities to become transitional jobs, as many teachers in the course of their careers are looking for a new professional challenge, for career opportunities outside of school, or even turn away from school because they feel that they can no longer cope with the demands.

School and the role of the family

According to federal civil law, parents have the right to educate their children (Plotke 2003, pp. 17ff.). The federal constitution guarantees, furthermore, the neutrality of philosophy within public schools and protects the religious freedom of the individual. Cantonal school law, therefore, defines the educational mission of the school as an addition to that of the parents. But since the educational mission of the

school hardly makes sense without parents' involvement, the participation of parents in school matters has been strengthened since the 1980s. The parents, organized in parents' councils and associations, can often delegate a representative to the school supervisory authority. Furthermore, parents are far more strongly involved in career decisions concerning their children than before. Nevertheless, the selection decisions remain the most common cause for legal action in the education system. The challenges put on schools in the area of family-school-relations increased mainly in two sectors: On the one hand, the need to establish norms in view of increasing social problems has intensified. The proportion of schools located in towns and agglomerations, which hire personnel trained in school social work is increasing. A number of cantons have, in the past few years, created the possibility to suspend for a few weeks those students, whose behaviour is unacceptable. By doing so, schools limit the right to education of the students concerned (this right is not a constitutional right in Switzerland). So far, systems of counselling and support of the families in such situations have not been sufficiently established. On the other hand, school communities are called upon to introduce organization and timetable forms, which correspond better to the realities of families and work. Core times, lunch, and all-day structures at school are measures that could meet these demands. This development is further advanced in Italian- and French-speaking Switzerland than in the German-speaking part.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Competencies and law-making processes

The cantons now have, as they have had before, a central role to play in the framework of federalism in education. The so-called assumption of competency is the prerogative of the cantons: all areas, which are not explicitly defined as falling under the remit of the federation, are regulated by the cantons. The federation has, since the coming into force of the new federal constitution in 2000, the competency in the whole of the vocational training sector, which also comprises the colleges (*Fachhochschulen*). Next to this, the federation is running two technical colleges, is active in the support of higher education and science and has laid down some principles for the *Volksschule* in the constitution (Art. 62). The cantons autonomously regulate the pre-school and the *Volksschule* sectors as well as the general-education middle schools and the cantonal universities, they also execute the federal law in the vocational-training sector, they bear the major financial burden of the education system, and are the maintaining bodies of upper-secondary schools and of the higher-education sector. The municipalities are generally school-maintaining bodies in the pre-school and *Volksschule* sector and they also finance these schools, but they receive funds for this purpose from the cantons. In recent years, the school communities have been granted greater autonomy in most of the cantons. At the same time, the internationalization of education policy is driving towards stronger harmonization among the cantons.

The cantons have established the Swiss Conference of Education Directors (*Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren*, EDK; see Bad-

ertscher 1997; EDK 1985) as a body that will manage co-operative federalism. By the use of concordats, agreements, and recommendations, this Conference is trying to harmonize and, at the same time, to safeguard the autonomy of the cantons in the education sector. In 1970, it issued the Concordat on school co-ordination (EDK 1970; Arnet 2000). This document regulates the compulsory school commencement age, the nine-year mandatory school attendance, the time spent at school until the higher-education qualification certificate (twelve to thirteen years), and the start of the academic year in late summer. The most important principles of education policy are formulated in constitutions and legislation (Plotke 1994). Amendments to the constitution can only be passed by referendum at federal level. Here, next to a people's majority, a majority of the Estates is necessary. Acts passed by parliament are generally subject to a facultative referendum. The governments prescribe the curricula and publish decrees.

Educational administration

The most important institutions of educational administration in the federally organized education system are the education departments (*Erziehungsdirektionen*). In some cantons, the education departments were at the beginning a collective authority; since the democratic movement of the 1860s and 1870s, the election of members of the government has been increasingly introduced in the cantons. This is done today by means of proportional representation. The elected directors of government (*Regierungsräte*) share responsibilities of the different sections. Whereas the directors of the education departments traditionally belong to one of the leading political parties in the cantons and whereas the directors exclusively used to be men, since the 1960s the EDK has become more heterogeneous.

During the expansion of education in the 1960s and the 1970s, the education administration was expanded as well. The education departments developed into differentiated, sometimes also cumbersome administrative units, and consolidated at administrative level what had prevailed in the nineteenth century: the dominant role of the cantons in education policy. However, with increasing delegation of competences to individual schools or school communities in the course of the promotion of partly autonomous schools on the one hand, and the internationalization of education policy and the harmonization pressure within Switzerland on the other, cantonal 'centralism' in the education system is being gradually put into perspective.

At federal level, the Federal Office for Vocational Training and Technology (*Bundesamt für Berufsbildung und Technologie*, BBT) in the Economics Department is responsible for vocational training in the upper-secondary and tertiary education sectors. In addition, the office of the Secretary of State for Education and Research at the Federal Department of the Interior is responsible for the grammar-school sector (*Eidgenössische Maturitäts-Anerkennungskommission*), for the university sector, as well as for science and research. Today, various endeavours aim at consolidating both sectors. In all important questions, especially in the area of developing a monitoring system of education, the federal administration works together with the cantons, represented by the EDK.

Various cantons today still have educational councils or instruction councils, an authority, which was established during the Helvetic Republic. They have had the function of an 'education government' and embodied the ideal of a voice of the educated public, able to execute policy in education at least to a certain degree independently from parliament, government, and administration (Brändli et al. 1998). In the context of the reform of the canton administrations according to the principles of New Public Management, the education councils or instruction councils were in some cantons either abolished or their function was re-defined or is now being re-defined.

At local level, the schools are being generally looked after by a lay authority, which is described as school commission (*Schulkommission*) or school council (*Schulrat*). In the tertiary education sector, since the 1990s, the institutions of higher education are increasingly coming under the strategic command of a higher-education council. There, a division of operative and strategic leadership according to the principles of New Public Management was recently introduced.

While the school commissions at local level are mostly responsible for the organizational and administrative needs of the schools, the professional school inspection has the role of a supervisory body of the cantons for subject-related questions and issues related to methods (Rhyn 1998). With schools being granted more autonomy, the roles of the school commissions, whose tasks in the field of personnel and organization are being increasingly taken over by head teachers, as well as the role of the school inspectorate are being re-defined. Thus, school inspection is increasingly assuming control functions, sometimes including new tasks in the area of external school evaluation.

The hierarchies within schools were traditionally very flat. Only recently many cantons started to introduce systems of school leadership. Where school leaders were already in place, they were assigned mainly organizational and administrative tasks. They had at their disposal only limited financial competences, the personnel was not really under their control, and the appointment procedures of new staff were the responsibility of the supervisory authorities. In larger municipalities and towns, the school commissions and the school directions were supported by school secretariats for administration. As a whole, in the Swiss education system a balance between competence delegation, accountability, and control had developed over a long period of time (Criblez 1999). With the changes brought about by the 1990s, this balance has been disturbed in many places. One of the main tasks of the future will be that the schools build up functioning quality-assurance systems without becoming bureaucratic.

Financing

The proportion of spending on education as part of the public budget of the federation and of the cantons has reached 18.6% since the beginning of the 1990s and has been relatively constant since. Yet in the period of time mentioned, social welfare has developed to be the biggest part of state expenditure. In 2002, the spending on education as a proportion of the GDP was nearly 6%. The federation bears 13% of this, the municipalities cover 33% and the major part, making up 54%, is borne by

the cantons. The municipalities are mainly involved in the financing of the pre-school and *Volksschule* sectors. The federation finances around 45% of the higher-education sector and vocational training at upper-secondary level as well as higher vocational training each at 13-14%. A pupil in Switzerland costs on average just under 7000 Swiss francs in pre-school education, around 11,000 Swiss francs at primary school, around 15,000 Swiss francs at lower- secondary level, and around 20,000 in an upper-secondary school leading to a higher-education qualification (all data: *Bundesamt für Statistik* 2004a).

Public and private school systems

Private schools have always played a limited role in the Swiss school system (Plotke 2003, pp. 663ff.). The proportion of private students fluctuates according to conjuncture. As a whole, the proportion of students enrolled at private schools is generally decreasing; this is all the more true as cantons have taken over middle schools that were governed and financed by the Church as well as vocational schools from private governing bodies. The proportion of students enrolled at private schools increases from the bottom up. Apart from nursery schools and kindergartens, where the proportion is at 6.8%, private school enrolment at primary school represents 2.7%, at lower-secondary level 5.4%, and at upper-secondary level 10.2%, yet the proportion in grammar schools is 11.3% and in vocational schools 9.3% (*Bundesamt für Statistik* 2004b).

The federal constitution provides that all children be given instruction, but does not prescribe that school-attendance is mandatory. In many cantons, therefore, children may be taught at home. However, home schooling has been, up until now, an absolutely marginal phenomenon in Switzerland.

Support systems

When speaking about support systems, financial support and counselling must be distinguished. The grant system is under the responsibility of the cantons, however, the federation helps by providing subsidies. This cantonal regulation results in a very heterogeneous situation at canton level: In 2002, the proportion of the population of sixteen- to nineteen-year olds receiving a grant in the canton of Zurich was below 2%, whereas in the canton of Jura, it was 12%. The canton of Neuchâtel paid an average of just below 3000 Swiss francs to pupils receiving grants, and the canton of Zurich, nearly 9000 Swiss francs. As a whole, the proportion of students receiving a grant as well as the amount paid out in grants and loans has been on the decrease since the beginning of the 1990s.

The cantons provide various counselling services for children, young people, parents, and sometimes also for adults and for schools. The school psychology service, or the child guidance centres deal with school problems, carry out tests, and provide counselling in cases of uncertainty (as to whether enrol in a school or whether a pupil should be referred to special classes). In co-operation with the schools, they order special instruction in the field of speech therapy, dyslexia, and psychomotoric disorders. This instruction is provided by specialized teachers. The number of children who receive such special tuition has greatly increased.

Vocational counselling and course guidance, which increasingly become career counselling, give advice to young people and adults on such issues as the choice of a profession or the choice of study and continuing education. Furthermore, the schools have personnel at their disposal for school social work. As a rule, teachers are offered counselling by the cantons.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The Swiss school system has seen a fundamental transformation since the 1990s. The traditional system, structured in a hierarchic way, where educational careers started from the broad base of the *Volksschule* and led via the grammar schools to the narrow top of the university, has been increasingly losing its pyramid form in favour of a broader top since the opening of higher education in the 1960s. Furthermore, since the introduction of the vocational leaving certificate and the qualification for specialized higher education, offering admission to colleges, a system with two tops (universities and colleges) is beginning to emerge, which also allows for paths between the various education tracks. As for entering school, a change is being seen in the integration of the kindergarten into the education system. At lower-secondary level, the differentiation process, which lasted until into the 1960s, has changed to a slow integration process, where individual cantons have reached different levels of development. Also at upper-secondary level, first (humble) integration processes are appearing.

Pre-school

On the one hand, the pre-school sector today covers an area shaped by socio-pedagogic traditions on the one hand, and, on the other, an area that is increasingly designed as part of the school system. Since the 1820s, the question of day-care provision for children whose mothers were at work had become a socio-political topic. In this context, socio-pedagogic ideas became accepted in the institutions offering day-care for children, as opposed to the idea of schooling children of this age-group. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, one part of the institutions which took care of small children developed into kindergartens based on the ideas of Fröbel; the other part became crèches, which take care for infants. For both institutions, the exclusive function of care prevailed in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, whereas in the Italian and French speaking parts of Switzerland, the kindergartens (*scuola dell'infanzia; école enfantine*) also assumed educational functions. The kindergarten was more strongly promoted in western Switzerland and in Ticino. This can still be observed today. Especially since the discussion about early support for disadvantaged children in the 1960s and 1970s (compensatory education), the kindergartens began to move closer to school education. This process went faster in the French- and the Italian-speaking parts than in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Step-by-step, the public authorities took over the financing and governance of the kindergartens. Also, pre-school education was more and more strongly regulated by cantonal legislation and the cantons took over part of the salaries of kinder-

garten staff. As a rule, kindergarten lasts two years. The average length of time spent at kindergarten increased in the past thirty years. Five cantons have recently introduced compulsory kindergarten attendance for one year before school. In most cantons, however, kindergarten attendance is still voluntary. The municipalities are obliged to guarantee attendance at kindergarten to all children of the respective age-group for at least one year.

Today around a third of four-year olds and most five-year olds (88.9%) attend kindergarten. The figure for six-year olds is 60%, the rest of the six-year olds are already at school (*Bundesamt für Statistik* 2004b, p. 32). Four further development tendencies are linked with the increasing incorporation of the kindergartens into the education system: (1) the school structures are supposed to be re-defined at the beginning of the school career so that either the last kindergarten year and the two first primary-school years or both kindergarten years and the two first primary-school years would be joined together in one basic level (both concepts assume that the classes are heterogeneous in age and offer the possibility to move through school at this level at different speeds); (2) both these ideas involve the bringing forward of the compulsory school commencement age because at least one kindergarten year is mandatory and will be integrated into the school system (learning cultural techniques will gain importance in both kindergarten years because education is focused on individual support of the abilities of the children); (3) many cantons meanwhile replaced the old curriculum of the Swiss kindergarten-teachers' association by new cantonal curricula; and, finally, a cantonalization process is linked with all these changes. Although the municipalities remain the maintaining bodies of the kindergartens, the cantons increasingly reserve the right to regulate; they define the core curricula and targets, take part in the financing of (personnel) costs, and define the training of personnel in the teacher-training colleges.

Primary school

In terms of structure, primary school is the level of schooling that is least affected by reforms. The compulsory school commencement age is fixed at the sixth year of age. The cut-off date is the 30th of June but 'deviations of up to four months before and after this date are permitted' (EDK 1970, Art. 2). The cantons generally deviate up from this date rather than down; this means that children in Switzerland are starting school late (EDK 1993). This is expected to change in the future. A new school concordat is expected to redefine the compulsory school commencement age in view of the changes in the field of school commencement by involving the kindergartens. In most cantons, primary schooling lasts six school years. However, individual cantons deviate from this rule: In the cantons of Basle-City and Vaud, it lasts four years, in the cantons Aargau, Basel-country, Neuchâtel, and Ticino, it lasts five years. School instruction is increasingly imparted by women, part-time positions are increasing. At primary level, teachers employed full-time teach between twenty-seven and thirty-three lessons (lower-secondary level: twenty-two to thirty-one lessons). A number of cantons have changed to assessment systems without marks (grades) in the lower grades of primary school.

Instruction at primary school lasts thirty-eight to forty school weeks (in Ticino: thirty-seven weeks). Instruction time per week fills twenty-two lessons at school commencement and at the end of lower-secondary level, around thirty-five lessons. The lessons or periods prescribed by the curriculum strongly vary from canton to canton: between the minimum school time in the Canton of Geneva (9538 lessons or 7154 periods) and the maximum in the Canton Graubünden (11,029 lessons or 8841 periods), there is more than a whole school year (Schildknecht 2001). The taught subjects and the content are fixed in cantonal curricula, which, as a rule, are passed by the government. Great differences between the cantons are found in the definition of school subjects. Generally children are taught in their mother tongue, mathematics, sciences, music/singing, physical education, as well as drawing and crafts (textile and non-textile). The first foreign language (today, this is normally still one of the national languages) is generally taught from fifth grade. Some cantons are now introducing early English at primary-school level from second grade. Sometimes, integrated subjects such as 'nature, humankind, and environment' have been implemented.

In French-speaking Switzerland, common-core curricula have been introduced recently. Likewise, the harmonization of the curricula has progressed greatly in central Switzerland. In German-speaking Switzerland, common-core curricula for the *Volkschule* are still a matter of debate. Textbooks are put at the schools' disposal by private textbook companies or by the cantons. Generally, cantonal commissions decide which textbooks are mandatory or will be permitted. Transfer to the lower-secondary level is generally made after six primary-school years, but in some cantons this happens earlier. Today, the transfer procedures are mainly formal; in most cases, they do not set entrance examinations, but a formal assessment, whereby the teaching staff of the school, which is being left by the student, co-operate with the parents.

Lower-secondary level

As far as school time, subjects taught at school, and textbooks are concerned, the most important points in the section on primary school also apply to the lower-secondary level. The lower-secondary level comprises, in correspondence to the length of time of primary school, three, four, or five school years. In many cantons, especially in those with school systems with less than six primary years and in French-speaking Switzerland, the upper-secondary level starts with an observation or orientation level. Sometimes the whole lower-secondary level is described as the orientation level, because it has such a function. At the end, pupils are expected to decide which further education or which apprenticeship they will pursue.

Traditionally, the lower-secondary level has three or more tracks. It is divided at least into a *Realschule*, a secondary, and a grammar school section (Markees 2003). Since the 1970s, various cantons have developed, co-operative or integrated school models at this level. As a rule, the main subjects are the mother tongue, mathematics, and the first foreign language. In the cantons of French and Italian-speaking Switzerland, the structural integration process in the lower-secondary level has progressed further than in German-speaking Switzerland. In some cantons, school

communities can freely choose between various models of schools. For the whole of Switzerland, around 30% of the students attend a school type with only basic requirements. This proportion, however, strongly varies between the cantons. The proportion of students in school types with basic requirements has been sinking permanently since the education expansion phase. Following the lower-secondary level, students transfer to a general-education middle school or to vocational training. The proportion of those who attend a tenth school year as an in-between solution is strongly increasing because of the lack of apprenticeship positions. These bridging possibilities are expected to facilitate entry into the world of work. At the same time, in various cantons projects for a re-design of the ninth grade are still running with the aim to prepare better young people for work.

The upper-secondary level

The secondary level is divided into three basic sectors: grammar schools, specialized middle schools (*Fachmittelschulen*) as well as diploma middle schools (*Diplommittelschulen*), and vocational apprenticeships with vocational qualification. All these sectors have undergone fundamental reforms in the 1990s. Today, nearly 90% of young people successfully complete an upper-secondary level education.

Grammar school

During the expansion period of the education sector of the 1960s and 1970s, the proportion of students who attained a higher education entrance qualification strongly increased. Also, as a consequence of decentralization, the number of schools more than doubled within a short time. After a short period of consolidation in the 1980s, a radical reform of the grammar school was carried out in the 1990s (Meylan 1995). With the amendment of the higher education entrance qualification recognition decree, the leaving certificates that had existed until then were abolished and a unitary higher education entrance qualification was introduced together with basic subjects, emphasis subjects, and complementary subjects. A number of subjects were integrated into combination subjects (for example, the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences). Furthermore, with the *matura* leaving certificate test, a new element was included in the system. The proportions of the various areas of compulsory and selective subjects were defined as follows: languages, 30-40%; maths and the natural sciences, 20-30%; the humanities and social sciences, 10-20%; art, 5-10 %; and emphasis and optional subjects 15-25%. For individual subject areas, the EDK has issued core curricula (EDK 1994). The cantons and the individual schools have enjoy considerable freedom within these specifications in the shaping of the education programmes, which, however, must be accredited by the federal *matura* recognition commission. In most cantons, education until the leaving certificate lasts twelve years, in individual cantons thirteen years. In any case, the grammar-school programme has to stretch over at least four years. With a schooling time of twelve years until the *matura* examination, grammar school instruction also comprises the last year of the mandatory school attendance time. Many cantons still know 'long-time grammar schools' (*Langgymnasien*), which begin in the 6th, 7th or 8th school year. The transfer to grammar school is made in a formal procedure,

where the feeder schools are involved with recommendations and average grades. Occasionally, parents may be included in the decision process.

The proportion of grammar-school students who achieve the higher-education qualification nearly doubled from 1980 (10.6%) to 2003 (19.0%). Since 1993, it has been higher for women as for men (2003: 22% against 16.2%). However, the rates strongly differ from canton to canton. Whereas in Geneva nearly a third of young people obtains a higher-education entrance qualification (29.8%), in the canton of Glarus, only one in eight (12.2%) receive one. For women, this rate diverges even more (Geneva 36.2%, Glarus: 8.7%). Nearly half of the students transfer to university-type higher education immediately after receiving their higher-education entrance qualification. The transfer rate of men, which is up to 80%, has increased; the transfer rate of women is 70-75%. Accordingly, grammar schools do not only prepare young people for university degree courses.

With the reform of the higher-education entrance qualification in 1995, the general higher-education entrance qualification was maintained. Meanwhile, this general higher-education entrance qualification is limited from various points of view: for medical school, at this moment in time, there is a *numerus clausus*. Admission to most of the technical colleges is only possible after a one-year internship in an enterprise that operates in a field related to the proposed subject. In addition, individual institutions of higher education have defined subject-related entrance examinations (especially music and art schools).

Specialized middle school / diploma middle school

As the grammar schools opened up during the 1960s and vocational training and vocational education expanded, it became clear that there was no education for the 'middle cadre' in the sense that there was no school between grammar school and vocational training. Thus, former general continuing education schools and schools for girls were transformed into diploma middle schools (*Diplommittelschule*, DMS), in most cases offering programmes with a duration of two or three years. They were expected to prepare for advanced vocational training in educational, social, and medical-related fields, which often could be begun at seventeen or eighteen years of age. The regulations were made by the cantons because they were already responsible for the regulation of the corresponding vocational training. The leaving certificate of the middle school was not linked to the admission qualification for a continuing education. Therefore even DMS-certificate holders had to undergo an admission procedure. The DMS did not prepare for specific professions, but was expected to create favourable conditions for the demanding vocational training which was supposed to follow (EDK 1989).

In the course of the years, the DMS developed into a school mainly for young women. Nowadays it is attended by 3% to 5% of the young people. The badly defined interface to the training courses in tertiary education resulted in a system crisis, as, in the mid-1990s, the colleges (*Fachhochschulen*) were established and a number of courses, which the DMS prepared for, were re-defined at college level. This led to the transformation of the DMS into a specialized middle school. The specialized middle school diploma is obtained after a three-year course. This school imparts a

deepened general education and prepares for vocational training in the fields of health, social work, education, communication and information, design and art, music and theatre, as well as applied psychology. The curriculum contains, next to a general-education part, vocation-related options. With a one-year internship or a supplementary general-education year, it is possible to obtain a specialized higher-education entrance qualification, which serves as an admission qualification for the corresponding college. Specialized middle schools with college entrance qualifications are, at this moment in time, in the introductory phase in many cantons.

Basic vocational training

Basic vocational training has been regulated on an integrated basis by the federation since the new Federal Constitution came into force in 2000. Before then, there were only sector regulations. The schools are maintained either by the cantons or by commercial organizations. The cantons supervise basic vocational education in enterprises and schools. Young people can, after completing the mandatory instruction, start a basic vocational instruction with an apprenticeship contract with an enterprise. Vocational schools must give instruction to young people with an apprenticeship contract. Basic vocational education lasts two, three, or four years. It is acquired at three distinct places:

- Vocational practice is imparted by the business itself, in the association of teaching enterprises, in teaching workshops, or in the commercial middle schools;
- Specialized vocational schools impart general and vocation-related education; and
- Courses held outside of the enterprise complete vocational practice and school instruction.

Following basic two-year instruction, young people receive a federal vocational qualification certificate. Three- to four-year training courses are concluded by an apprenticeship examination and lead to the federal certificate of professional competence. This can be extended by complementary general-education in a course running parallel to the basic vocational training or at the end of the latter. The vocational technical higher-education entrance qualification is the admission requirement for the colleges. These regulations came into force only in 2004. The cantons were given five years to adapt their laws regarding implementation. In the context of the new federal act on vocational training, the federation took over responsibility for vocational training in the health sector, in the area of social work, and in fine arts. Around a third of young people complete basic vocational training. This ratio is lower in French-speaking Switzerland than in the German-speaking part of the country. Within a few years after its introduction in the mid-1990s, the vocational maturity ratio increased to 10% (men: 12%, women: 7%).

Small or special classes and special-needs schools

Small or special classes are specialized classes, which differ from normal classroom instruction, but are part of the *Volksschule* and therefore fall under the cantonal regulation authority. They are expected to offer students who, for various reasons,

cannot follow regular instruction or can only follow instruction with great difficulty, an optimum learning environment. The instruction on offer supposes that optimal support of these children can be better achieved in special classes than in regular classes. Since the middle of the 1990s, efforts have been made to integrate many pupils into regular classes, and to support instruction by staff with special training in remedial pedagogy. The cantons have organized the small and special classes in a variety of ways. There are great differences in dealing with poorly performing pupils: whereas some cantons tend to send these pupils to small or special classes, others use the repetition of a class more often as an instrument. The proportion of pupils in small or special classes was 4.2% of all students in 2003; in 1980, it was still 2.7%. The variation between the cantons is enormous (Aargau: 7.0%, Wallis: 1.2%). In these classes, children who speak a foreign language as their mother tongue are heavily overrepresented. Next to the argument that special support in separate classes is no longer the most advanced way of dealing with this issue and, as regards school performance, is only partly legitimized, the increasing number of pupils in small and special classes and related costs have led to a wide acceptance of the integration demand. In more detail, the following categories of small and special classes have to be distinguished:

- Start-up classes, where the taught instruction of the first primary school year is spread over two school years;
- small or special classes for pupils with learning disabilities;
- Observation classes for pupils with behavioural problems; and
- Classes for students whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction in order to introduce the language of instruction of the school's location (Plotke 2003, p. 129).

In most cases, special-needs schools form a separate type of school. They are often integrated with boarding institutions. Special-needs schools are regulated by federal legislation as part of insurance regulations for the disabled, and are subsidized by the federation. In some instances, a distinction is made according to the nature of the disability between institutions for the physically disabled, for those with sensory difficulties, for the mentally disabled, for children with complex disabilities, for children with behavioural disorders, and for autistic children. The aim of special schooling is to remedy or to lessen the disability and enable future inclusion into vocational life (Plotke 2003, p. 130). Special-needs schools are attended by 1.5% of pupils.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

The tertiary education sector comprises various fields: the system of higher education, which itself comprises universities, colleges, teacher-training colleges, various offers of higher vocational training, and of vocational and general continuing education.

Universities

The universities are under the responsibility of the cantons. The federation is the maintaining body of the two technical universities (ETH) in Lausanne and Zurich. Since the 1960s, the universities have been confronted with a strong quantitative growth and at the same time, a strong specialization of areas of teaching and research has been taking place. Answers to the challenges posed by growth and differentiation have been, on the one hand, the creation of new universities (ETH Lausanne in 1969; the universities of Lucerne and Ticino were founded in the 1990s and added to the existing universities of Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, and Zurich), on the other hand, an attempt was made to cope with the situation by re-grouping and creating new faculties, departments, and institutes. However, the student-staff ratio has strongly deteriorated, especially in the humanities and social sciences.

Students with a higher-education entrance qualification can freely choose the place and the institution where they want to study, with the exception of medical studies, which are bound by a *numerus clausus*. Actually, the courses of study have been re-designed along the lines of the bachelor's/master's degrees (BA/MA). The studies last at least three or five years. The period of entry into university studies has, in the past years, been increasingly shaped by selectivity in order to cope with the increasing number of students. Actually, the number of students at universities is still growing; the prognosis is that a ceiling of 100,000 students will be reached as from 2010. Even though more women than men are entering universities, more men hold degrees and the great majority of doctoral theses are still written by men. Furthermore, the proportion of women strongly varies between faculties: women dominate in the social sciences and humanities, medicine, and law; in the other faculties, there are more men than women (*Bundesamt für Statistik 2004e*).

Colleges

With the Federal Act on Colleges, the colleges (*Fachhochschulen*) were created as a new type of higher-education in 1995. Colleges and universities are 'equal but different'. The colleges are strongly oriented towards the vocational world and perform applied research and development. Many advanced specialized schools have been integrated into the colleges and, in those cases, the courses of study were reformed correspondingly. The colleges are under the general responsibility of the federation. Seven public institutions and one private college have been accredited.

As a rule, the maintaining bodies of colleges belong to the cantons, either to a number of cantons simultaneously or individual cantons (Berne, Zurich, or Ticino). The reform dynamism of the last ten years was particularly characterized by the question which courses should be defined as college courses and which ones ought to remain at the level of the higher specialized schools. The re-definition process has, so far, not been concluded in all sectors. By the consolidation of many advanced specialized schools into seven colleges, each with a number of different locations, questions about the synergy of decentralized structures arise. The consolidation process is by far not concluded today. The courses of study are now being

converted into bachelor's courses and an important question will be which master's courses the colleges will be able to offer.

With the transfer of cantonal regulation competency to the federation, at this moment in time, the sectors visual arts, social work, health, music, and theatre are being integrated into the college system of the federation. Next to this, the colleges are offering civil engineering, technology, chemistry, agriculture, economy, sport, applied linguistics, and applied psychology. At this moment in time, only the canton of Aargau has completely integrated teacher training in the college as part of the institution (where the canton is the governing body); the other cantons have got separate teacher-training colleges. The number of students in the colleges is strongly increasing; the predictions show that a ceiling of 50-55,000 students will be reached gradually. The average proportion of women on these courses is at around a third, but there are great differences between the faculties. Whereas women dominate in the degree courses in teacher training, health, social work, applied psychology, applied linguistics, as well as in design and fine arts, men dominate in all technical and business degree courses (*Bundesamt für Statistik 2004d*).

The competence for the regulation of teacher training lies, with the exception of teachers in vocational schools, with the cantons. Since the mid-1990s, teacher training has been re-organized so as to be offered at teacher training colleges (in Geneva, at university). The subject-related training of teaching staff of the lower- and upper-secondary levels is partly carried out in universities and colleges. Special programmes exist for the teaching staff of the pre-primary, primary, and lower-secondary levels as well as for teaching staff for schools preparing for higher-education entrance certificates and for teachers of remedial-pedagogy. The training period stretches over at least three years, for teaching staff of the lower- and upper-secondary level, over four to five years. The degree courses are accredited by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Education Directors (EDK). In most of the cantons, continuing education for teachers has been integrated into teacher-training colleges.

Higher specialized and vocational examinations; higher specialized schools

The requirement for higher vocational training is a qualification in basic vocational training. The purpose of higher vocational training is to qualify for a more challenging and responsible vocation. The vocational examination and the higher vocational examination attest to the completion of further education in relevant branches of trade and industry and presuppose a corresponding vocational practice and corresponding subject-related knowledge and skills. The vocational examination ascertains whether the candidate possesses the necessary skills to fill a leadership position or fulfil a demanding vocational function. Once the examination has been passed, a federal subject-related certificate is issued. The higher follow-up examination ascertains whether the applicant is capable of independently running an industrial operation and whether the applicant satisfies more demanding vocational requirements. A passed examination entitles the student to bear the protected title 'master of the trade'. The cantons and the trade associations offer courses preparing for this examination. The courses are run parallel to exercising a vocation. The relevant organizations of industries and trades regulate the admission requirements, instruc-

tion contents, qualification procedures, certificate-holder cards, and titles. These provisions are approved by the Federal Act on Vocational Training 2002 (*Bundesgesetz über die Berufsbildung*). For both of these examinations, the number of students attaining this level has strongly increased in the last ten years.

In the past twenty years, next to the traditional technical schools, a whole system of higher specialized schools has developed. Following the creation of colleges, many vocational-training courses have been integrated into the colleges. So far, the selection process is not fully completed. As a full-time programme, the training lasts for at least two years. As continuing training next to work, it lasts at least three years. A prerequisite of this course is relevant vocational experience. The federation issues minimum rules and regulations and accredits the courses of study. The cantons supervise them (Federal Act on Vocational Training 2002, section 26ff.).

Continuing education

Continuing education comprises two main sectors: continuing training and general continuing education (Schläfli/Gonon 1999). Basically a matter of private initiative, the federation and the cantons have established subsidy systems for individual areas of continuing education. Generally, there is no doubt within education policy that lifelong learning has to be publicly supported. However, the kind of support and the issue of financing adult learning polarize those who have to deal with these questions. In 2003, 36% of the adult population has taken part in some sort of continuing education. Men mostly take part in continuing training courses. More people who achieved a high level of education attend than persons who have no post-compulsory education. 84% of all participants of continuing education are in employment. Persons from French-, Italian-, and Romansh-speaking Switzerland attended courses remarkably less as well as less often than persons from German-speaking Switzerland. 33% of people in employment attend vocational training. Here, four out of five participants are supported by their enterprise, men more often than women, well-qualified persons more often than low-qualified people.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

The far-reaching reforms introduced in the 1990s in Switzerland are by far not concluded. As a whole, three sectors can be identified where further reform or need for reform are beginning to emerge: governance, quality, structural reform. All three areas are interconnected in many ways. First, with respect to the governance of the education system (Hutmacher 1998), the basic question is what problems will have to be solved in future and at what level. The strengthening of a partial autonomy of individual schools is to be continued; the new allocation of tasks between school leadership as well as local and cantonal school supervisory bodies is only slowly taking shape. The question of external school evaluation has been hardly tackled up until now.

In the federal parliament, various approaches and proposals for a new regulation of the allocation of tasks between the federation and the cantons in the field of education are pending, aiming to co-ordinate and harmonize them better. At the fore-

front of these endeavours are, amongst others, the introduction of a subsidiary co-ordination task of the federation; a unified regulation of school entrance, of foreign-language instruction, and of school structures; as well as a common policy of the federation and the cantons for the higher education sector. The internationalization of education policy will presumably increase the necessity to act at federal level. The co-operative federalism in the education system is not at its end, but needs to be radically re-defined. At present, two significant projects are being built: a project of the cantons to introduce educational standards valid in the whole country, and a common project of the federation and the cantons, aiming at the continuous monitoring of the education system. Through both projects, new knowledge, useful for governance, is generated. This knowledge will no doubt rather accelerate than slow down the dynamism of reforms. As a whole, systematic knowledge on processes of system governance has been rather low, however, the purpose was to ensure high expectations in this field.

The second sector that must be dealt with is quality assurance at all levels of the system. Switzerland has undergone an inspection of its education system by the OECD for the first time at the end of the 1980s and had a separate evaluation of the higher education sector after the turn of the century (EDK 1990; OECD 2003). Also, it participates in international school performance surveys. This external view on the education system of Switzerland has directed the attention to quality issues at the system level, and various reforms have been introduced. However, the PISA results have also demonstrated that major problems lie at the level of classroom instruction. The problem of socio-linguistic discrimination or the social problems resulting from cutbacks in the welfare system may well have structural causes, too. But sensitive support measures must above all be implemented at the instruction level. In future, therefore, quality-assurance measures have to be complemented at system and school level.

Many structural reforms which were initiated in the 1990s haven't yet been concluded. In the third area of activities, the intention is to bring the structural innovations to an end while, at the same time, new structural reforms are beginning to emerge. The most important of these are:

- New regulations of the compulsory school commencement age, bringing the school commencement age forward, incorporating kindergartens into the education system (or creating a new primary or basic level);
- Structural reform and harmonization of the lower-secondary level;
- A new concept for ninth grade, which aims at an optimal design of the transfer from school to vocational life for more young persons;
- The introduction of tiered courses of study in the higher education sector;
- The improvement of the system of grants for students;
- Making the teaching profession more attractive; and
- Increasing the participation of adults in continuing education, especially for disadvantaged groups or groups who normally shun continuing education.

Next to this, old problems are posed in new circumstances: the PISA-surveys have shown that the efforts made towards the integration of children and young people whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction will have to be increased.

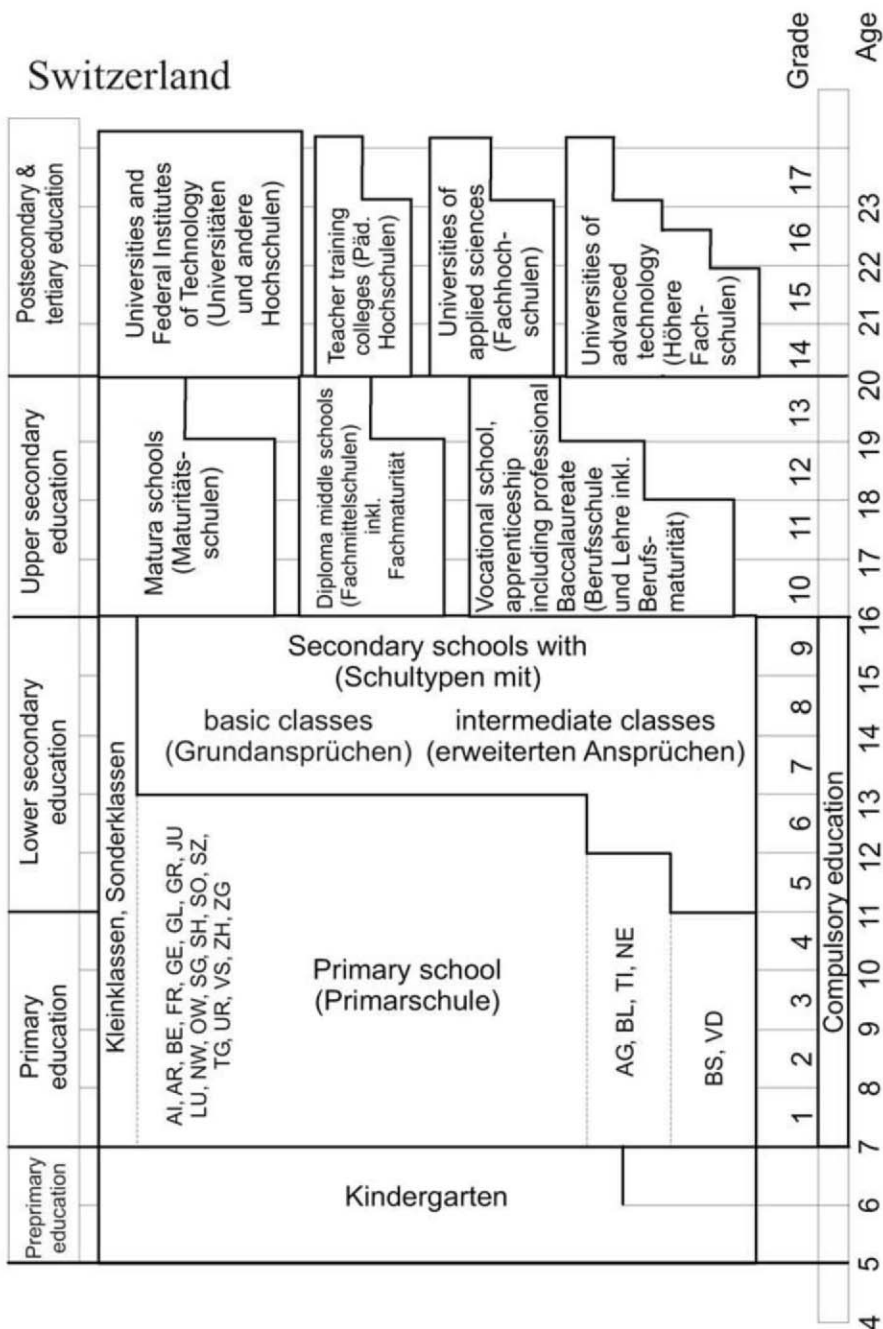
Also, the proportion of male to female pupils on training courses is becoming skewed again at upper-secondary level and in the tertiary education sector. The prospect that the number of pupils at *Volksschule* will drop by 10-12% within the next ten years and the number of higher education students will gradually reach a ceiling within the next ten years is linked to the hope that more resources will be available to accomplish the new reforms.

References

- Arnet, M.: Das Schulkonkordat vom 29. Oktober 1970. Entstehung, Geschichte, Kommentar. Bern 2000.
- Badertscher, H. (Ed.): Die Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren 1897 bis 1997. Bern; Stuttgart; Wien 1997.
- Brändli, S. et al.: Die Bildung des wahren republikanischen Bürgers. Der aargauische Erziehungsrat 1798-1998. Aarau 1998.
- Bundesamt für Statistik: Arbeitsbedingungen der Lehrkräfte. Bern 1997.
- Bundesamt für Statistik: Lehrkräfte 1998/99. Neuchâtel 2000.
- Bundesamt für Statistik: Öffentliche Bildungsausgaben 2002. Neuchâtel 2004a.
- Bundesamt für Statistik: Schülerinnen, Schüler und Studierende 2003/04. Neuchâtel 2004b.
- Bundesamt für Statistik: Weiterbildung in der Schweiz 2003. Auswertungen der Arbeitskräfteerhebungen 1996-2003. Neuchâtel 2004c.
- Bundesamt für Statistik: Abschlüsse der Fachhochschulen. Neuchâtel 2004d.
- Bundesamt für Statistik: Abschlüsse der universitären Hochschulen. Neuchâtel 2004e.
- Criblez, L.: Requirements for a democratic education organization. In: *Studies in philosophy and education* 18 (1999), pp. 107-119.
- Criblez, L. et al. (Eds): Eine Schule für die Demokratie. Zur Entwicklung der Volksschule in der Schweiz im 19. Jahrhundert. Bern 1999.
- Criblez, L.: Bildungsexpansion durch Differenzierung des Bildungssystems – am Beispiel der Sekundarstufe II. In: *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Bildungswissenschaften* 23 (2001), pp. 95-118.
- Criblez, L.: Lehrerin, Lehrer sein – gestern und heute. Zur historischen Veränderung des Lehrberufs. In: Sigrist, M./Wehner, Th. (Eds): *Schule als Arbeitsplatz*. Zürich 2005. (In print)
- EDK [Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren]: Konkordat über die Schulkoordination vom 29. Oktober 1970. In: EDK: Interkantonale Zusammenarbeit im Bildungswesen. Rechtsgrundlagen. Bern 1986, pp. 91-94.
- EDK (Ed.): *Bildungspolitik im schweizerischen Föderalismus*. Bern; Stuttgart 1985.
- EDK: *Diplommittelschulen DMS*. Bern 1989.
- EDK: *Bildungspolitik in der Schweiz*. Bericht der OECD. Bern 1990.
- EDK: *Schuleintrittsalter*. Bern 1993.
- EDK: *Rahmenlehrplan für die Maturitätsschulen*. Bern 1994.
- Hutmacher, W.: Strategien der Systemsteuerung. Von der Systemexpansion zum Systemumbau. In: Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten et al. (Eds): *Schulleitung und Schulaufsicht. Neue Rollen und Aufgaben im Schulwesen einer dynamischen und offenen Gesellschaft*. Innsbruck; Wien 1998, pp. 49-92.
- Lerch, C.: *Der Bund und die kantonalen Hochschulen. Gesamtstaatliche Tätigkeit zugunsten von Wissenschaft und Forschung 1740-1970*. Bern; Frankfurt/M. 1971.
- Lüdi, G./Werlen, I.: *Eidgenössische Volkszählung 2000: Sprachlandschaft in der Schweiz*. Neuchâtel 2005.

- Lustenberger, W.: Pädagogische Rekrutenprüfungen. Ein Beitrag zur Schweizer Schulgeschichte. Zürich; Chur 1996.
- Markees, S.: Kantonale Schulsysteme in der Schweiz. Bern 2003.
- Meylan, J.-P.: Die Erneuerung des Gymnasiums und die Anerkennung der Maturitäten. Stationen der Debatte 1968-1995. In: EDK (Ed.): Von der «Mittelschule von morgen» zur Maturitätsreform 1995. Bern 1996, pp. 7-45.
- OECD: L'enseignement tertiaire en Suisse. Examens des politiques nationales d'éducation. Paris 2003.
- Plotke, H.: Bildung und Schule in den kantonalen Verfassungen. In: Zeitschrift für Schweizerisches Recht, Beiheft 17 (1994), pp. 5-117.
- Plotke, H.: Schweizerisches Schulrecht. Bern; Stuttgart; Wien 2003.
- Rhyn, H.: Länderbericht Schweiz. In: Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten et al. (Eds): Schulleitung und Schulaufsicht. Neue Rollen und Aufgaben im Schulwesen einer dynamischen und offenen Gesellschaft. Innsbruck; Wien 1998, pp. 163-187.
- Schildknecht, U.: Bündner müssen/dürfen länger lernen. In: Bildung Schweiz 6 (2001), pp. 9-11.
- Schläfli, A./Gonon, Ph.: Weiterbildung in der Schweiz. Frankfurt/M. 1999.
- Tabin, J.-P.: Formation professionnelle en Suisse. Histoire et actualité. Lausanne 1989.
- Vonlanthen, A./Lattmann, U.P./Egger, E.: Maturität und Gymnasium. Ein Abriss über die Entwicklung der eidgenössischen Maturitätsordnungen und deren Auswirkungen auf das Gymnasium. Bern 1978.
- Wettstein, E.: Die Entwicklung der Berufsbildung in der Schweiz. Aarau 1987.
- Wettstein, E./Bossy, R./Dommann, F./Villiger, D.: Die Berufsbildung in der Schweiz. Eine Einführung. Luzern 1988.

Switzerland



Yasemin Karakaşoğlu

TURKEY

History of the school system

Cultural context and corner-stones of the historical development of school education

In the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the contemporary state of Turkey, the Turkish education system has undergone far-reaching developments. In contrast to other European countries, the Turkish education system was not secularized until the twentieth century. However, since the foundation of the Republic in 1923, Turkey, as the only country among those with a mainly Muslim population, has worked steadfastly to bring its education system up to Western standards.

When, in the course of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire disintegrated after five hundred years of existence, a political entity disappeared in which the citizens had defined themselves through their religion. The Sultan-Caliph was both the civil and the religious head of the Empire. His Muslim subjects were taught in religious primary and middle schools (*Mahalle Mektepleri* and *Medreseler*). The recognized religious minorities of Christians and Jews were under the personal protection of the Sultan-Caliph. As 'protected people', they managed their cultural affairs independently. These comprised, among other things, their own churches or synagogues and, because the whole educational system was religiously oriented, their own educational institutions as well.

Although the Young Turks – the reform-oriented ruling party of the second constitutional phase of the Ottoman Empire – announced as early as 1913 the restructuring of the education system as one of their main objectives, major changes in the educational sector did not take place until the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. The young Republic broke radically with the traditions of a religiously dominated state, and as result of its subsequent orientation towards the West adopted both a positivistic understanding of science and the Roman alphabet. The latter was introduced in 1928 to replace the Persian-Arabic alphabet which had been in use until then. In order to speed up the introduction of the new writing system, 'Schools for the Nation' (*Millet Mektepleri*) were set up in the same year. Each citizen between the age of fifteen and forty-five was to go to one of these schools. Between 1929 and 1936, 2.6 million people attended 20,500 schools.

In 1924 the Council for Science and Education (*Heyet-i İlimiye*) defined the basic principles of primary and middle school education and teacher training. Apart from several small changes, these principles have remained valid until today. The most important national education law was the Law for the Standardization of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*). National education became the most important conveyor of the principles of the Kemalistic revolution (*inkılap*). These include the six principles of nationalism, secularism, republicanism, popularism, reformism, and statism. The

aim was to educate the young to be devout followers of the Turkish nation state. These young people, oriented towards Western civilization and secularism, were to subscribe to nationalism and republicanism. Co-education of men and women, introduced in 1926, stresses the equality of the two genders. Western kinds of sport and music as well as foreign-language teaching – in Western languages as opposed to the previously taught Persian and Arabic – emphasize the orientation towards the West. In addition, the practice of Islam was strictly banished to the private sphere. Therefore, until the re-introduction of religious instruction on a voluntary basis in 1948, there was no Islamic religious instruction (R.I.), no schools for the training of Preachers and Imams, and also no theological faculties at the University of Ankara (*İlahiyat Fakülteleri*). The attitude of the State towards religion changed only very gradually during the first years of the Republic; the first theological faculty at the University of Ankara was opened in 1949, and Imam and Preacher schools were not re-established until 1951. The change, therefore, in the education and teacher-training system from a religious to a secular basis is one of the essential cultural factors of the development of the Turkish education system. The specific understanding of secularism in Turkey, where the State takes responsibility for the religious affairs of Muslims, and civil servants can be holders of religious office, is also reflected in the way in which religious expression in state institutions is dealt with. For example, people in positions of responsibility in schools and universities, as well as in Parliament, are not allowed to wear religious symbols such as the headscarf (for women) or the beard (for men). Since the late 1980s, this has repeatedly generated great controversy between the Kemalistic state elite and the religious establishment concerning the permission to wear a headscarf or beard, especially with regard to university students. In 2004 a female student took the matter to the European Court of Human Rights to appeal against the law that allowed her to take up her studies only under the condition that she did not wear her headscarf. The court, however, dismissed the case with reference to the principle of secularism which is anchored in the Turkish Constitution.

One particular political issue in the pedagogic debate in Turkey is religious education as carried out in state schools. Since 1982, the Department for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), which is directly accountable to the Prime Minister, has planned, co-ordinated, and monitored compulsory instruction in religious studies and ethics, which only members of recognized ethnic-religious minority groups are not obliged to attend. The curriculum for the R.I. lessons can be described as of an Islamic nature with a leaning towards the Sunni-Hanif tradition while claiming to be scientifically based. The aim of these lessons is to convey Islam as the unifying element of Turkish culture. The Koran courses, which take place before or after school hours in state mosques, are carried out under state supervision. The Department for Religious Affairs develops, co-ordinates, and supervises the curricula for courses in and out of school. At present, the Koran courses are organized in accordance with a state decree (published in the Official Journal on 16 November 1990, under the Number 20697). Apart from this, private Koran courses (sometimes forbidden and sometimes tolerated, depending on the government's attitude towards

Islamic teaching) organized by religious orders and organizations enjoy considerable popularity.

The Kemalites' wish to create an education system open to all social classes, and oriented towards the needs of the young state of Turkey, led to the planning and creation of 'village institutions' (*Köy Enstitüleri*) in 1936. They arose from the desire to establish primary school education all over the country, and thus reach every village, regardless of the size of its population. This notion of primary education was closely connected with new pedagogical concepts, and was based on the German *Reformpädagogik* i.e. reformed educational approach. The aim of these institutions, which were integrated into village life, was a form of education that was close to practical life and that would meet the needs of the rural population. As part of this teaching programme, modern agricultural methods and technologies were also to be taught. Due to their low salaries, teachers were forced to work in agriculture and were thus a role model for their pupils. During the Cold War era, these schools had the reputation of fostering left-wing intellectuals who did not support the official view of the nation; as a result, they were converted into village teacher training colleges. The ambitious system of village schools was thus ultimately an historical interlude in Turkish education policy.

Reforms and innovations

Until 1997, five years of primary school (*İlkokul*) education were followed by a three-year period of middle school (*Ortaokul*). Pupils could then add a further three- to four-year period at an upper secondary school (*Lise*). This tiered system had been introduced gradually. When the Republic was founded in 1923, five years of primary education for six- to eleven-year-olds became compulsory and, hence, free. It was not until 1951 that middle schools were introduced throughout the country; middle school education did not become compulsory until 1982. Middle schools, like upper secondary schools, were subdivided into general, vocational, and technical school forms. This structure is reflected in autonomous curricula, school buildings, and school uniforms, and also in individual teacher training courses.

The school reform of 1997, which came into force in 1998, resulted in the abolition of both the five-year primary school and the three-year middle school as independent school forms. Instead, eight-year uniform primary schools (*İlköğretim Okulu*) were established. It was only at this point that the length of compulsory schooling reached eight years in practice, although it had been officially introduced much earlier. This was an important step in adjusting the school system to European standards. Since then, the vocational and technical school forms have no longer existed in lower secondary but only in upper secondary education (*Ortaöğretim Okulları*). Even before the reform, there were schools that combined middle and upper secondary education, such as the Anatolia upper secondary schools (*Anadolu lisesi*). At present, they only exist in the secondary education sector, although there is a transitional stage until 2006 for those pupils who were already in the former system in 1998. In these secondary schools, a high percentage of the lessons are taught in a foreign language, mainly in English, but also in French, German, or Italian. There are special provisions for children of re-migrants, i.e. for the children of

former guest workers in Western European countries, who have been returning since the mid-1990s. The idea behind the establishment of these schools was that these children should be integrated into the Turkish education system and also be enabled to apply the foreign-language potential that they bring with them.

The closure of all the middle schools released a wave of protest, because it also involved the closure of the closely associated Imam and Preacher schools, which were very popular with conservative rural and small-town inhabitants. Students also protested, because many of them owed their education to the existence of these religiously oriented boarding schools in isolated regions.

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

The aims of national education are defined in the Basic Laws on National Education No. 1739 in its version of 1983. From the outset, the basic educational principles of the Republic were aimed at a secular, rather than a religious, and at an international, rather than a national form of education (Kaplan 1999, p. 143). Further principles of the Turkish education system are: equal opportunity; co-education; the adaptation of the curriculum to social requirements; a long-term educational plan; continuity of education by enabling lifelong learning; scholarliness and an orientation towards the reforms of Atatürk as the basis of all lessons, regardless of subject and the age of pupils; close co-operation between school and parents; and nation-wide availability of education for everyone.

The aims of the Turkish education system as regards the development of individual personality are laid down in Paragraph 2 of the Basic Law on National Education:

- The development of a good citizen who feels closely connected with the reforms of Atatürk and nationalism as expressed in the Constitution of Atatürk; who has internalized the ethical, ideological, historical, and cultural values of the Turkish nation; and who is in possession of a definite cultural identity;
- The development of a free-thinking person with a constructive, creative, and productive personality, who has internalized scholarly thought, who has command over a broad world view, who respects human rights, and who feels responsible towards society; and
- The education of a person with the abilities and knowledge required for a profession which corresponds to his or her interests and aptitudes, which offers fulfilment, and which enables him or her to make a contribution to the welfare of society and train for a profession.

The aim of compulsory schooling is to provide pupils with the skills, abilities, and knowledge necessary to develop into good citizens; it should also educate them in national moral values. Compulsory schooling should educate all children according to their interests, gifts, and capabilities, and prepare them for life and the next stage of education (Akyüz 1999, p. 302). The importance of these principles is reflected in

the school oath, which pupils have had to swear together at the beginning of each school day since 1932. Its text reads:

I am a Turk, honest and hard-working. My principles are to protect those younger than myself, to respect my parents and my country, and to love my country as well as my nation more than myself. My aim is to move onwards and upwards in life. My very being should be given to Turkish existence. Oh you great Atatürk! The path you have prepared for us, the goal you have shown us I will continue to follow. I swear it. (1992 version)

Teaching methods at state schools tend to be along traditional lines, even though educational plans have advocated other forms for years. Lessons mainly take the form of *ex cathedra* teaching, i.e. frontal teaching, the reason for which can be found in the above-average size of classes. Until recently, classes of often fifty or more pupils were the order of the day, especially in urban schools; this made any other form of teaching almost impossible. Above all, schools require receptive learning from the pupils. Learning by heart is a particularly popular method. One explanation often put forward to explain the emphasis laid on this form of learning is the tradition of learning by heart and recitation within the framework of the Islamic education system (Akyüz 1999). The pupil-teacher relationship is based on a hierarchically structured interdependence of authority and love. Pupils are expected to accept unquestioningly the authoritarian structures and discipline of the school, while the teachers, especially in primary schools, show loving care of their protégés in return. The traditional methods portrayed here are, however, gradually being extended through, or replaced by, more modern methods of teaching and learning in the well-equipped schools of the large towns and cities. In its latest publication, the national Ministry of Education (MEB) sets out its aim to establish more modern and democratic teaching methods in schools by improving teacher training and providing more tightly focused in-service courses for teachers. During the academic year 2004-05, the Instruction and Training Committee (*Talim Terbiye Kurulu*) of the Ministry of Education developed a curriculum for over a hundred primary schools which accords with Gardner's multiple intelligence perspective and is based on constructivist theory. In the academic year 2005-06, this curriculum will be introduced, led by the city of Izmir. In order to enable the application of this program, the following steps were taken:

- a) The internal facilities in schools were developed.
- b) Teachers attended computer courses and obtained a certificate (this certificate is now demanded of everyone who applies for a teaching position and can be obtained by attending one of the Ministry's courses).
- c) The Ministry initiated a programme to supply notebook computers to teachers.
- d) Inspectors gave seminars to teachers.
- e) Campaigns were started to build schools, classrooms, ateliers, and laboratories with the participation of citizens in order to overcome the problems associated with infrastructure, equipment, and class sizes.

Socio-economic context

The demands on the Turkish education system are high, especially in respect of the large population of young people. In the year 2000, 31% of Turkey's 68 million inhabitants were in the five to nineteen age bracket, which is that of primary and secondary education (DİE 2004). The population grew by 1.4% in 2003, which means an annual increase of about one million people. In the school year 2003-04, 18.2 million people were being taught by 772,823 teachers, including pre-school and university level. The increasing growth of the urban population is a particular challenge for education planners. The proportion of town and country dwellers has almost reversed in the last twenty years on account of the massive increase in urbanization. While in 1980 36% of the population lived in towns and 64% in the country, this had changed to 61% and 39% respectively by 2003. The effects of the most recent reforms have not yet appeared in the statistics; at present, Turkish children can expect to spend on average 11.5 years in education, which is the lowest figure among all the OECD member states.

The education of children and adolescents from ethnic and religious minorities, as well as of those from migrant families, does not play a special role in the Turkish school system at present. Data about children from these backgrounds are not collected. Although Turkey emerged from the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, the picture it presents today, at least superficially, is that of a state ethnically dominated by Turkish Muslims (99% of the population is Muslim; two thirds belong to the Sunni and one third to the Shiite subdenomination of Islam, with the latter consisting mainly of Alevites, a specifically Anatolian group of non-orthodox Shiites). This situation is the result of the determination to consolidate the political form of the nation state, e.g. by exchanging since the mid-1920s native groups of Greeks living in Turkey for native Turks living in Greece. Since the foundation of the Republic, the massive migration of Jews and Armenians to Europe and the U.S.A., as well as to Armenia and Israel, has contributed to the homogeneity of the population of Turkey. However, there still remains a great variety of religious groups within the national boundaries, such as Sunni, Shiite, and Alevi Muslims; members of old Oriental Churches; and Jews. In addition, more than forty-five different and predominantly native ethnic groups live in Turkey; the largest of these is the Kurdish group. These minorities have no status as minority groups, however, in contrast to the recognized minorities such as the Armenians, Greek Orthodox Christians, and Jews.

The latter three minority groups have their own schools, which belong to the category of private schools. In 2001-02, there were eighty-seven of these schools covering all educational levels and with a total of 4247 pupils and 426 teachers. The lessons are taught in the languages of the minorities. However, there are also the compulsory subjects of Turkish and culture, in which the principles of Atatürk, the Turkish national idea, secularism, and equality are essential parts. Both the instruction and the textbooks used in these schools are supervised by the Ministry for National Education. As private schools, they are obliged by Paragraph 42 of the Constitution of 1982 to comply with the rules governing state schools. In the objectives and development of their curricula, the aims and basic principles of Turkish national education are to be implemented. The law for the unification of the education system forbids

minority schools to teach lessons which are based on religious principles or to spread any form of religious propaganda in class; moreover, the wearing of religious symbols is not allowed in school buildings. Minority schools are also required to accept at least 2% of their pupils without fees. At present, a great number of the pupils at these 'foreign' and minority schools are children of Muslim origin. These schools have the reputation of closely adhering to Western European standards; they are also considered very competent with respect to the teaching of European languages. Hence, they are very popular.

In contrast to the recognized ethnic-cultural minority groups expressly mentioned in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), such as the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, the ethnic minority groups of the Kurds, Adyges, and Laz – to mention just a few of the approximately forty-five different groups living in Turkey – do not have their own schools. The Treaty ensured the recognition of those minority institutions founded before 30 October 1914 (educational and religious institutions, hospitals, and self-help organizations), as well as those established by organizations from such countries as France, Britain, Italy, the United States, Austria, Germany, Iran, and Bulgaria. The preservation of minority schools in the Republic was a kind of concession to the multi-ethnic character of the Ottoman Empire. However, it also constituted a problem with regard to the identity of the Turkish Republic, given that one of the aims of the Republic was the centralization of national education. Instead of granting privileges based on *jus soli* to ethnic minorities with Turkish citizenship, the intention was to bind all citizens to the ideal of a Turkish nation state. Moreover, the concessions made towards the ethnic and religious minorities during the Ottoman Empire were regarded as a factor that had contributed to its decline. The ethnic minorities had co-operated closely with their protecting states, and were thus held partly responsible for the Empire's dependence on the Western European powers. The ambivalence of the restrictions which are placed on the minority schools in Turkey today must be evaluated in the light of this historical background.

The Alevite group is the most demanding with regard to the rights of religious minorities. Since 1990, several associations (*Pir Sultan Abdal*, *Hacı Bektaş Veli*) and a foundation (*Ehlibeyt*) have been established and have started to make demands from the State following the massacre of Sivas-Madımak. These demands are mainly as follows: the abolition of the Department for Religious Affairs (because the Alevites do not feel represented by this Department), the abolition of compulsory religion classes, and the inclusion of Alevi teachings in school books for social sciences, etc. The Department for Religious Affairs has responded by stating that it maintains an equal distance to all religious subgroups, and that it would be impossible to consider the abolition of the Department, but that Alevite teachings would be included in school books from the year 2005-06 onwards. As different interpretations of the nature of Alevite teachings are current among Alevite authorities themselves (as to whether it is a subdenomination of Islam, a separate religion, or only a different way of life, etc.), the extent to which Alevite teachings will be given space in the official curriculum remains in doubt.

With a view to future membership of the EU, it is also on the agenda to turn the currently compulsory subject of religious culture and ethics (which is predominantly

based on Islamic principles) into a subject of choice. Another current issue is the abolition of the statement of religion on the identity card. However, no concrete steps concerning this issue have been taken yet.

There are no special schools or integrative support within the framework of regular schools for the numerous migrants who came to Turkey after the collapse of the former Eastern Bloc, especially from the Caucasus region and the central Asiatic Turk republics. Nor is there any form of educational support for those who came as a result of the Iranian revolution, those fleeing from the dictator Saddam Hussein in Iraq, or for the above-mentioned native minority groups who are not recognized as such. At present, there are no school programmes which are geared towards a common education of migrants and native peoples while taking cultural variety into consideration (multicultural concepts). It is at the moment impossible to assess the extent to which this will change as a result of the increasing orientation towards European educational standards that is taking place in connection with the negotiations to become a member state of the European Union. Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been a debate concerning Kurdish as a subject for the largest ethnic minority group in Turkey. First steps towards changes in the official position with respect to ethnic and thus linguistic diversity are being taken; the state radio station has been broadcasting thirty-minute programmes in the languages of the larger ethnic minority groups, such as the Bosnians and the Kurds, on a weekly basis. A further innovative step has been the introduction of human rights education as an obligatory part of citizenship education at primary school level since 1999, and lessons in democracy and human rights within the context of upper secondary education. In the last few years, starting in Diyarbakir and other districts, courses have been introduced in the Kurdish language. However, no university-level department for Kurdish language and literature has been established yet, although extinct languages such as Sumer and Urartu have their own courses and departments. Nevertheless, developments in this direction to the benefit of Kurds are expected in the near future in connection with Turkey's bid for membership of the EU.

The social position of the teaching profession

Considering the fact that when the Republic was founded in 1923, only 10% of the population of Turkey could read and write (the official illiteracy rate in 1999 was 14.3%), the problem of finding and training teachers in the first years was great. In the eyes of the founders of the Republic, teachers formed the 'army of knowledge' and therefore constituted the most important medium for the dissemination of the new idea of the Republic. It is from this self-image that the central significance of the teaching profession for the progress of the Republic arose. The first years focused on rapidly training as many teachers as possible in order to achieve the ambitious goal of educating the Turkish nation. In practice, however, this aim was hardly attainable. In 1926, there were a mere 200 teachers, while it had been assessed that 3000 teachers would be required for the national education programme.

The teaching profession, hailed by the founders of the Republic as a profession of particular significance (a 'Teachers' Day' is celebrated annually on 24 November, and the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk bears the title of 'Head

Teacher of the Country'), is still regarded highly; teachers are also civil servants. However, the profession is not as desirable as it used to be, as the low salary forces many teachers to take on second jobs in order to support their families. With regard to salaries, however, it must be mentioned that, in addition to the basic salary, the State pays bonuses for excellence and offers discounts on public services, such as transport and cultural or sporting institutions, in order to make the profession more attractive. Nevertheless, the first posts that young teachers are assigned to are mainly out in the country or in politically insecure or risky areas, for example in the south-east, and this tends to discourage potential recruits to the profession.

Due to the notorious lack of teachers in Turkey, special programmes have repeatedly been initiated to train more teachers and speed up teacher training. A case in point is the teacher training correspondence course through which, from 1974, students leaving the upper secondary schools qualified as teachers in a quarter of the usual time (Akyüz 1999, p. 337). In 1988, the MEB estimated that approximately one third of the active teachers at that time had trained in this way. In numerous cases, university graduates from all faculties without any formal teacher training whatsoever became class teachers. This form of fast teacher training has negatively affected the otherwise positive image of the teacher in Turkey.

Since the Law on National Education came into effect in 1973, teachers for all age groups have been required to hold a university degree. Teacher training takes place at universities after the successful completion of secondary school. Until 1990, a two-year course of study sufficed for primary school teachers. Since then, however, a four-year course has been mandatory for all teachers. After qualification, graduates are sent as teaching assistants to vacant posts for one year by the central organizational body. In order to accelerate the teacher training process, Anatolian upper secondary schools for teachers (*Anadolu öğretmen lisesi*) were created. This four-year course of study includes intensive training in a foreign language. The graduates from these schools are entitled to a teacher training course at university level. After the degree, there is a ten-month period of practical work under the supervision of an experienced teacher. At the end of this period, the supervisor and the head teacher assess the trainee teacher. Successful trainees are accorded the status of a qualified teacher and sent to posts according to a centrally determined plan. Recently, the Ministry has increased its efforts to improve in-service teacher training by offering, for instance, courses on modern teaching and learning methods and computer literacy. Today, teacher training programmes are mainly run by the faculties of education. Pre-school and classroom teacher departments are only found in the faculties of education. The same faculties also train subject teachers for the middle school. Graduates of science (physics, chemistry, and biology) and literature departments (Turkish language, geography, history, and philosophy) undergo a pedagogic training programme run by the faculties of education over three half-semester under the name of 'master's degree without a thesis'. In this programme, graduates participate in practical training in schools over three semesters and study subjects such as learning and teaching processes, classroom management, materials development, pupil development, and psychology. As there is a serious lack of English language teachers, graduates of English and American language and linguistics

departments as well as graduates of universities with English-language curricula (ODTÜ, Bođaziçi, Bilkent) can obtain teaching qualifications by attending a one-year English Teaching Certificate Programme. Participants in the programme must cover the costs themselves.

School and the role of the family

Co-operation between home and school is specifically named as part of the national education profile and is therefore desired. The MEB has issued decrees aimed at improving this interaction, and according to the Performance Assessment Model to be applied in 2005-06, parents will take part in the assessment of teachers' performance (at a level of 10%). The aim of this initiative is to encourage parents to become more closely involved in school and classroom matters and to express their expectations with respect to the quality and quantity of teaching and school facilities. Since 1999, parents have more often taken part in School Development Management Teams (*Okul Gelişimi Yönetim Ekipleri*; OGYE), which were established according to the TKY school-management system. Furthermore, since 2000 representatives of the School Family Union have participated in the Educational Regions Advisory Committees, which were established to decrease centralization in education.

Recent research has shown that much development is required in the area of school-parent relationships. This applies both to the way parents are involved in school by teachers and to the unrealistic expectations of parents themselves. Although a high percentage of teachers believe that school includes parents sufficiently in decision-making, they are also convinced that parents do not get involved to a great extent in educational matters (Yiđit/Bayraktar 2003). Individual regional surveys on parents' expectations of teachers, on the other hand, reveal that most parents – regardless of whether their children attend a private or a state school – have hardly any understanding of the nature of the teaching profession, apart from its task to convey social competence. Furthermore, they are not sufficiently aware of their own role in the partnership between school and the family with regard to bringing up and educating their children. Their expectations of the teachers are that they be friendly, tolerant, and loving towards their pupils, and that they approach them with honesty and openness (Hazır-Bıkmaz 2002). A third of parents consider their expectation of a permanent exchange between teachers and themselves to be unfulfilled, which they put down to the large size of classes and teachers' consequent lack of time. With respect to the task of conveying social competences, parents desire continuity with the way they bring up their children. This involves forming close and permanent emotional bonds with the family and strengthening the feeling of community spirit, rather than supporting the development of an independent personality (Kađıtçıbaçi 1996).

Organizational context and management of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels, and philosophy of management

With Law No. 3115 of 1937, all forms of education were placed under the supervision and control of the State. Paragraph 50 of the new Constitution of 1961 con-

ferred the task of ensuring citizens' educational opportunities to the State. Primary education (*ilköğretim*) is compulsory and free of charge. The State is obliged to enable particularly gifted children from socially weak families to take part in education at all stages by providing scholarships; it is furthermore required to safeguard the education of members of the population who have special educational needs.

Educational planning in Turkey is based on an educational strategy expressed in an Act of Parliament. This is part of a general development plan for Turkey which has been elaborated every five years since 1961. After this period of time, Parliament is presented with a report in which the planned and achieved objectives for the development of the education system are compared. This comparison enables conclusions to be drawn about the success of the measures taken by the State. A glance at the five-yearly reports to date shows that achievements always fall short of expectations.

The Turkish education system is centrally organized. The highest controlling and directing agency is the Ministry of National Education (*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* - MEB). The Ministry is the body which takes decisions on, creates, and is responsible for every form of education and training. All steps to be taken with respect to education are *de jure* and *de facto* only possible and achievable with the permission and collaboration of the MEB. The authority and responsibility of the MEB are defined in the Basic Law on National Education No. 1739 of 1973. In Article 18 of this law, a fundamental distinction between formal schooling (*örgün eğitim*) and informal out-of-school education (*yaygın eğitim*) is drawn. Informal out-of-school education comprises a wide spectrum of training measures in adult education or, to be more precise, 'in the lifelong training of people outside of school' (MEB). The central head office of the MEB (Directorate General) administers the entire field of dual training and education, vocational courses, and adult education courses ('education of the people') in urban and rural areas. The duties and responsibilities of the MEB in this field are governed by Law No. 40. The most recent working basis for the Ministry of National Education is Law No. 3797 of 30 April 1992. The decisions taken by the Ministry are binding for all Turkish educational institutions. Not until 1993 were some forms of decision-making delegated to administrative departments in the provinces. Nevertheless, all decisions taken in the educational sector must be approved by the MEB.

In order to create the basis for more decentralization in education, the Ministry of Education (MEB) has established a number of new organizations since the year 2000. These are the Class Teachers' Council (*Zümre Öğretmenler Kurulu*) and the Directors' Council (*Müdürler Kurulu*), both of which are subordinated to the Educational Regions Advisory Committees (*Eğitim Bölgeleri Danışma Kurulları*). However, the desired level of decentralization has not yet been achieved, and the Turkish education system has maintained its centralized and hierarchical structure. The MEB itself has a hierarchical structure. Besides the Ministerial Office in Ankara, the MEB is represented and organized on the level of the eighty provinces by designated Directors of Education. The Minister, the State Secretary, and his deputies work in administrative departments such as the High Council for Higher Education (YÖK), the Council of Directors, and the Council for Trainees and Vocational Training; all of these have advisory functions. The central organization of the MEB is based on sixteen

Head Offices for all forms and stages of education. The former include general and vocational education; the latter comprises, for instance, pre-school institutions, teacher-training schools, and further educational institutions for teachers. In addition, there are departmental units that provide services for the Head Offices, such as the Departmental Unit for Teachers and Social Affairs or the Departmental Unit for Publications.

Financing

The state education system is financed from the national educational budget and from the funds and resources of the provinces. Attendance at state educational institutions is free of charge. Public expenditure for education is 3.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Between 1995 and 2000, Turkey had the largest percentage increase in expenditure for educational institutions with respect to the State's total expenditure of all OECD states. This increase amounted to three times the rise in GDP, which clearly indicates that the State is investing in education more than ever before. In addition, since the introduction of neo-liberal politics in the 1980s, there have been incentives for private investment in education in the form of various tax reliefs and subsidies (Ercan 1999, p. 33). Nevertheless, the State remains the mainstay of the education system. Private investors contribute 5% of the expenditure on education, mainly in the tertiary sector (OECD 2003). Apart from the private sector, organizations for the support of schooling and also parents' organizations have been called upon to finance the building of new schools. Part of the costs for the equipment and maintenance of schools are levied directly from the parents in the form of a 'contribution to education.'

Public and private schools

In addition to state institutions, increasing numbers of private schools are being established in the large towns and cities with the support of the State. They complement the education offered by state schools by providing better equipped institutions with respect to technical equipment, the provision of teaching and learning materials, and the qualifications of the teachers. In this way, the range of educational possibilities for the training of an elite is extended by excellent private schools. Since 1980, the State itself has increased its range of elite schools with the Anatolia upper secondary schools (*Anadolu Lisesi*) and 'super secondary schools' (*Süper Lisesi*). In both these school forms, lessons take place mainly in a foreign language, and as an extension of the general upper secondary schools they introduce a hierarchical structure which undermines the idea of equal opportunities in the education system. This tendency continues in the university sector. The new University Law of 1991 enabled private investors to establish 'foundation universities' (*Vakıf Üniversiteleri*) with loans at low interest rates and up to 45% state subsidies from the education budget. In 1990 the first private university in Turkey, Bilkent University, was established. In the academic year 2003-04, there were twenty-four foundation universities in Turkey. At private universities, students who fail to attain the required grades in their entrance examinations for state universities can take up a course of studies for a relatively high fee. All of the private schools and universities are under the supervision of the MEB. Likewise, in the vocational sector, the involvement of private investors is being encouraged.

General standards of the school system

In formal school education, central control through the Ministry attempts to create, and mainly achieves, a high degree of uniformity, especially in primary education, through both external means (expressed in the design of school buildings, school uniforms, etc.) and internal means (common curricula, the same textbooks nationwide, methodological explanations, and compulsory preparation for the teachers). Only since 1992 has a greater diversity in form and content been allowed. The MEB is accused of great inertia and only very limited functionality resulting from its bloated bureaucratic machinery (Sakaoğlu 1999, pp. 122–24). The critics within Turkey of the bureaucratic structures of the Ministry have recently become increasingly outspoken, and the government has reacted with a far-reaching programme of reforms and the establishment of an internal system of evaluation.

The curriculum for all schools is developed and determined centrally for the various stages and types of school by the relevant Head Office in the MEB. After the last educational reform (Official Journal of the National Ministry of Education, vol. 60, no. 2481, October 1997), a weekly timetable was presented that is valid for all schools in the eight-year primary school system. The textbooks are prepared partly by the Ministry for National Education and partly by authorized textbook publishers.

Quality management

Quality management is one of the main tasks of the MEB. Its efforts are supported by other state institutions. In 1961, for example, the National Planning Department (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*) was created as an advisory body for the educational planning of the country. In addition, regular meetings of the National Education Council (*Milli Eğitim Şuraları*) take place to identify problems in the education system, discuss these with experts, and present solutions. The meetings of the National Education Council, which has met sixteen times since 1961, comprise the official source of advice for the MEB. The regular five-yearly checks within the framework of the five-year plans to compare planned and achieved targets can be considered the most important instrument of evaluation for the MEB. A further instrument of quality control consists of the annual final examinations of the schools and the central university entrance examinations.

In an international context, Turkey is a founding member of the OECD and takes part in projects of the CERİ, such as the annual statistics handbook *Education at a Glance*, which contains comparative data from all OECD member states. Within the next two years, Turkey intends to have independent experts of the OECD examine how far its recent education policies, the extension of compulsory education to eight years, and its attempts to improve quality have been successful. In addition to the PISA test, Turkey participated in the IEA and the PIRLS (Progress of International Reading Skills) studies. The former was conducted between 1999 and 2003 as an international comparison of the reading skills of primary school fourth grade pupils. The latter was an international assessment carried out between 2000 and 2003 of the reading skills of primary school fourth-graders and the teaching methods used in their instruction.

Support systems

There are various areas in which the MEB is trying to increase its effectiveness and transparency by means of reorganization and new strategies of action. An example of a new approach to improve the quality and monitoring of the state education system is the Total Quality Management (TQM) programme. TQM aims at achieving higher quality in the classroom. In the delivery of education services, the MEB has adapted, as a responsible service approach, the practice of working efficiently in cooperation with other public institutions and organizations, civil society, and volunteer organizations. As a consequence of the TQM effort, service priorities based on participation, sharing, and demand are reflected in the working programme. This highly ambitious programme aims

to ensure that everyone directly or indirectly involved in the education system is committed to and familiar with the education process; to ensure that people who produce education services are acquainted with the concepts, tools, methods, and techniques needed to manage themselves; to provide those in the education system with the opportunity to get help from more knowledgeable and experienced people in order to produce more effective education services; to help those in the education system to understand that the people and the tools used are more qualified than before; to ensure that everyone involved in the education system contributes to the development of the education process; to provide everyone in the education system with the expectations and opportunities of sharing success; to ensure that education service providers understand and know how to use quality tools; and to make sure that a planning, working, and implementation cycle is activated (MEB 2002).

As part of the TQM Implementation Project, employees of the MEB receive in-service training; furthermore, those arrangements within the MEB that are regarded as ineffective and not transparent are to be changed. In order to establish bilateral democratic relations in the work patterns of the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry plans to consult educational unions on their opinions and suggestions for all legislation prepared in relation to personnel and education policies. In the framework of this programme, feedback was collected in the academic year 2000-01 from central and provincial organizations; in addition, hundreds of schools were inspected by MEB personnel according to common inspection principles. The Ministry has announced that a system of specialized teachers and head teachers will be established from the academic year 2005-06 onwards. Every three years the teachers will undergo an examination. Together with their achievement in a performance assessment and their classification on the basis of a senior report, the results of this exam will be the basis for promotions in rank and salary. The 'performance assessment criteria' can be obtained from the address www.meb.gov.tr.

The current school system

General structure: overview

The Turkish education system is divided into the school education sector (*Örgün Eğitim*), which consists of pre-school, primary, secondary, and university education, and the education sector outside of schools (*Yaygın Eğitim*), which comprises adult education and correspondence courses. Since the last school reform, primary educa-

tion has been provided only in the compulsory uniform eight-year school (*İlköğretim Okulu*). The successful completion of this school programme enables progress to secondary school, which is more differentiated. In the secondary school (*Lise*), there are at present three lines of education: firstly, schools which prepare pupils for study at a university; secondly, schools which offer preparation for both a profession and university; and thirdly, schools which lead directly to a profession (Ağdemir 1998, p. 186). The types of school which prepare for university are scientific upper secondary schools, Anatolia secondary schools (with a considerable number of the lessons taught in a foreign language), foreign language secondary schools (with a high percentage of foreign language lessons, but with the remaining lessons in Turkish), Anatolia secondary schools for fine arts, Anatolia secondary schools for prospective teachers, general secondary schools, correspondence course secondary schools, military secondary schools, and police schools. A further differentiation arises through private schools, whose performance is much better than that of the state schools, and which thus offer better chances of passing the university entrance examinations. As the private schools have to be paid for, the possibility of attendance is closely connected to a family's financial situation. Internal differentiation, for instance by means of various courses within an age group, is absent from the Turkish education system. All forms of Anatolia upper secondary schools, military secondary schools, police schools, and foreign language secondary schools offer upper secondary education over four years instead of the usual three, as pupils are required to complete a preparatory year in order to learn a foreign language. The most common form of secondary education is the general upper secondary school, whose final certificate leads to A-levels, i.e. the qualification necessary for enrolment at a university, which are supplemented by the central university entrance examination.

The increase in and extension of school and school-external vocational training has an important place in the five-year plan of the Ministry of Education. For years, Turkey has been trying to replace traditional training on the job with the dual form of training practised in Germany. However, even today, forms of dual education are more the exception than the rule. It is therefore not surprising that vocational training is regarded by Turkish society as far below university education, which in turn results in a large number of applicants to Turkish universities. In addition to traditional training on the job, which is not standardized and conveys no theoretical knowledge, there is also the possibility of a vocational training course at a public or private technical school or in a vocational or technical secondary school.

Pre-primary education

Pre-school institutions are mainly attended by those children who are not yet old enough for compulsory schooling, i.e. the group of three- to six-year-olds. These schools are not very common in Turkey; 98% of them are in large towns and cities. Nevertheless, they have trebled in number in the last thirteen years, during which time the number of children attending them has more than doubled. In 1989 approximately 3500 institutions took care of 104,000 children. In the school year 2001-02, there were 10,554 pre-school institutions attended by 256,392 children. The majority of these were state-owned; only 799 were in private hands. The insti-

tutions can be divided into independent pre-schools, pre-schools linked to a primary school, and school kindergartens. There are a) nursery schools for children of up to three years of age, b) kindergartens for three- to five-year-olds, and c) pre-school classes for five- to six-year-olds. The aim of pre-school education is to support and encourage the emotional, physical, and intellectual development of the children; to teach them good manners; to prepare them for primary school; and to teach them good Turkish. Apart from this, they have the objective of promoting the development of children from socially weak families and of those growing up in a poor environment.

The fees for pre-primary schools are paid by the parents or the parents' employers, or are alternatively subsidized by the State, depending on the type of institution. In this way, it becomes possible for children from socially weak families to enjoy pre-school education. The supply can never meet the demand, however, especially given increasing urbanization and, closely connected to this, the growing number of women working outside the house.

Primary education

Compulsory education begins in September of the year in which children reach the age of five and ends in June of the year in which they turn fifteen. Special assessment tests are not carried out. Because of the great demand, however, for private schools, several of these institutions have introduced tests by means of which they choose the most gifted children among the applicants. Apart from conveying and deepening basic education and skills with regard to language; the social, human, and natural sciences; and the arts, primary-school education has an important role in creating a strong sense of citizenship. The inculcation of the state ideology of Kemalism thus plays a significant role in such subjects as social studies, Turkish, social science, religion, and ethics (Gök 1999, p. 1).

The town-country and east-west divide prevents, however, equal access to education in terms of both quality and quantity. In addition to this, and especially in the rural regions, girls are disadvantaged, which is reflected in the fact that they are taken out of school earlier by their parents. On average, girls spend 10.3 years in school while boys attend school for 12.2 years (OECD 2003). The MEB is trying to counteract this tendency with an information campaign for parents to inform them that a good education is just as important for girls as for boys.

The school year in Turkey consists of 180 weekdays; lessons last forty minutes in all school forms. In addition to academic performance, secondary skills such as social behaviour contribute to the final mark. The average size of a class in the primary sector is thirty pupils; the pupil-teacher ratio is thirty to one (OECD 2003).

Lower secondary education

As primary school in Turkey comprises both primary and lower secondary school, only an artificial break can be made here by calling grades six to eight of primary school (*lköğretim*) 'lower secondary education.' As the system does not contain this as such, it cannot be analysed in detail.

Upper secondary education

Secondary school follows the eight-year primary school as a non-compulsory part of school education. The aim of Turkish secondary education is to prepare pupils for a university course of study or a vocation. In theory, all pupils with a final school certificate from primary school have the right to continue their schooling at an institution of upper secondary education (*Ortaöğretim*). The possibilities at this stage can be roughly divided into a) general upper secondary schools (*Lise*) and b) vocational and technical upper secondary schools (*Mesleki ve Teknik Lise*). They are supposed to offer pupils a general education at secondary school level and prepare them for a profession or study at a university .

General upper secondary schools can be divided into a) general secondary schools (*Lise*), b) Anatolia secondary schools (*Anadolu Lisesi*), c) scientific secondary schools (*Fen Lisesi*), d) Anatolia teacher training schools (*Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi*), e) Anatolia secondary schools for fine arts (*Anadolu Güzel Sanatlar Lisesi*), and f) private secondary schools (*Özel Lise*).

Vocational and technical secondary schools run parallel to general secondary schools as institutions which are supposed to provide vocational qualifications and also prepare pupils for the university entrance examination. They can be divided into a) technical schools for girls and for boys respectively (*Kız Teknik Lisesi*; *Erkek Teknik Lisesi*), b) schools for trade and tourism (*Ticaret ve Turizm Lisesi*), and c) Imam and Preacher secondary schools (*Imam Hatip Lisesi*). According to the Law on National Education No. 1730, it is also possible to offer a form of comprehensive school (*çok Programlı Lise*) as a secondary school which comprises general, vocational, and technical schools under one roof. According to the regulations of the education reform of 1997-98, the final qualification of vocational schools entitles pupils to study the subjects which were the special subjects of the individual vocational school attended; thus, they do not have to take an entrance examination at university. The training at a four-year technical-industrial secondary school ends with a master qualification, and thus with the qualification to become self-employed. At foreign-language schools and scientific schools, admission is subject to the passing of the university entrance examination (OKÖSYS). In addition to this, a one-year preparatory class has been established nation-wide. In this class, pupils are prepared for the particular requirements of the lessons in these schools with regard to foreign language and scientific knowledge. As a result, school education up to A-levels has effectively been increased from eleven to twelve years. The regulations for the admission of pupils, registration, transfer between schools, and grading are all defined in the 'Decree on Upper Secondary Schools with a Foreign Language Orientation'. The most able pupils can complete the course in a shorter period of time. In the secondary school sector, pupils have the right to change from one school form to another or shorten their schooling by six months. As in all of the private schools, it is also necessary in the above-mentioned special state schools to pass an entrance exam; moreover, children have to have a certain average in order to be allowed to attend these schools (Anatolia secondary schools, scientific secondary schools, secondary schools with special status, super secondary schools, secondary schools with diverse programmes, etc.).

In addition to vocational secondary schools, a system of vocational training based on apprenticeships exists (*çıraklık Eđitimi*). This is divided into four steps a) candidate for an apprenticeship (*Aday çırak*), b) apprenticeship education (*çırak*), c) journeyman-ship (*kalfa*), and d) mastership (*Usta*). These qualifications can be acquired in the form of a dual vocational education in apprenticeship training centres and vocational education centres. In the apprenticeship training centres, journeymen and masters receive theoretical training one day a week; in the remaining time, they undertake practical training in companies. The training lasts between three and four years, depending on the vocation. The qualification is the Journeyman's Certificate. Successful pupils can then complete their master's qualification by continuing for another two or three years in an educational institution outside of school (*Yaygın Eđitim*) and sitting a further exam. In vocational training centres, education consists of two days theoretical instruction in school and three days practical training in the company. After three years, pupils can acquire their Journeyman's Certificate; following this, a diploma of a vocational secondary school can also be obtained (Ađdemir 1998, pp. 197-98).

Parallel to this dual system, traditional vocational training in the company also exists; after the period of compulsory schooling, boys or girls are instructed in a company by the master. This training on the job takes place on the basis of an oral arrangement between the parents and the master or between the apprentice and the master; it is not subject to any standards. Depending on the proficiency of the apprentice and the assessment of the master, the apprenticeship can take between three and five years. At the latest, the start of military service signifies the end of the apprenticeship. If the master is satisfied with the apprentice's skills, he awards him or her the title of *kalfa* (roughly meaning journeyman) at the end of the apprenticeship. This qualification is confirmed by the Chairman of the Trade Association and documented by the Journeyman's Certificate. If the master regards the journeyman as well qualified, the latter can apply for a trade licence after one year, which allows him or her to open his own workshop.

In 2002 64% of pupils in upper secondary education were in the general secondary school sector and up to 35.5% in the vocational sector. In the upper secondary education sector there is a pupil-teacher ratio of seventeen to one.

Special education schools

Special schools are hardly developed in Turkey at all. The first schools for physically disabled children were opened in the 1940s; these were schools for children with impaired hearing or sight. In 1955 the first class was opened for mentally challenged children. Paragraph 50 of the new Constitution of 1961 established the right of children who require special schooling to receive support with regard to their contribution to society. In 2003-04, the special education sector for children with physical or mental disabilities comprised 423 institutions in which 20,411 children were supervised by 3867 teachers. This network can never do justice, however, to the needs of the estimated 900,000 children in all age groups who require special education (see the assessment by Çađlar 1999, p. 134).

The potential of highly gifted pupils is to be recognized and developed in special school forms. Pilot projects, known as 'Knowledge and Art Centres' (*Bilim ve Sanat Merkezleri*), have been established in nine provinces across the country. Five of these institutions opened in 2002. Children of primary and secondary school age are to receive special schooling according to their particular talents, individually or in groups, and outside of regular compulsory schools. Here, too, the need for the expansion of these possibilities should be stated.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

In Turkey, no post-secondary form of education exists; all types of education that follow vocational training or upper secondary school are part of tertiary education. This can be divided into tertiary education at vocational training schools (*Meslek Yüksek Okulları*) and university education.

The higher education system in Turkey has experienced a particularly rapid development over the last seventy years. In 1933 the *İstanbul Darülfünunu* (House of Science), founded in 1863, was one of the first Turkish institutions to become a modern university and was restructured to become Istanbul University. Above all German scientists, many of whom fled Nazi Germany, played a major role in the development of the Turkish university system between the 1930s and 1950s (Başar 1996, pp. 82–85). By 2004, the number of universities in Turkey had increased to seventy-seven, twenty-four of which were run by foundations.

The autonomy of the universities has had an unstable history during the past seventy years. While Article 120 of the liberal Constitution of 1961 granted them autonomy and self-government, this changed after 1968 as a result of student unrest, and after 1971 as a consequence of the political instability following the military putsch. The second University Law (No. 1750) was enacted after several years' preparation on 7 July 1973; with this law, the freedom of the universities became more restricted. On 4 November 1981, the third University Law (No. 2547) was passed and virtually eliminated the universities' autonomy. It was passed together with regulations on the University Council (YÖK), which became the highest controlling authority of the university system. The University Council received far-reaching powers with respect to both subjects of study and the organizational and personnel arrangements of the universities. Beyond this, the third University Law forbade students and staff to engage in any political activities. With the aim of removing all political activity from the universities, these regulations were anchored in the Constitution of 1982. As a result of the implementation of Law 1402, i.e. the law on the state of emergency, thousands of university employees lost their positions or resigned in protest against the restrictions on the autonomy of the universities (Hatiboğlu 2000, p. 343). The new law not only abolished the autonomy of the universities with regard to their scientific duties and responsibilities and their administration, but also attached all institutions without university status, such as academies, to the universities. At the same time, the whole university system was removed from the domain of the Ministry of Education and organized as a self-contained and independent administrative unit. Simultaneously, the universities were put under the supervision of the University Council, which was, in turn, given far-reaching powers.

In response to the growing demand for university studies, a central university entrance examination was introduced in 1963-64. These exams are carried out nation-wide once a year by the Allocation Office for University Places (ÖSYM), which is directly responsible to the University Council. In the following years, the demand for places at university, caused above all through a lack of alternatives in the vocational training sector, still could not be met, despite the establishment of many new universities. The university entrance examination, which was single-level up to then, was extended by another level. As a consequence, however, of the massive criticism of the devaluation of upper secondary school qualifications which was connected directly to this step, the single-level university entrance examination in its original form was reintroduced in 1999. This entrance examination, called *Öğrenci Seçme Sınavı* (ÖSS), assesses the examinees' level of general knowledge. The scores achieved in ÖSS are the basis for the central allocation of applicants to subjects of study and universities. The average of the final diploma from upper secondary school and the scores assigned to individual secondary schools according to an established scale are taken into consideration (DPT 2000, p. 17). This latter measure is intended to improve the equality of access of pupils from less prestigious secondary schools to a university course of study.

University education has long been the problem child of Turkish educational policies. Although many efforts were undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s to provide Turkey with a more extensive network of universities in all provinces – between 1982 and 2004 alone, their number has grown from nineteen to seventy-seven – still only one third of the successful candidates in the university entrance examination actually enrol at a university. For numerous adolescents, the only alternative to waiting for one of the much-desired places at a university is to take up a correspondence course at the University of Eskişehir. The newly founded universities in the many smaller main cities of the provinces have to manage with a minimum of scientific and academic infrastructure. Many of these universities lack the necessary computer equipment and sufficient, appropriate, and topical specialist literature. Only the newly founded private universities are sufficiently equipped for international competition. A further problem is the fact that the places in the various faculties are distributed according to the scores achieved in the central entrance examinations; thus, many students cannot study the subjects which interest them. One success, however, of the Turkish university system can be seen in the participation of both genders. In the academic year 2003-04, 43.4% of the graduates were women. In contrast to their counterparts in many Western European countries, Turkish women often study less typical subjects for female students, such as the sciences or engineering.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Apart from the above-mentioned problems in the education system, further significant difficulties are to be found in: the population increase (in the last ten years, the number of pupils has increased by 54%); the wide dispersion of the population; the geographically difficult position of some settlement areas; a town-country divide

caused by people leaving the rural areas and the resulting, unplanned urbanization; a sharp west-east divide, which is the result of the long civil war from 1980 to the late 1990s between government forces and the separatist terror organization PKK in the south-east of Turkey; a higher than average number of pupils in many urban school classes; outdated teaching materials; poor equipment and sometimes even a complete lack of equipment such as language laboratories, video recorders, laboratories, overhead projectors, computers, etc.; and a continually decreasing, but nevertheless relatively high rate of illiteracy in woman compared to men, especially in the south-east regions of Turkey.

In addition, it must be mentioned that upper secondary school, which ends with the secondary school diploma (*lise diploması*), does not prepare its pupils sufficiently for the university entrance examination. This gap is filled by private schools, which, however, the poorer members of society cannot afford. The government had planned to close the private schools on the grounds that they undermine the unity of teaching and the principle of equal opportunities for all children. However, the existence of these private institutions was instead confirmed in 1984 by means of Law No. 3035; they were thus given a legal footing. It is therefore not surprising that these institutions are expanding rapidly. They not only fulfil the task of giving extra lessons to pupils in primary and secondary education, but also prepare them for the entrance examinations for both high-quality secondary schools and the universities. Furthermore, they offer the opportunity to prepare outside of school for school exams and to catch up on certain qualifications. The teachers in private schools receive a much higher salary than the teachers in state schools. It is thus obvious that the standard of state education is much lower than in the private sector, and that enrolling their children at a university becomes a financial burden for families.

A further problematic area is religious education in schools, which is seen in a positive light by the majority population of the Sunni, but is criticized by the minority Alevi population. Ethics and religious education follow guidelines provided by a state office, the Department for Religious Matters, which prescribes the religious instruction curriculum for all Muslims in Turkey, i.e. for Sunni and Alevi alike. Until now, a satisfactory discussion about the legitimacy of this procedure has not taken place, even though Alevi and Sunni scholars have already held talks on this challenge.

The transformation of the multi-level school system to a one-level uniform school system for grades 1 to 8 has led to fierce controversies in Turkish educational discourse. It was not so much the fact that compulsory schooling was increased from five to eight years that caused the problems, but rather that the middle schools were removed in the process. This also meant that the vocationally oriented middle school branch of the Imam and Preacher high schools was dissolved, which in turn provoked fierce resistance on the part of those in favour of a religiously oriented education, in opposition to government policy. The subsequent discussion concentrated on this aspect, which meant that the necessary discussion about the general idea behind the reform, the feasibility of its implementation, and its financing faded into the background. Above all, there was the problem of how the pupils, now compelled to spend eight years in school, were going to be provided with sufficient teachers in

such a short space of time. An attempt was made to compensate this lack of teaching staff by recalling retired teachers as supply teachers. In order to finance this ambitious objective, extra taxes from petrol, alcohol, the lottery, etc. were earmarked for education (Tertemiz 1999, pp. 174-75). In connection with the increase in the length of compulsory education under the motto 'Education 2000', there are further ambitious state projects in the area of educational policy; however, they are still awaiting implementation. An average class size of thirty has now been reached, at least statistically, but the aim of abolishing the practice of 'teaching in shifts', i.e. in the morning and in the afternoon in one school building, has not yet been achieved. In the school year 2001 - 02, lessons were being taught in two shifts in 23% of all schools nation-wide. The problem of overcrowded classes, especially in urban primary schools, still exists, along with the connected problem of insufficient school buildings. Furthermore, there is an acute lack of teachers, modern equipment for teaching and learning, and adequate technology such as computers. Nor can the universities cope with the number of students who want to engage in tertiary studies. In schools, as at universities, an attempt is being made to cope with capacity difficulties by introducing distance learning in the form of correspondence courses.

Further progress has been made in the meantime with regard to the transport system and the bussing of children from rural areas to schools in towns, as the latter offer a higher quality of education than is possible in tiny village schools. In addition to bus transport, the existing regional school forms are to be upgraded through the provision of boarding school facilities, and the general schools through living quarters. As opposed to countries such as Germany, Denmark, or Italy, Turkey is confronted with a continuing rapid increase in population and, in connection with this, the challenge of providing children with basic compulsory schooling. The highest priority is therefore the construction of new schools and the training of the greatest possible number of teachers in the shortest possible time. In this context a clear east-west divide is apparent, as can be seen in the fact that the pupil population grew by 4% in the school year 2000-01 in Turkey as a whole, but in the south-west provinces of Hakkari, Şırnak, and Bitlis by 13%. Whereas twenty-five pupils are taught by one teacher in the western province of Aydın, a teacher in the eastern province of Hakkari has, on average, fifty pupils.

A further developmental perspective is an extension of the time spent at upper secondary schools. The foreign language secondary schools and the scientifically oriented secondary schools already have a preparatory year, which is now compulsory, before the three-year programme, and this is planned for the general upper secondary schools as well. Thus, secondary education will *de facto* be extended to four years in the middle term (Başaran 1999, p. 106). Indeed, all high school programmes will be four years long as of the 2005-06 academic year. Furthermore, a High Schools Entrance Exam (*Liselere Giriş Sınavı*; LGS) will be introduced in all schools. It is foreseen that the first year of education will mainly consist of general cultural subjects and an introduction to subject fields, and that after the first grade the transfer of pupils to other kinds of high school will be facilitated. The withdrawal of English preparation classes is also planned. Instead, foreign language teaching will be given more space in primary schools.

Since the beginning of 2000, the MEB has been working on the ambitious objective of further extending the length of compulsory education to twelve years. Even though twelve years of compulsory schooling are already a reality for some pupils at the Anatolia upper secondary schools as a result of the preparatory year, it will be some time before all pupils in the relevant age bracket between fifteen and nineteen are actually included in upper secondary education. At the moment, only 30% of this age group attend educational institutions (OECD 2003).

Further expansion of the private school sector, which began in 1990, can be expected in the Turkish education system, as outlined in the seventh and eighth five-year plans of the State (1996-2005). For example, students are to be encouraged to support the budget of their specific university. The extension of private educational institutions on all levels is also to be encouraged and supported.

The effects on teacher training of the transformation of primary and middle schools to eight-year compulsory primary schools are also of great significance. The training will have to combine the job profile of the infant, junior, and middle school teacher and will thus result in qualification as both a class and a subject teacher (Glumpler 1997, p. 28). There has been an increase in training courses for teachers since early 2000. Furthermore, there has been a paradigm shift from the usual type of *ex cathedra* teaching to more open forms of instruction and learning, which is revealed in the introduction of class time for 'individual and communal activities' in grades 1 to 3, and the extension of the primary school subject of 'social knowledge' into grades 4 to 7. The fact that the educational reform of 1997 introduced foreign-language teaching for grade 4 makes it clear that Turkey is trying to emulate Western European models of early foreign language learning. The desire for the expansion of research in scholarly monitoring and evaluation of the introduction of the eight-year primary school period appears to exist. This has been registered by the MEB in that this reorganization is to be evaluated by experts of the OECD.

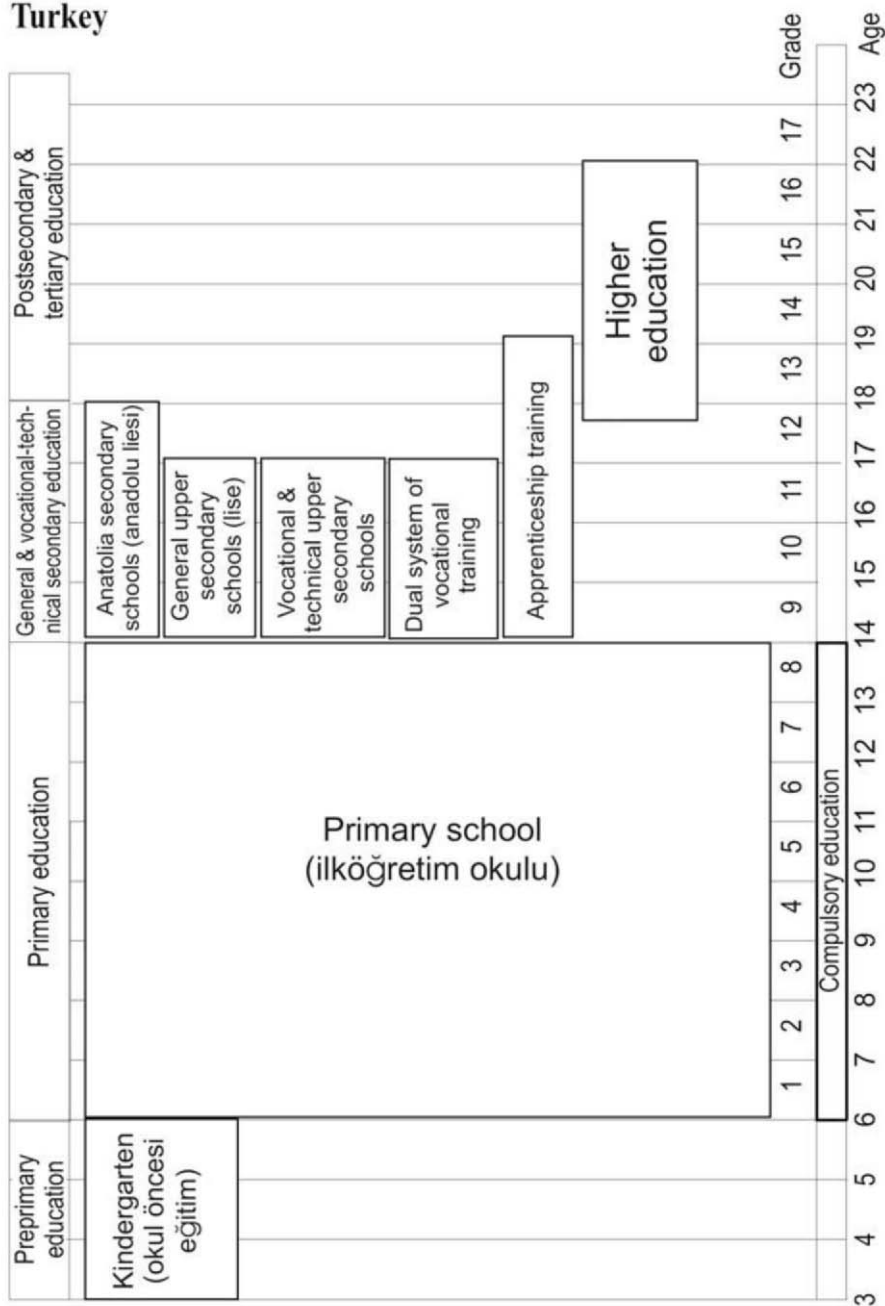
With the aim of improving its educational standards – especially in consideration of future membership of the European Union – Turkey took part in the second cycle of the pupil attainment study PISA in 2003. A pilot study was carried out in May 2002 at thirty-five high schools with a total of 1225 pupils, while the study itself took place in May 2003 in the eighty-one provinces of the seven geographical regions of Turkey. In the latter, 4500 first graders at 150 upper secondary schools participated. The results have not yet been published. It is clear, however, that the most important motor for the continuing and far-reaching reforms of the Turkish education system is the desired membership of the EU. The aim is to attain European educational standards as soon as possible.

References

- Akyüz, Yahya: Türk Eğitim Tarihi. Başlangıçtan 1999'a, İstanbul 1999.
Başar, Erdoğan: „Türk Yükseköğretim Sisteminin Dünü, Bugünü, Yarını“ in: Fındıkçı, İlhami (ed.): Eğitimimize Bakışlar, İstanbul 1996.
Çayır, Kenan: Human Rights Education Scenarios, in: Educational Sciences. Theory and Practise, November 2002, Vol.2, Issue 2, p. 398-400.

- Çelenk, Süleyman: Okul Başarısının Ön Koşulu: Okul Aile Dayanışması, in: İlköğretim-Online 2(2), 2003, p. 28-34.
- Ercan, Fuat: „1980’lerde Eğitim Sisteminin Yeniden Yapılanması: Küreselleşme ve Neoliberal Eğitim Politikaları“, in: Gök, Fatma (ed.): 75 yılda Eğitim, İstanbul 1999, S. 23-38.
- Ergün, Mustafa: 11. Meşrutiyet Devrinde Eğitim Hareketleri (1908-1914), Ankara 1996
- Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education (ed.): The Turkish Education System, Ankara 2000.
- Glumpler, Edith: Vergleichende Bildungsforschung im Dienst interkultureller Bildungsplanung. Eine vergleichende Analyse des türkischen Pflicht- und Elementarschulwesens, Dortmund 1997.
- Gök, Fatma: „75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme. Eğitim ve Devlet“ in: Gök, Fatma (ed.): 75 Yılda Eğitim, İstanbul 1999, S. 1-8.
- Hatipoğlu, Tahir: Türkiye Üniversite Tarihi, Ankara 2000.
- Hazır-Bakmaz (2002): What parents expect from classroom teachers and how classroom teachers measure up to those expectations, in: Educational Sciences. Theory and Practise, November 2002, Vol.2, Issue 2, p. 445-472.
- Kağıtçıbaşı, Çigdem (1996): İnsan, aile, kültür, İstanbul.
- Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung (Hrsg.): Bildungsdiskussion in der Türkei und in Deutschland, Redaktion Dr. Hasan Coşkun und Sürmeli Ağdemir, Ankara 1998.
- OECD (ed.): Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators - 2003 Edition.
- Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı: 2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitim, Ankara 2001.
- Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı: İlköğretim Kurumları Yönetmeliği, Ankara 2003.
- Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Milli Eğitim Sayısal Veriler 2003-2004, Ankara 2004.
- Ünal L. Işıl/Özsoy, Seçkin: “Modern Türkiye’nin Sisypheos Miti: ‘Eğitimde Fırsat Eşitliği’“, in: Gök, Fatma (ed.): 75 Yılda Eğitim, İstanbul 1999, S. 39-73.
- Sakaoğlu, Necdet: “Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Merkez Örgütü” in: Gök, Fatma (ed.): 75 Yılda Eğitim, İstanbul 1999, S. 111-117.
- Tertemiz, Neşe Isık: „Sekiz Yıllık Zorunlu İlköğretim: Hedefler ve Uygulamalar“, in: Gök, Fatma (ed.): 75 Yılda Eğitim, İstanbul 1999, S. 171-176.
- Yiğit, Birol/Bayraktar, Mehmet (2003): Toplam Kalite Yönetim İlkelerinin İlköğretim Okullarında Uygulanabilirliğine İlişkin Öğretmen Algıları, in: Milli Eğitim Dergisi, Vol. 158, Spring 2003 <http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/yayimlar/158/yigit.htm>
- Internet site of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education <http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm>

Turkey



Ukraine

History of the school system

Cultural context, reforms, and innovations

Until the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, the laws of the USSR and of the Union republics on national education also applied to the Ukraine. These laws complied in essence with Marxist-Leninist ideology and were characterized by their centralized organization and their claim to a unifying function (middle school, structure, curricula, etc.). Following the Declaration of Independence of the Ukraine on 24 August 1991 by the Supreme Soviet in Kiev, the Declaration of Sovereignty, which had been formulated a year before, contained a 'cultural development' section aimed at the educational domain which stipulated that, from then onwards, the Ukraine would act independently on all issues concerning education, sciences, and the cultural and intellectual development of the Ukrainian nation, and that all nationalities living in the territory of the Republic were granted the right to freely exercise their national culture. The Act on Education of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic, issued in June 1991, laid down the future direction of education and its place in society. The period from 1991 to 1993, which represented the beginning of the reorganization of the education system, turned out to be a phase of struggle against the Soviet legacy, which nothing concrete or new could counter. The public was not presented with a change of direction in national educational policy until the spring of 1994, when the state education programme, passed by Parliament on 3 November 1993, was made accessible under the title: 'Education (*Osvita*) – The Ukraine in the Twenty-first Century'. The programme focuses on the three following sets of topics:

- The remodelling of the existing education system, taking into account all of the political, economic, and intellectual changes which have occurred in the independent state of the Ukraine;
- The creation of a flexible education system, which aims at increasing the education level of the population of the country; and
- The creation of new types of education facilities, such as 'associate institutions' consisting of university and non-university institutions, also called educational complexes; academies with 'profiles'; regional universities; college networks; grammar schools; high schools; etc.

Development of vocational education

The area of vocational training has for a long time presented a special field of problems in the Ukrainian education system. Because of centrally taken decisions on labour requirements and the unification of contents and curricula, materials, etc. in

accordance with the specifications of a planned economy, an adaptation of vocational training was, as already in Soviet times, only possible in a restricted way. Vocational training was conceived primarily for a centrally planned economy and industry. After the system change and the transition to a market economy, there was a lack of labour in the social field, in services, in the commercial sector, etc., but there was also a lack of teaching staff, tutors, new teaching models, and the corresponding material for these areas. The need for qualified labour to respond to the changed requirements is great. Until now, the vocational training system has not been capable of meeting this need. In the long term, a vocational training system is planned which involves enterprises to a greater extent and in a more practice-oriented manner. However, the fundamental requirements for this are missing: neither the ailing nationalized enterprises, nor private enterprises, which have not yet started to flourish, can provide vocational training. There is a lack of qualified trainers and new training programmes. There is still no cohesive training programme for the majority of the newly created professions in commercial as well as in many other fields. As a rule, employees are trained on the job, with some academics offering training to specific branches of industry on the basis of individually tailored curricula, for example in the banking sector. Numerous Western institutions and organizations are involved in training and continuing education.

Current reforms

In 2000 the Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine adopted the Regulation 'On the transition of comprehensive educational institutions of the Ukraine to new contents, structures, and a twelve-year period of schooling'; the gradual transition to twelve years of schooling began in 2001. A new twelve-point marking system has been introduced for comprehensive schools. A central testing system has been elaborated in order to simplify the passage from secondary to higher education; external tests now replace school-leaving exams and entry exams for higher education (Ministry of Education).

Socio-cultural context of the current school system

Educational targets and general function of school

Civic education is currently a crucial topic throughout the world. However, in the post-communist transition countries such as the Ukraine, it is of special importance. The heritage of the past and the challenges in all spheres of life determine the specific situation in the Ukraine with respect to civic education.

People in the Ukraine are now in the process of learning how to be active, how to participate in social and political life, how to defend their views and opinions, and how to apply democratic values. Hence, the introduction and implementation of a sustainable civic education system in the Ukraine is vital. Much has already been achieved in this respect, not least through the implementation of numerous projects related to civic education, but there is still a long way to go, and a number of problems have yet to be addressed.

Selected problems related to the development of civic education in the Ukraine

Civic education is not a mandatory subject in formal education curricula and is only partly addressed in national education standards and educational programmes. However the present humanities subjects are not or are only partly aimed at the development of skills and competencies demanded by modern civic education. In general, most teachers are not familiar with civic education, and the current system of re-training and in-service training for teachers does not include programmes or special courses in civic education designed to enable teachers to teach civic education in a professional way. Moreover, teachers are not capable of mastering active and interactive teaching methods, and many of them are still not used to leading classroom debates with students and accepting them as partners. The pedagogical universities do not train prospective teachers in civic education.

Socio-economic context*Education and the labour market*

During the last decade, the Ukraine has experienced radical and rapid socio-economic changes, particularly – with regard to employment – through structural changes in production and in the agricultural sector. Shortly after independence, the Ukrainian government liberalized most prices and erected a legal framework for privatization. However, widespread resistance to reform within the government and the legislature soon stalled reform efforts and led to some backtracking. By 1999, output had fallen to less than 40% of the 1991 level, while loose monetary policies pushed inflation to hyperinflationary levels by late 1993 and the IMF and other donor institutions encouraged the government to take appropriate measurements to speed up the reform process and achieve economic growth.

More recently, the situation seems to have improved, as GDP in 2000 showed strong export-based growth of 6% - the first growth since independence - and industrial production grew by 12.9%. The economy continued to expand in 2001 as real GDP rose 9% and industrial output grew by over 14%. Growth was underpinned by strong domestic demand and growing consumer and investor confidence. Economists believe that under an even more pro-active policy with the right strategic actions, foreign direct investment could increase strongly in the Ukraine.

In the policy debate on measures to increase competitiveness, growth, and employment in a global economy, it has become clear that it is increasingly important to develop a high quality workforce which is both well educated and well trained. This is a view reflected by the recent summits of the G8 countries and by the European Commission's 1998 employment guidelines. High quality and on-going training is a key component of economic development, ensuring that the workforce is flexible, responsive, and able to meet changing demands from the labour market.

Table 2: Ukraine economic data

Ukraine economic data	1998	1999	2000	2001
GDP per head (\$ at PPP)	2,144	2,186	2,387	2,680
GDP (% real change p.a.)	-1.94	-0.25	5.85	9.05
Government consumption (% of GDP)	21.54	18.96	18.4	17.9
Budget balance (% of GDP)	-2.22	-1.53	0.57	-0.63
Consumer prices (% change p.a.; average)	10.58	22.68	28.2	11.96
Public debt (% of GDP)	36.88	46.86	44.9	38.3
Labour costs per hour (USD)	0.47	0.33	0.32	0.44
Recorded unemployment (%)	3	4.1	4.3	3.9
Current account balance/GDP	-3.09	5.39	4.74	3.73
Foreign exchange reserves (m\$)	761	1,046	1,352	2,955

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit September 2002

Table 3: Ukraine trade

Ukraine Trade	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002 (est.)
A. Total Exports (\$ million)	12,637	11,581	14,572	16,265	22,322
B. Total Imports (\$ million)	14,675	11,846	13,956	15,775	22,046
C. Trade Balance (Ukr) (\$ million)	-2,038	-265	616	490	276
D. U.S. Exports (\$ million)	368	204	725.3	569.2	N/A
E. U.S. Imports (\$ million)	531	518	360.3	457.7	N/A
F. Trade Balance (US) (\$ million)	-163	-314	365	111.5	N/A

Source: Business Information Service for the Newly Independent States (BISNIS) 2002

In recent years, the Ukraine has introduced new tax regulations to promote foreign and national economic investment. According to the Ukrainian State Statistics Committee, as of 1 April 2002 the total volume of direct foreign investment into Ukraine since 1992 had reached \$4.532 billion. Investments were made in a total of 7794 enterprises, both state and private. The most attractive regions for new investments are Kiev - \$1309.1m, the Kiev region - \$340.8m, and the Donetsk region - \$305.3m.

Social position of the teaching profession

There is a particular lack of well-trained teaching staff able to meet the requirements of a changing society after independence. In particular, highly qualified personnel move from badly paid teaching jobs to the free economy or to other fields which can offer them an appropriate reward for their skills. Changes in this situation can come about, however, through further progress in self-administration in the education sector. Already in the autumn of 1999, the privilege of self-determination was granted to the Taras Shevchenko Kiev State University. What the University will make of this situation remains to be seen, especially whether or not it succeeds in setting a positive example which other education institutions will emulate.

In 2002-03, 546,000 pedagogic specialists were working in comprehensive schools. The number of teachers is constantly decreasing: in 2003-04, 7400 teaching posts were vacant. However, the State is taking measures to improve the financial position of teachers: a new government programme, 'The Teacher', has been adopted, which includes the elaboration of a new evaluation and payment system for pedagogical staff. A national contest, 'The Teacher of the Year', has been organized in order to stimulate the active participation of teachers in the formation and development of the education system (Ministry of Education). In higher education institutions, the number of teachers is increasing. In 2003-04, 136,500 lecturers were employed: 95,000 in HEIs with third or fourth levels of accreditation, and 40,700 in colleges, technical schools, and vocational schools. The number of academics with the status of professor or assistant professor, and the number of lecturers with doctorates are increasing.

Organizational context and governance of the current school system

Basic legal principles, levels of governance, and philosophy of governance

The competency of state organs for the administration of the education system and the system's own areas of competences and responsibility are laid down in Sections 10 to 14 of the Education Act, 1996. The following administrative institutions are named:

- The Ministry of Education and Science of the Ukraine,
- Various sectoral ministries and authorities,
- The State Accreditation Commission,
- The Ministry of Education and Science of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, and
- Local bodies of the state executive and self-administering local bodies as well as bodies and divisions of the educational administration under their responsibility.

Schools of general education

Compulsory school attendance starts with primary school and ends when the pupil reaches fifteen years of age. Schooling begins at six or seven years of age. The duration of the school year must be at least thirty-four weeks; the first school year may

not have fewer than thirty weeks. There should not be fewer than thirty days' holiday in any one school year. In the first school year, one period lasts thirty-five minutes as a rule, in all other school years, forty-five minutes. Alterations to these rules were introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science in order to consolidate the financial situation of the education system. The winter holidays were increased by four weeks, and each teaching period was reduced by ten minutes. The purpose of these modifications, which only apply in the winter months, is to save heating costs. At the same time, the number of pupils per class was increased from a maximum of twenty-five pupils to thirty-five pupils. Exemptions from this rule are made for specialized schools and classes, grammar schools, and lyceums, where the number of students per class is limited to twenty, as well as for special schools and classes, which are permitted a maximum of fifteen students per class. Furthermore, in foreign language classes as well as in practical, lab, and computer classes, the class has to be split into two groups.

As far as grading is concerned, the following regulations apply: in the first school year of the three-year primary schools and in the first two years of the four-year primary schools, only oral marks are given for achievement in school. In all of the following years, the achievement of pupils is graded on a five-point scale, where 5 represents the best and 1 the worst mark. A mark of 2 is generally regarded as a fail. Grading can be carried out on a trimester or semester basis, according to the decision of the education council. The only compulsory grading is the one for the whole year, the marks for which are documented in the school report at the end of the academic year.

Financing

All the institutions that make up the educational administration, with the exception of the State Accreditation Commission, play a role as maintaining bodies for state education institutions. In the context of the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science, they are, for this reason, responsible for financing each institution and for recognizing its respective charters and statutes. All state educational establishments, institutions, and organizations, as well as industrial operations of the education system, are financed by the treasury, by nationalized operations and organizations, and by supplementary funding sources such as funding from the municipal treasury, donations from enterprises and individuals, proceeds from the sale of the products from workshops, etc. In accordance with the law, the education budget corresponds to at least 10% of national income. In 1998, however, only 42.1% of the maintenance costs of the national and regional educational establishments could be covered by the treasury. The proportion of spending on education was only 4.2% of the gross national product. The Act On Vocational Training of 10 February 1998 and the Act on Secondary Education of 13 May 1999 represent the most recent important attempts at reforming and modernizing the education system. Together with the relevant articles of the Constitution, they now constitute the most important education policy principles.

Public and private schooling

The education system is complemented by private general education institutions. As described in the general decrees on private educational institutions, these institutions are not state-owned, but have to fulfil state requirements for general secondary education. This means that their leaving certificates are only recognized if the extent and the level of the education that they provide comply with the standards laid down by the State. Furthermore, these institutions must fulfil certain basic requirements apart from those governing educational contents, for example with regard to the state of premises, equipment, etc. It is forbidden to turn existing state general education schools into private educational institutions or to set up single, separate classes or branches within general education state schools. Therefore, private schools are nearly always newly founded and are mostly grammar schools or lyceums, i.e. elite schools. Private schools are therefore not without their critics, even though these schools are of marginal importance. The Act on Comprehensive Secondary Education of 1999 defines the system of comprehensive secondary education as constituted by general education teaching units of all types and of all forms of ownership. In 2003-04, there were 267 private schools in the Ukraine (Ministry of Education).

General standards of the school education system

One of the main current problems is the modernization of the education system; therefore, new curricula have been elaborated for students of primary and secondary schools. The curricula for secondary schools are formed of two components: one state component that is common for all secondary schools, and one variable component that is determined by the institution in response to the interests and needs of pupils. The compulsory study of one foreign language has been introduced in all comprehensive educational institutions beginning in the second year of schooling (Ministry of Education).

Quality management

A special form of quality management are pupils' competitions. The aim of pupils' contests is to check pupils' knowledge and form their personalities in a way that enables them to put acquired knowledge into practice. In 2003-04, over three million pupils took part in national subject-based competitions; 1018 of them won a competition or competitions. In 2003 twenty-six secondary school students took part in international pupils' competitions; twenty-five of them won medals.

Support systems

Languages of national minorities

Presently, there are 16,900 comprehensive schools with Ukrainian as the principal language of instruction, 1732 with Russian, 69 with Hungarian, 94 with Romanian, 9 with Moldavian, 13 with Crimean-Tatar, and 4 with Polish. However, comprehensive educational institutions with Ukrainian as the principal language of instruction also often provide teaching in the languages of national minorities. Thus, 2125 schools have Russian classes, 65 schools have Crimean-Tartar classes, 30 schools

have Hungarian classes, 10 schools have Romanian classes, and 5 schools have Moldavian classes. The languages of national minorities are also learned as school subjects (Ministry of Education).

The current school system

General structure: overview

The structure of the education system is laid down in the Education Act. It provides details on institutions of pre-school education, of comprehensive secondary school, of vocational training, of higher education, and of continuing education after a degree (post-graduate studies); on studies for future academics; on doctoral studies; on institutions of continuing vocational training and occupational re-training and of extra-mural education; on upbringing; and on autonomous learning.

At the age of six to seven years, after a more or less intensive pre-school phase, children transfer to primary school. Pre-school education has never been compulsory. General education is imparted in accordance with state educational standards in the three-stage comprehensive school:

- Level I: the primary school, which lasts three or four years;
- Level II: the middle school, covering school years five to nine; and
- Level III: the upper school, for school years ten to eleven or twelve.

Some schools teach only one of these levels, but there are also integrated schools with all three levels, and ‘compound’ institutions comprising level I, level II, level III, and a higher education institution. The comprehensive school, which lasts eleven years, is open to all pupils, irrespective of their talents or school achievements. The leaving certificate of the comprehensive school concludes middle education, and qualifies for study in an institution of tertiary education; it is therefore the equivalent of the general qualification for university entrance. The creation of grammar schools and lyceums with different profiles and specializations, and of educational networks where certain schools, for example a grammar school or lyceum, form an association with a higher education establishment or a university, is permitted. Additionally, there are specialist schools and colleges which also impart full secondary education. In their structure, they basically correspond to the comprehensive schools, but they offer in-depth instruction in one or more subjects. The specialized schools and colleges as well as the grammar schools and lyceums are reserved for especially talented children. One admission requirement of these fee-charging schools is success in the entrance examination. Especially talented children can receive financial support from the State in the form of grants, study placements, or internships. The upper secondary sector fulfils a bridging function between general and vocational education, but mainly prepares pupils for studies in tertiary education establishments. This is especially true of the grammar schools and lyceums, and, depending on subject emphasis and profile, also for the secondary level of the comprehensive school. Vocational orientation is realized through the subject ‘technology’ and through instruction in workshops. Vocational schools for different fields of instruction provide basic vocational training. Admission to these schools occurs after the eleventh or twelfth school year based on the grades in the secondary school leaving certificate,

or after the ninth school year. In the latter case, there is the possibility of completing secondary education parallel to vocational training. The higher education sector is comprised of colleges, institutes, academies, universities, and specialized higher education institutions. Admission to a course of studies is subject to the number of study places as determined by the State according to national requirements. The basic prerequisite, in addition to the secondary school leaving certificate, is success in the entrance examination. In the context of requirement planning, state as well as private higher education institutions have the right to admit students who are willing and able to pay study fees. This includes applicants who only attained a very low pass mark in the entrance examination.

In the year 1998-99, there were 21,903 general education schools (primary and secondary level), of which 6913 were urban and 14,990 were rural. These schools were attended by seven million pupils. Only a few of them took advantage of the possibilities offered by evening or distance learning. The vast majority (6.88 million) attended day schools.

Pre-primary education

Pre-school education is not mandatory. It can take place exclusively within the family, or in a state, company, private, or other pre-school institution, which is normally the case. Crèches are attended by children aged two months to three years, kindergartens by children aged three to six or seven years. The number of kindergarten places has decreased in recent years. The reason for this is the difficult financial situation of many companies, which are trying to extract themselves from the funding of this social provision. Companies are increasingly forced to ask parents to contribute financially to the costs of this facility. However, because of decreasing living standards, it has become impossible for many parents to pay their fees. Although the State is taking over the financing of state pre-school institutions, all parents have to make a contribution on a sliding scale according to their income.

New types of pre-school institutions with specialized profiles (arts and aesthetics, physical culture and hygiene, humanitarian science, etc.) have been created in recent years. In 2002-03, 15700 pre-school institutions, in which 96,000 children were enrolled, were in operation (Ministry of Education).

Primary education

The admission to the first level of general education, the primary level (*počatkova škola SOŠ, srednjaja obščeobrazovatel'naja škola*), corresponds to the beginning of compulsory schooling at the age of seven years. Children who are already mature enough to start school can enrol at the age of six. The primary level already includes structural differentiation and differentiation on the basis of contents. With respect to structure, alongside the three-year primary school there exists the four-year primary school, which has a slower learning pace and strives for equality of achievement in the first four school years. Talented children are able to finish primary school in three years.

Lower secondary education

The lower secondary level comprises school years five to nine of the comprehensive schools. This includes level II of the comprehensive school and the corresponding classes of grammar schools and lyceums.

The secondary level of the comprehensive school (*osnovna škola SOŠ, srednjaja obščeobrazovatel'naja škola*) builds on the primary level. Around 96% of all ten- to fourteen-year-olds take part in this form of education. At this level, pupils are imparted systematic knowledge in the fundamentals of the sciences, the capacity to work and learn on their own, skills which are necessary for the continuation of the general middle school, and vocational education. Instruction consists of subject blocks for general and mandatory subjects as well as optional and facultative courses. A remarkable broadening of the field of language and literature has taken place, which alongside teaching in Ukrainian language and literature leaves plenty of room for various foreign languages and the subject of 'international literature', as well as teaching in national (ethnic) languages. History has also been divided and broadened into instruction in the subjects of 'Ukrainian history' and 'world history', each comprising 3% of total instruction. If parents, pupils, and an interested enterprise so wish, the latter offering above all the possibility of practical instruction, school workshop instruction can take the form of fundamental vocational training, provided the School Council approves and the necessary requirements are fulfilled.

Upper secondary education

The upper secondary level (*starša škola SOŠ, srednjaja obščeobrazovatel'naja škola*) comprises school years nine to eleven and, according to the new law in effect, also the twelfth school year.

The admission of pupils to level III is generally by means of a competition, whose conditions are elaborated by each school and are approved by the relevant authorities of the state educational administration. The admission requirement is in any case successful completion of the ninth school year. According to statistical data, nearly 40% of fifteen- to seventeen-year-olds receive instruction at upper secondary level. One or more profiles (in humanities, maths and physics, technology, economics, etc.) can be introduced in all schools at level III in accordance with the wishes of parents and pupils, and if the requirements are met by the school.

Grammar schools, lyceums, and other schools with a selective character

According to the definition of the Ministry of Education and Science, grammar schools are comprehensive secondary education institutions of the lower and upper secondary level which provide scientific and theoretical as well as general cultural education for talented children and adolescents. They include, therefore, school years five to twelve. The lyceum is a special educational institution, also for talented children, which provides a general education, including scientific and practical aspects, that goes beyond the requirements laid down by the Ministry of Education. In the corresponding decrees of the Ministry of Education and Science, the lyceum is described as an institution of the upper secondary level. As a rule, lyceums do not provide instruction at lower secondary level. However, the lyceum can start in the

eighth school year, thereby covering a part of the lower secondary level. Transfer to both school types is dependent upon passing an admission exam. The basic timetable of the grammar school is divided from the eighth school year onwards into three subject areas: humanities, natural sciences, and fine arts and artistic work. On the whole, there is a recognizable tendency towards a stronger classical-humanities orientation as a result of the introduction of subjects such as Latin, rhetoric, and logic. At grammar school, no vocational education takes place. Only a vocational orientation to the state standard in the context of the subject area of technology is provided. The basic timetable of the lyceum is conceived along the following lines. It is comprised of six basic profiles: philological, historico-cultural, arts and humanities, maths and physics, biology and chemistry, and technical. No vocational education takes place at the lyceum, but a vocational orientation and specialization with a view to the future choice of profession can be undertaken. In addition to the lyceums and grammar schools, there are the 'specialized schools' and colleges, which represent two further school types that serve to promote talented children. However, these schools only play a marginal role because of their low number. The 'specialized schools', which already existed in Soviet times, differ from the comprehensive school in that they build a profile in single subjects, for example in mathematics, sports, or music, in which in-depth instruction over a significantly greater number of hours is imparted from the first school year onwards. The colleges are general education schools which cover school years five to twelve. Only in exceptional cases do they offer instruction from the first school year. They provide an education that exceeds the standards set by the State with a profile in humanities, humanities and social sciences, or humanities and natural sciences.

Vocational schools

Vocational education encompasses a broad spectrum of learning and teaching forms at educational institutions of the secondary, post secondary, and tertiary sectors, and in enterprises, co-operatives, etc. In all state vocational education institutions, pupils receive a fundamental vocational education which fulfils the basic right of citizens to free education. The schools of the upper secondary level specializing in various subjects provide basic vocational education, as do vocational technical schools, PTUs (*profesijno-tehnične učilišče*), vocational artistic teaching institutions, teaching institutions for social rehabilitation, teaching institutions of agricultural and industrial enterprises, etc. The transfer to a vocational school may take place after the eleventh or the twelfth school year, i.e. once the pupil has completed secondary education. However, vocational schools mostly take on graduates from compulsory school, that is pupils who have received only level II of secondary education. In this case, pupils can complete their secondary education parallel to their vocational education, which ends with a certificate as a qualified worker. In 1995, 15.8% of the pupils in these schools were graduates from the eleventh school year of comprehensive secondary school and had received full secondary education, 82.9% were graduates of the nine-year compulsory school, and 1.3% were school leavers who held no certificate and wanted to learn or become skilled in a simple trade. Around 70% of the pupils who enter vocational technical institutions complete secondary

education at the same time as their vocational training. The higher vocational schools only admit students who have completed secondary education, through successful attendance of either the eleventh/twelfth school year or a PTU. Accordingly, the higher vocational school, or VPU (*Vyššee professional'noe učilišče*), imparts a higher vocational qualification and a leaving certificate as a junior technician. The PTU has above all the duty to ensure the attainment of a skilled profession corresponding to the wishes and abilities of the pupil concerned, taking the education already completed into consideration. Vocational training in higher professions is imparted at a technical institute or college. These are institutions with accreditation levels I or II, and belong to the area of comprehensive secondary education. For a short time until 1999 they were institutions of higher education.

The VET system currently consists mainly of public schools offering around 260 (the number has decreased from 800 in recent years) different professional qualifications at three different levels:

Level 1:

Lasts one to six months and provides lower qualifications in different occupational areas. A state certificate is awarded at the end of the course, showing results or only attendance.

Level 2:

Lasts one to three years and provides qualifications for science-intensive trades and occupations. Depending on the results, the state skilled worker's diploma is awarded. Pupils entering from the lower secondary level who also take courses at upper general secondary level in addition receive an upper secondary school leaving certificate.

Level 3:

Lasts one to one and a half years and provides higher qualifications for science-intensive trades and occupations. The entry requirement is a level II diploma plus a full upper general vocational education.

Special education schools

Children with handicaps have the possibility to receive secondary and vocational education in specialized schools. Taking into account the nature of their disability, special classes are provided for handicapped children in vocational institutions; they also enjoy privileges in the admission procedure for vocational education. For children who cannot study in general comprehensive schools because of special health problems, special education institutes, such as special comprehensive boarding schools, teaching and rehabilitation centres, and specialized classes in comprehensive educational institutions have been established; in these institutions, learning is organized on the basis of special curricula (Ministry of Education).

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Higher education

The institutions of higher education include colleges (*koledży*), institutes (*instytuty*), academies (*akademii*), and universities (*university*). All these institutions have the authority to set up educational networks, i.e. to build up the educational associations mentioned above. Studies at these institutions of higher education can be taken in the form of day, distance, or evening courses. As distance or evening courses, they provide further qualifications for students who are simultaneously pursuing a vocational career. When analysing statistical data on the institutions of higher education, one must take into account the fact that in mid-1999 the technical institutes (*technikum*) and some colleges (*koledży*) still belonged to the higher education sector, so that the number of educational establishments was extraordinarily high. The different institutions of higher education are not equal to one another, but are divided into different levels. These divisions are made on the basis of the 'accreditation', which represents the official recognition of the right of each higher education institution to exercise its teaching function. In addition to state higher education institutions, there exist, according to unofficial data, around 200 private institutions of all four accreditation levels, only a very small proportion of which enjoy, however, state recognition and have the right to award recognized leaving certificates.

The following four levels of accreditation of higher education institutions (HEI) are set:

- Level I - vocational schools and other HEIs equivalent to them which teach junior specialist courses through educational and professional programmes (EPPs);
- Level II – colleges and other HEIs equal to them which teach bachelor's courses and, if need be, junior specialist courses through EPPs;
- Level III - institutes, conservatories, academies, and universities which teach bachelor's, specialist and, if need be, junior specialist courses through EPPs; and
- Level IV - institutes, conservatories, academies, and universities which teach bachelor's, master's and, if need be, specialist courses through EPPs.

In higher education there are 1009 higher education institutes, among them 188 private higher education institutes. In 2003-04 there were 512 students per 10,000 citizens of the Ukraine. 61.5% of students are enrolled in day courses, 37.8% in external courses, and 0.7% in evening courses. In HEIs with the third or fourth levels of accreditation, 37% of students are funded through the state budget, 61% through state and other legal bodies, and 2% through branches of industry and local budgets. In HEIs with the first or second levels of accreditation, 40% are funded through the state budget, 48.7% through individuals or legal corporations, 11% through local budgets, and 0.3% through branches of industry. 11.9% of students are studying in private higher education institutions (Ministry of Education).

There are four stages of university level studies: bachelor's degree (after four years), master's (after six years), the first doctoral degree, and the second doctoral degree (EARC).

Teacher training

Pre-primary and basic school teachers are trained in institutions of the first, second, and third levels of accreditation (technical institutes, colleges, and institutes). Secondary school teachers are trained in institutions of the third and fourth level of accreditation (institutes and universities). There are no special forms of training for higher education teachers; generally, they are university graduates with at least a master's degree who have followed special education courses (EARC).

Continuing training

In formal terms, continuing training consists of instruction aimed at occupational advancement and training to conform with existing professional standards. Practice shows, however, that professional training is still principally related to career advancement, i.e. to access to university and the qualification possibilities that it offers, even though, in view of the system change and the transition to market economy structures, training to conform to new job requirements was desperately necessary. This need was fully recognized, but what was missing was an appropriate system of continuing training and re-training. In the meantime, some moves have been made in this area. Most institutions of higher education offer continuing training, and new centres for continuing training and vocational education have been created. Continuing training measures for students who already have a job are generally carried out at a PTU or in the relevant subsections of enterprises, industrial operations, or organizations, mostly in the form of evening courses.

Training, and in particular management training, is recognized as an important instrument for achieving economic reform. In order to accelerate the economic development process, the government of the Ukraine has developed a strategy for the expansion and upgrading of management training. Strategic approaches to business and management development have also been gaining importance and acceptance by local enterprise management. However, if the challenges are not correctly perceived, subsequent strategies will inevitably be deficient in one way or another. It was for this reason that in 2000 the Ukrainian government launched a large scale 'National Initiative for Retraining Managers in the Sphere of Entrepreneurship'. This Initiative aims at facilitating economic and enterprise development in the Ukraine by both enhancing the ability of young company managers, and developing the skills and competencies of managers already in the job. The initiative, which started in 2000, is currently in its pilot phase and will continue until 2004.

International donors, in particular the EU, have also given much attention to training and re-training managers, as this has been seen as an effective form of intervention that provides significant leverage in the reform process. Support in the area of management training has been partly devoted to strengthening key training institutes and partly to the direct training of managers. The EU Tacis programme has also helped to strengthen a number of management training institutions by conducting courses for which managers and trainee managers are prepared to pay. Not all support has been equally successful, and in a few cases management training institutions remained in place without undergoing any significant structural changes. Because of this, such management training institutions have remained dependent on external support. Alongside

institutional support, training has also been directly provided to the end-user, i.e. the manager or technical specialist, with a strong emphasis on practice-based learning.

It takes time for people to become fully aware of the need for specific training geared towards new management principles and methods that match the requirements of a market economy. Furthermore, difficult economic circumstances have prevented the development of a commercial training market with customers prepared and/or able to pay for training. We may therefore conclude that many managers are not yet ready to operate in an open competitive market, and their professional competence and ability to manage their own enterprises will affect both the speed and depth of economic and social change. For these reasons, it must be said that despite all efforts and supporting measures, the shortage of well-trained managers has been, and will continue to be, a serious obstacle to the reform programme.

So far, more attention has been given to management education and training of full-time students, rather than to training managers already in companies. It seems to be more difficult to move away from the more traditional academic approach, and towards competencies and skills training directly related to the demands of SMEs, especially with regard to regional peculiarities. On the other hand, senior managers of big companies have well understood the need for qualified management staff and are consequently more willing to invest in training their managers.

Current problems, discussions, and perspectives for development

Major problems

Research carried out during the past year (Ukraine Education Reform Policy Note - 2002) confirms that the major challenges facing the Ukrainian education system today are: (a) low quality, an over-emphasis on factual knowledge, and a lack of programmes, curricula, teaching practices, and modern aids appropriate to the needs of civil society and a market economy;¹ (b) increasing enrolment² and access problems; (c) a system that has not adjusted to a falling age cohort population, resulting in low capacity utilization³ and declining efficiency, especially in rural areas; (d) a lack of a national policy on educational evaluation and information on educational achievement; (e) inequality in the provision of education, with the better-off urban population able to access higher quality general education and enrol at tertiary institutions;⁴ (f) aging and inadequately equipped physical resources which make learn-

¹ In 2004 the Ukraine plans to begin introducing changes in the curriculum for grades 1 to 12, and to start adapting general secondary curricula to lifelong learning. The complete schedule is as follows: 2003 - planned approval of standards; 2004 - study plans and programmes (grades 5 to 12) and preparation of textbooks (grades 5 to 6); and so on. The transition to the twelve-year system is expected to be completed by 2012.

² The percentage of children of the relevant age group in pre-school education was 57% in 1990, falling to 40% in 2000. Gross enrolment rates (seven- to fifteen-year-old pupils) are down to 90% in the Ukraine (1999), while Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, and Poland increased their compulsory schooling rates to more than 98%.

³ The average student: teacher ratio is low at 11 to 7.

⁴ Disparities in provision can be observed between rural and urban areas, and even between schools within individual regions. For example, unit costs in some Kyiv city schools are double those in nearby schools.

ing increasingly difficult and costly; and (g) low capacities of the MES and regional and local education authorities to plan, implement, manage, monitor, and evaluate quality education policies and programmes. Moreover, funding for education is low (about 3.8% of GDP), and more than 90% is spent on salaries and utilities.

Impact of the economic crisis

The continuing economic crisis of the country is hindering the progress of reforms in the education system as well as in other social fields. The enactment of the new Education Act in the middle of the nineties provided the legal framework for a restructuring of the education system. If one looks at the material equipment of the schools, the supply of textbooks should be emphasized, which in the past was always guaranteed. One of the main tasks will be to bring the education system up to European standards, or to at least orient it to these standards.

The discrepancy between plans and concepts on the one hand, and their realization on the other is still considerable. The lack of readiness for change in all areas of the educational administration as well as on the part of teachers makes the situation worse. The continuity of personnel since Soviet times meant that intellectual, expert, and methodical renewal had to be protracted. Teachers who welcome the changes, and creative teachers who know how to use the newly created autonomous space provided by the Education Act are few in number and have so far had little impact within the system.

Vocational education

The authors of a study on the Ukrainian vocational education and training (VET) system came to the conclusion that the VET system in general has to be adapted as follows to the new circumstances (European Training Foundation 2004):

- A new funding system made up of public, employer, and other funding.
- Enhance the chances for young people to enter the VET system in order to meet the needs of the emerging labour market.
- Decentralization of VET management in order to strengthen local development.
- Adapt the system to the demands of the labour market, which increasingly requires a workforce with higher qualifications and/or competencies.
- Train the trainers in new pedagogical teaching methods and new technical skills.
- Development of a new system of continuing vocational training to meet the growing needs in terms of quantity and quality.

An important role in this sphere is played by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Supported by international consulting agencies, they are now taking responsibility for the development of human resources in the Ukraine. The main task of the chambers will be the quality assurance of the vocational training offered by the different training providers.

The tertiary level

For some years now, the tertiary education sector has been the object of intense debates. The need for reform is considerable, but the approaches to the reforms appear heterogeneous and possess an experimental character. Especially the reform of contents and methodologies in the higher education institutions, which could not be imposed by an act of Parliament or decree, depend on the innovative spirit of single institutions and their leaders. In addition, low wages and poor working conditions result in personnel being generally neither interested in nor motivated by reform, which should be the basis for real changes. The thoroughly outdated and insufficient equipment of the institutions of higher education also represents a significant obstacle to the progress of the reforms. Until now, the majority of the proposed changes have not progressed beyond the planning stage. A new Higher Education Act is still being drafted, so changes based on new regulations can only be expected in a few years.

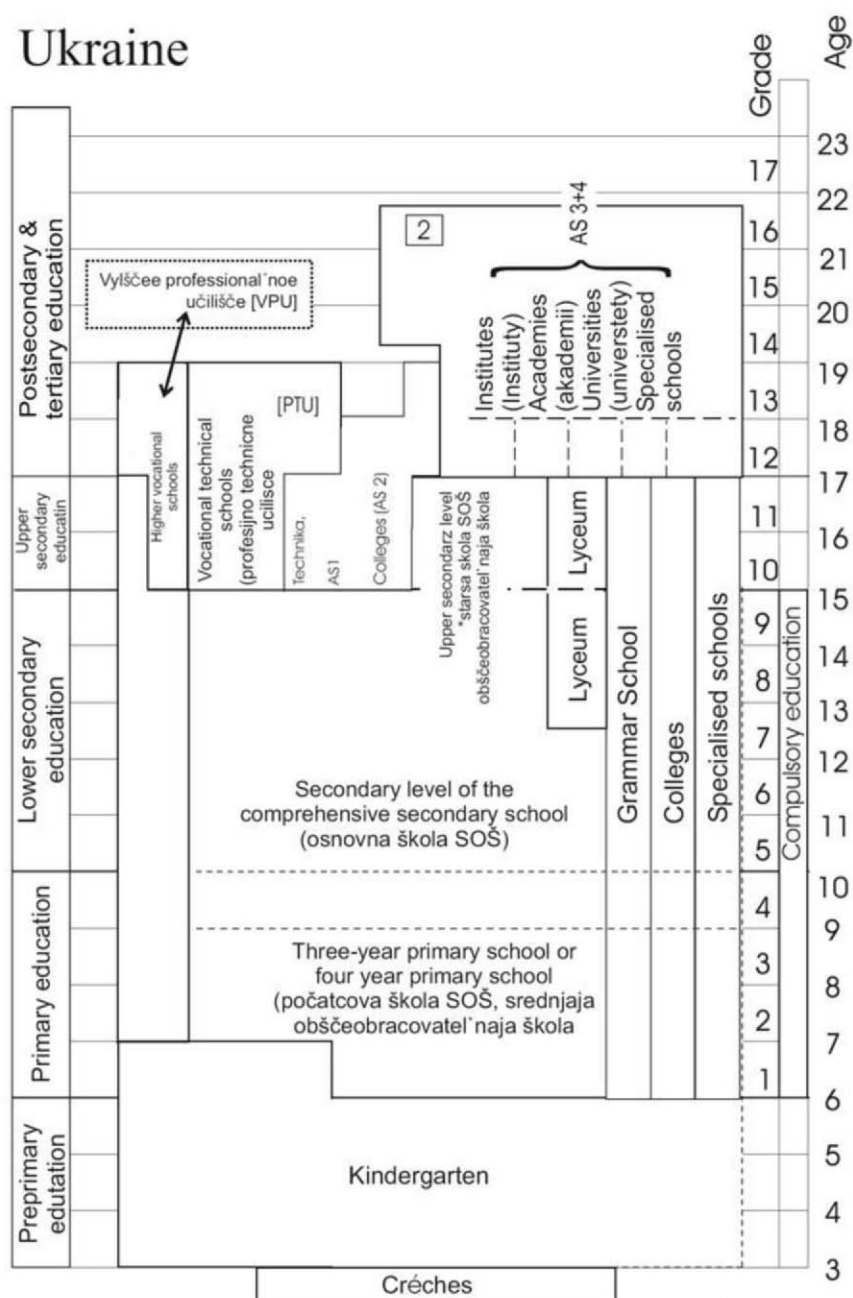
References

- <http://www.edu.kiev.ua/>
Education in the Ukraine - schools, colleges, universities, educational organizations, study abroad programmes, foreign language study, exhibitions, etc.
- <http://www.mon.gov.ua/>
Ministry of Education and Science of the Ukraine
- <http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/ukrco.htm>
A Guide to Graduate Programmes in Arts, Business, Economics, Engineering, Humanities, Management, MBA, and Science
- <http://education.gov.ua/pls/edu/educ.home.eng>
Ministry of Education and Science of the Ukraine official site - information at first hand: the description of an education system in the Ukraine
- <http://www.bizukraine.com/education.htm>
Resources on education in the Ukraine: Ukrainian schools, Ukrainian universities, Ukrainian colleges, Ukrainian professors, academic studies in the Ukraine

Sources:

- Educational Advising Ressource Center (EARC): Ukraine's National Higher Education System, www.earcmn.org/html/eng/education/ukraine
- European Training Foundation (prepared by Borisova, G./Poulsen, S./ Viertel, E.): A study of the Ukrainian vocational education and training system and its relevance to labour market needs. Torino 2004.
- Ministry of Education: High level education for all youth: challenges, tendencies, and priorities. Kiev 2004

Ukraine



United Kingdom

The post-1944 emergence of the national system of education

The patchy implementation of the 1944 Education Act because of the poor post-war economy meant that there was a diverse education system divided along lines that corresponded to social class and religion. Nevertheless, the political agenda of the period was one of achieving 'meritocracy' (hence the introduction of 'ability tests' that would replace parental ability to pay as a criterion of receiving secondary education). The principle of 'equality of educational opportunity' was shared by both political parties at the time. The 1945 general election returned the Labour Party to power under the leadership of Clement Attlee. Although not its first taste of government, it was Labour's first real opportunity to push its social agenda. However, in the immediate post-war context of economic reconstruction, the first social sector priority had to be the creation of the National Health Service. After all, the 1944 Education Act had just been passed and had to be implemented, a process which took the remainder of the 1940s. Tawney's ideal of the common, non-selective school, which had become known as 'the comprehensive school', had to wait for another day. Such a unified secondary school had already had its supporters, and was first introduced in 1953 in Anglesey, North Wales, where the predominantly rural population did not, in its distribution, lend itself to the logistics of the selective system. Local politics was also conducive, as with LEAs still having sufficient power in the 1950s, some Labour authorities in London and other major cities moved to the construction of comprehensive schools, although the fact that some were still single-sex seemed to belie such a title! In most localities, however, the tripartite system of grammar, secondary modern, and technical schools prevailed throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, supported by the Conservative government from 1951 to 1964.

The election of another Labour government in 1964, this time under Harold Wilson, proved to be a major event in the evolution of all sectors of public education. With the National Health Service well established, education was the main other social sector interest, with the expansion of 'equality of opportunity' being a priority.

The famous Circular 10/65 from central to local government in England and Wales invited all the LEAs to submit plans for non-selective secondary schooling, to replace the 11+ examination, and to develop some form of comprehensive schooling. Many variations on the theme were put forward, and with over one hundred plans involved, it took time for them all to be approved. Indeed, it was somewhat ironical that when, in 1970, the Conservative Party was returned to power, Margaret Thatcher as Secretary of State for Education had the task of approving the various LEA schemes for non-selective schooling.

While this process was underway, the 1973 global economic crisis precipitated by the OPEC group of oil-producing countries fundamentally changed the economic climate. It was accompanied by a demographic downturn in Britain with reduced numbers feeding through the primary and secondary schools. The number of teachers declined, and the teacher training sector was severely downsized and rationalized. By the end of the decade, the majority of teachers' colleges had been closed or merged with universities. This was a matter for each university: for example, while Oxford severed its links with local teachers' colleges, the University of Leeds welcomed them into an extended network.

By the mid-1970s, most LEAs had completed their reorganization of secondary schooling along non-selective lines, but about ten of them maintained a selective system, with grammar schools, over all or part of their areas. Many reorganizations had been made difficult by the funding downturn, as the new system of comprehensive secondary schools had not really been given a fair chance to establish itself. It was accompanied from the mid-1960s by a great deal of curricula innovation promoted by the newly created body The School's Council for Curriculum and Examinations. Schools were bombarded with curriculum projects and at the same time the school leaving age was raised to sixteen in an effort to alleviate youth unemployment, which had been rising.

The resulting difficulties for a secondary sector struggling to cope with massive structural and curricular change at a time of economic downturn led to the unprecedented decision of a Prime Minister, James Callaghan, to make a highly critical attack on the maintained school sector. This was in the form of a famous speech at Ruskin College, Oxford, in 1976, in which he accused schools of failing the needs of the national economy. It was ironic that a Labour leader should provide the opportunity for the neo-liberal policies of the following Conservative government elected in 1979 and led by Margaret Thatcher.

Recent and current themes: 1980s until today

Tradition and modernization: the context of the 1980s and early 1990s

The periods 1979 to 1997 and 1997 to 2004 will be examined separately because of their different political contexts with regard to education reforms. The former period covers eighteen years of consecutive Conservative administrations, while in 1997 a Labour government was elected that is still in power at the time of writing. Three main sets of ideas framed educational debates of the 1980s and early 1990s:

- A shift in thinking about links between education and the economy;
- The introduction of market-influenced principles and practices in the organization of schooling; and
- A much stronger centralization of control over education than ever before.

All of these ideas originated and developed throughout the 1970s, but they were implemented through educational reforms after the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1979.

The economic crisis of the seventies and the subsequent recession led the main political parties away from the Keynesian economic and social policies of the post-war

period, and towards monetarist policies (McKenzie 2001). The political and economic views of the Austrian economist Hayek were strongly advocated by groups such as the Institute of Economic Affairs, the Adam Smith Institute, and the Centre for Policy Studies, all of which were later to be influential in the thinking of Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph, who was the Secretary of State for Education between 1981 and 1986.

At the time, the perceived 'failure' of British industry and high levels of unemployment, combined with a reduction in social welfare that continued well into the 1980s, resulted in a political climate of disaffection and discontent with the policies associated with the 'old' social democratic consensus of the post-war period. Political parties, civil servants, and the then Department of Education and Science urged a new organization of schooling more explicitly linked to the world of work (Dale 1989, Lawton 1994). Earlier concerns with equal opportunities and progressive pedagogies were marginalized (and criticized as 'social engineering'), and were replaced by debates on improving the 'relevance' of education and the 'employability' of school leavers for the creation of a 'modern' and dynamic economy. The theme of 'vocationalism' was introduced into secondary comprehensive schools, while the notion of 'enterprise' was key for the policies of the post-compulsory (mainly further education) sectors. Following the positions of the international policy community, and especially the OECD, the belief was formulated that education has a major and very specific economic role in its provision of a skilled workforce. Educational standards as measured in public examinations were increasingly seen to be vital as part of a wider national economic strategy (Phillips 2001). Strong state intervention in schooling to achieve this goal was thus justified as politically and economically necessary, and led through the 1980s and early 1990s to considerable expansion of institutions and types of provision, both in the compulsory and the post-compulsory spheres. This expansion in numbers was not accompanied, however, by increased public expenditure on education, which in the 1980s fell as a percentage of GDP, as did spending per student (McKinnon et al. 1996). Nevertheless, one result of such policies of expansion of education provision was that certification increased and new social groups benefited from the process.

The second set of important ideas that framed the educational discussions of the 1980s related to the introduction of the principles of 'the market' in the organization of schooling, mainly those of parental choice and competition. These ideas only became operative after the election of the Conservative Party in 1979. Throughout the 1980s, the political pressure to reduce public expenditure because of the recession made neo-liberal ideas and deregulatory policies feasible and led to the closing down of unprofitable industries and the beginnings of debates on privatizing previously national industries. Profound economic and social restructuring followed, accompanied by political transformations. The changing economy, increasing privatization, reduced social protection, and the decision to subject the Welfare State to an organization influenced by market principles had profound social and educational implications. In a climate of financial difficulties, where public services were perceived as too expensive, inefficient, and ineffective, the market was seen to be the best way of allocating resources. However, there was also a strong ideological ele-

ment in the promotion of market-influenced organization for the Welfare State: people were seen to be too dependent on the State and that was attacked as morally reprehensible. The 'market' and the liberal ideas upon which it rests were seen to encourage self-sufficiency, personal initiative, individualism, and self-regulation. They were seen to be part of a wider attempt to 'modernize' public services, but also to modernize the relationships between individuals and the State. The notions of collective action and organization were consistently attacked, and their power significantly reduced after the mass strikes of the first half of the 1980s. But the decade of the eighties was one of mixed benefits for different groups of the population. While unemployment kept rising (accompanied, moreover, by a reduction in social spending), new groups acquired significant amounts of material wealth, particularly new 'entrepreneurs' and many people employed in finance. These groups were a significant political support to the policies of the Conservative governments, which, as Jones (2003) points out, would not have governed for eighteen years without such a constituency. However, the social stress that was caused by these same policies was substantial, with high unemployment concentrated in particular regions of the country, and frequent strikes and inner city riots that were often rooted in racial politics in areas of economic disadvantage. New forms of poverty developed alongside new forms of privilege, leading to a considerable widening of inequalities between the rich and the poor (Rowntree Foundation 1995).

Finally, another context that is important in examining education developments of this period is that of cultural restoration and tradition. Parallel to the voices advocating the 'modernization' of education and public services in general, there were those from within the Conservative Party, but also the civil service establishment, that promoted the themes of tradition, heritage, established hierarchies (in education and elsewhere), and 'Englishness' as the core national identity. Jones (2003) describes Thatcherism as a distinctly 'English' rather than 'British' movement that drew on Anglo-centric references and frameworks. Thatcher herself declared: 'I am an English nationalist and never you forget it' (quoted in Jones 2003, p. 109). This emphasis on tradition and Englishness had implications for groups of the population that did not associate themselves with this national identity, including ethnic minority groups but also the other component nations of the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales). The discursive dismantling of the 'one nation' into its parts, and the framing of national policies on the basis of the economically most powerful element of the Union (England) generated many political tensions and high levels of disaffection with the political centre. Furthermore, this political centre itself was not socially or economically coherent. As mentioned above, there were also widening disparities in the wealth and well-being of people in different regions within England. The political and economic basis that provided the Conservative Party with its support was located in southern England, which offered the most votes and the most political benefits (Jones 2003). Many areas in the North of England were blighted by economic underdevelopment, high and chronic unemployment, and pockets of relative poverty. Furthermore, 'race' and ethnicity became controversial issues, since the Anglo-centric policies and rhetoric of the 1980s only acknowledged and promoted white, usually middle or upper class cultural norms, and traditional

images of the desirable society. Black¹ people had been firmly integrated into the social and economic life of the country since the early 1970s, but many Conservative politicians were reluctant to acknowledge the problems associated with racism and discrimination in education and other spheres of public life. As could be expected, these strains of political thought clashed strongly with the liberal ideas of the advocates of a free market within the Party.

In the other parts of the United Kingdom there were reactions to Thatcher's neo-liberal political project, although at times they managed to turn political tensions to their advantage. Northern Ireland is the most obvious example here, where high levels of funding were channelled to combat the problem of sectarianism through educational and other welfare projects. The Conservative administrations of the 1980s and 1990s supported non-denominational schooling and school curricula that promoted not just 'British' but also nationalist (Irish) traditions. Jones (2003) argues that these concessions involved the London-based government in a dialogue concerning national identity and tradition that led to more pluralist outcomes than those arrived at in England.

Wales and Scotland experienced economic depression throughout the 1980s because of the decline of manufacturing industry, which also had implications for local communities and for social organization. Nationalist movements grew stronger, as the central Conservative government with its base in southern England was seen as responsible for the loss of jobs and for the reduction of social welfare. The local power of the Conservative Party declined throughout the last two decades to such a degree that in the 1997 election the Conservatives did not win a single parliamentary seat in either Wales or Scotland. Despite these conditions, Thatcher imposed undesirable market-based reforms on education and other public services, thereby provoking strong opposition. Politically and ideologically, both Wales and Scotland remained committed to either nationalism or social democracy (Paterson 2003, Phillips/Daugherty 2001).

The above ideological and political frameworks did not find a consistent or even coherent manifestation in all of the education policies of the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s. The emphasis on vocationalism and on an education relevant to the workplace did not find the approval of everyone in the Conservative party, and nor did the concept of education as a commodity in a market place. Tradition and 'Englishness' were paramount elements in the thinking of many in the Party, and as Lawton (1994) suggests, there were often tensions and clashes between viewpoints (usually those of the 'humanists' in opposition to those advocating more industrial training). What was politically ingenious however, was the way in which all of these seemingly contradictory positions were reconciled into the reforms of particular sectors of education, as we shall see in the following sections.

Schooling in the 1980s and mid-1990s

Comprehensive secondary schools continued to grow in number throughout the 1980s, so that by 1988 they constituted 87% of all secondary schools in the United Kingdom (HMSO 1989). Their numbers varied across different parts of the UK (in

¹ 'Black' here is used as a political and ideological term that refers to various key ethnic minorities including British people of Afro-Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi origins.

Scotland they comprised 99%, whereas they made up a much smaller proportion of all schools in Northern Ireland). However, despite the title 'comprehensive', many of these schools were operating on 'non-comprehensive' principles such as 'streaming' pupils at the age of 11 on the basis of their general ability (through allocation to streams A, B, or C), or 'setting' them, again on the basis of ability but for different subjects (a pupil could be in set A for maths, and set C for English). These forms of organization gave rise to the criticism that comprehensive schools were never really allowed to function on genuinely comprehensive lines. In addition, the ideas of 'modernization' and the 'market' described above led to renewed political criticism of comprehensive schools, which were seen as promoting mediocrity and uniformity amongst students, suppressing excellence, drawing on false ideas of multiculturalism and progressivism, and undermining traditional British values and economic growth. The attack on comprehensive schools and on teachers who were seen as carrying these values into the classroom increased throughout the late 1970s and 1980s.

In terms of the organization of the education system, the assumed 'consensus' that had been established by the 1944 Act between central government, local government (Local Education Authorities), and teachers in the running of education began breaking up in the 1980s. The 'breakdown of consensus' as described by McNay/Ozga (1985) meant a significant shift of power from local to central government that was sustained by the constant blaming of teachers (and often LEAs) for the 'failure' of the education system, and by the demand for 'modernization' and 'excellence' in schooling. Even those politicians within the Conservative government who supported neo-liberal, market ideas in education (and would by implication be against any further state interference in its organization), came to support a strengthening of central intervention in education policies. The political agenda was one of weakening the power and role of local government, and giving more power to parents as the 'customers' of education.

Most of the legislation introduced by the first two Conservative administrations (1979 to 1987) was small-scale, but it aimed to operationalize this political agenda and to achieve the goals of modernization and marketization in education. This was achieved by increasing the rights and power of parents in choosing the school they wanted for their child, and in their representation on school governing bodies (see for instance the 1980 Education Act, which was also known as a 'parents' charter', and the 1986 Education Act, which gave parents a role in deciding school policy on issues such as 'sex education'). At the same time, this legislation limited the power of Local Education Authorities to refuse to provide places for pupils in primary, secondary, or further education because they did not 'belong' to their catchment area. Parallel to these developments, there was an increased focus on the 'skills' and 'employability' of students, and on the 'relevance' of the curriculum to the needs of industry. The central government, local authorities, examination boards, and teacher training institutions were all involved in making recommendations for a 'differentiated curriculum' that would meet the different needs of the economy. In 1985, however, the government published the White Paper 'Better Schools', which made clear that there could be no additional funding to support the developments promoted by

the legislation of the early 1980s. The costs would have to be met by a more efficient and effective use of existing resources (McKenzie 2001). Ideas for a centrally determined national curriculum and testing began emerging during the second half of the decade.

The relatively small changes introduced by the Conservative administrations in education throughout the 1980s culminated in one very important piece of legislation that signalled a radical departure from the ideological and organizational forms of the post-1944 era. This was the 1988 Education Reform Act for England and Wales (also known as the ERA). Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State for Education who introduced the Act, summarized its aims as the introduction of ‘choice, freedom, standards, and quality control’ to schools. The Act brought together all the (controversial and often clashing) elements of Conservative thinking in education, combining centralization with de-centralization, market-influenced organization with strong elements of central control, and modernizing tendencies with a traditionalist curriculum. Amongst the most significant changes introduced by the 1988 Act are the following:

- It introduced Local Management of Schools (LMS), which meant the delegation of financial responsibilities from LEAs to the governing bodies of the schools. This measure gave schools significant autonomy from local government and much increased accountability for the running of their affairs. The basis of the LMS was the so-called ‘formula funding’, which in effect means that individual pupils carry a certain monetary value that they bring to the school of their choice.
- It allowed secondary schools and larger primary schools to ‘opt out’ of the control of LEAs and acquire ‘grant-maintained’ status. These schools would own their own premises, employ their own staff, and receive their funding directly from the central government. This measure was voluntary – it was to be effective in those schools whose governing body decided to ‘opt out’, and it clearly aimed at the reduction of the role of local government.
- Through the scheme of ‘open enrolment’ it increased the power of parents to choose a school for their children, provided it had room for them. Catchment areas were no longer of any significance.
- It introduced a National Curriculum for pupils aged five to sixteen in all state schools (private schools are not required to teach the National Curriculum). Attainment targets were introduced at different stages of the curriculum, and these were examined by national tests for various subjects at the ages of seven, eleven, fourteen, and sixteen.
- It introduced a new type of school, called the City Technology College, which was meant to be partially funded by industry. This measure was never successful, and very few of these schools have been established, as industry did not show very much interest in their funding.

The above measures introduced strong elements of a ‘market’ within schooling (Ball 1990). The education system was still publicly funded, provided by the State, and heavily regulated by the Secretary of State for Education (Tooley 1999), but the

reforms introduced competition and differentiation of schools and a profound change in the organization and cultures of schooling. Since 1988, schools have had to publish the results of their tests of the National Curriculum, and are subsequently ranked in a 'league table' on the basis of their performance. Parents (as the 'customers' of the service) are encouraged to select a school for their child on the basis of this information. This creates strong competition for places in the 'desirable', high-performing schools. The financial autonomy given to schools means that their income depends on the number of pupils they can recruit; thus, the principle of competition became the most important driving force for the behaviour of both schools and parents. The explicit rationale behind this set of reforms was that parental pressure and choice would ensure that all schools and teachers start performing better and raise their teaching standards. The assumption was that low performing schools were badly managed, that teaching was of a low quality, and that accountability towards parents and children was absent.

Throughout the 1990s, new categories of schools were created in order to introduce more diversity into the system: 'specialist schools' (which could select 10% of pupils on the basis of ability) and 'technology schools' added to an already diverse system including Church schools, grammar schools (which were never abolished), grant-maintained schools, etc. By 1997, the number of locally controlled comprehensive schools (that is, schools admitting pupils from across the ability range) was only 40% of the total. As Jones (2003, p. 115) argues, 'pre-existing patterns of diversity had been accentuated to create a complex and subtly differentiated hierarchy of schools, whose status, reputation, and achievement levels varied considerably'.

One of the impacts of these changes was the development of a new managerial culture in schools and the adoption of private-sector models of management (Gewirtz 2002). Head teachers are no longer 'curriculum leaders', but 'chief executives' of institutions that use marketing techniques in order to attract pupils (this refers mainly to urban secondary schools, where competition for places is fierce). At the same time, parental choice led to the strengthening of pre-existing patterns of social advantage and disadvantage that became particularly evident in large conurbations (school 'choice' makes less sense in rural areas). There has been a considerable amount of research over the last ten years on the effect of choice-based reforms on the differentiation between schools, but also between groups of pupils and parents. Most of this research suggests: (a) that the cultural, social, and economic capital of parents (closely associated with social class, but also connected with ethnicity) is the key determinant of success in the politics of school choice, and (b) that the differentiation of schools leads to a rather rigid hierarchy of status that is accompanied by differentiated school funding (Bowe et al. 1992, Gewirtz et al. 1995, Adnett/Davies 2003). In the London area, where differentiation and competition have been strong, about one third of parents are not able to send their child to their first choice of secondary school (Jones 2003). This differentiation was intended and was considered desirable by the Conservative administrations, which saw it as a prerequisite for the operation of the educational market, and the driver for competition and excellence.

The 1988 ERA did not apply to Scotland, although the 1988 Schools Boards (Scotland) Act and the 1989 Self-Governing Schools (Scotland) Act introduced

elements similar to those in England. Thus, parental and community representation on school boards was increased, and Scottish schools could 'opt out' of financial and administrative control from the local authority and receive their funding directly from the Scottish central government. By 1994, only one school had done so (McKenzie 2001). Significantly, there was also no statutory national curriculum introduced in Scotland, although curriculum guidelines introduced a certain harmonization of curriculum content. In Scotland, but also in Wales, educational differentiation was much less pronounced than in England, as there was a stronger commitment to non-selective, comprehensive schooling. The number of schools that 'opted out' of local government control was very small, local authorities retained a stronger role than those in England, trust in the judgement of professional teachers was still high, and local ideologies continued to stress more egalitarian goals and to resist market ideology, which was seen as a distinctly English project (Paterson 2003, Phillips/Daugherty 2001).

In Northern Ireland, many more of the reforms were adopted, given the already existing structure of schooling based on segregation by religion, differentiation, and selection. Thus, the 1989 Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order introduced most of the elements of the 1988 ERA that aimed at the creation of an educational market: open enrolment, delegated financial management, standardized national curriculum and assessment procedures along with the publication of exam results, and formula funding (McKeown 1997). In accordance with the policy of 'open enrolment', schools are open to all pupils regardless of religious denomination, and where possible, parents should be given the school of their choice. Many schools have a mix of Roman Catholic and Protestant children. However, the system is still highly segregated (although not 'by law'). In practice, this means that 'state controlled schools' are mainly attended by Protestants, 'voluntary maintained schools' are mostly attended by Roman Catholics, and 'voluntary grammar schools' are selective on the basis of ability. Since 1989 there have also been schools that make provisions for parents to opt for non-segregated education, and that acquire 'grant-maintained integrated' status. These latter schools must demonstrate that they have a commitment to religious integration and are expected to have a pupil population that is balanced in terms of religious denomination ((McKeown 1997). The existence of a high number of selective grammar schools in Northern Ireland meant that after the market-influenced reforms of 1989 these schools (which had always performed very well in public examinations) increased their status and position. By the late 1990s, selective grammar schools in Northern Ireland constituted about 40% of the total (McKeown 2001).

Paradoxically, given the emphasis of the 1988 Education Reform Act (England and Wales) and the 1989 (Northern Ireland) education reforms on parental 'choice' and the operation of a 'quasi-market' in schooling, the new National Curriculum was strongly centralized. The curriculum stressed 'standards' and 'tradition', and was seen as part of a wider political project aiming to deal with (assumed) problems of declining social control and public authority. It was a curriculum that did not acknowledge local diversity, did not respond to ethnic or class-based sub-cultures, and was imposed on a teaching profession that was accustomed to deciding on and

designing the curriculum itself (Jones 2003). A number of political ‘battles’ were fought over the curriculum in the early 1990s. Some of them involved particular subject areas or sub-areas and how these promoted social and personal identities (sex education, religious education, the ‘promotion of homosexuality’, ‘race’, British history, the use of language, etc.). Heated debates emerged in relation to areas of social change, such as the increased participation of women in the labour force, which contrasted with both the political ‘back to basics’ campaign launched by John Major, and a rhetoric that promoted traditional ideas of domestic and maternal femininity (Arnot et al. 1999). The politics of the family, sexuality, and moral traditionalism offered controversial themes that found expression in curricular debates. The tensions related to the new National Curriculum, mainly reflecting the archaism of the Conservative agenda but also arising from the accumulation of exams from an early age, the bureaucratic nature of assessment procedures, and the marginalization of teachers from the process, led to teachers boycotting National Curriculum testing in 1993-94. After 1994, ‘tradition’ was dropped from the educational and social policy agenda of the Conservative party (Jones 2003).

The period between 1988 and the mid-1990s was characterized by the consolidation of the 1988 ERA reforms, the refinement of the National Curriculum, and issues around its testing. Following strong criticism and opposition, by the mid-1990s the curriculum had been redesigned, with reduced ethno-centrism and Anglo-centrism, and the removal of most of the ‘tradition’ elements. By the end of the decade, it had been widely accepted as a consensual part of schooling. In terms of marketization and modernization, there was no major change either. Diversity of types of schooling increased throughout the 1990s, and in 1992 the Education Secretary John Patten argued that ‘specialization’ would be the dominant principle for secondary school organization (Chitty 2001). The education structures that were put in place by eighteen years of Conservative policies proved to be enduring and established a policy context that was further developed and refined, but not radically changed, by the subsequent Labour governments.

Changing education governance: a new wave of modernization, and globalization in the post-1997 era

Soon after winning the 1997 general election, New Labour² embarked on a programme of political and social policy reform that had important implications for education. Many writers have supported the view that New Labour education policies represent a straightforward continuation and strengthening of the neo-liberal legacy of the Thatcher period. However, as Paterson (2003) argues, this conclusion can only be reached if one looks exclusively at the English context, and only at compulsory schooling. He suggests that when one takes into account the education debates and changes in Scotland especially, but also in Wales, and those reforms that apply to post-compulsory education and training, New Labour education poli-

² Throughout the 1990s, the Labour Party redefined itself and changed its constitution. The term ‘New Labour’ signifies a break with ‘Old’ Labour and its commitment to high taxation, high regulation of the economy, affiliation with the trade unions, and, in education, the commitment to ‘equality of outcome’ as the goal of the system.

cies appear more complex and more ideologically coherent than those of Thatcherism. Taking into account Paterson's analysis, we shall briefly present the political and ideological frameworks that have underpinned education policies since 1997.

Political and constitutional modernization

The new government was from the beginning committed to a project of 'modernization' in various aspects of political life and social affairs. New Labour wanted to modernize government, the relationship between citizens and the State, the ways of delivering public services, and the 'professions'. As part of their political modernization, in 1998 New Labour introduced a new constitutional order in the United Kingdom that was based on the devolution of political power to a new Scottish Parliament and to separate Representative Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland. The Scottish Parliament has responsibility for all matters not 'reserved' for Westminster in London, among which are education and training, while the Welsh Assembly only has the power to enact secondary legislation. This very significant change in governance has accentuated differences in education policy within the UK, and reflects the widening gap between national educational cultures (Alexiadou/Ozga 2002).

The current commitment to the modernization of government, and the managerialist modes through which that end is to be achieved, are underpinned by the twin discourses of 'globalization' and 'the knowledge economy'. The Prime Minister Tony Blair (from 1997 until the time of writing) has repeatedly used these two notions in order to justify changes in governance, but also to tie education to imperative economic needs:

Globalization is changing the nature of the nation state as power becomes more diffuse and borders more porous. Technological change is reducing the capacity of government to control a domestic economy free from external influence. The role of government in this world of change is to represent a national interest, to create a competitive base of physical infrastructure and human skills. The challenge before our party [...] is not how to slow down and so get off the world, but to educate and retrain for the new technologies, to prepare our country for new global competition, and to make our country a competitive base from which to produce the goods and services people want to buy. (Blair 1995, quoted in Jones 2003, p. 149)

By stressing the importance of global economic developments on the national economy, the new government argued forcefully for a reduction in the degree of state intervention in various spheres of the economy, supported deregulation of industries and services, and promoted market-influenced reforms in all areas of economic and social policy. Thus, market-driven reforms in education and other public services were not only accepted but strengthened by the Labour government, and education was seen primarily in terms of its capacity to increase the competitiveness of the economy. At the same time, the government continued with the low expenditure public policies that earlier Conservative governments had followed. Glennerster (2001) points out that increasing taxation was not politically feasible at a time when poverty was on the rise and the Welfare State was financially stretched. As a result, the government argued for a system of 'targeted' (as opposed to universal) intervention in areas of social policy dealing with poverty but also other social problems.

The acceptance of neo-liberal ideology in the operation of the public sector and continuously reduced public expenditure were combined with a highly interventionist approach by the government in order to ensure the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of public services. In education, this intervention relates to a political agenda committed to the raising of school standards of performance. This was realized through:

- The setting of numerous targets of performance for individual teachers, schools, and Local Education Authorities;
- Frequent inspection of schools;
- The linking of money directly to school improvement; and
- Government intervention at the level of classroom practice and pedagogy (through the setting up of initiatives dealing with literacy and numeracy).

In this respect, New Labour retained all of the structural reforms of the period of Conservative rule. In designing its social and political agenda, the new government identified 'business' as its preferred ally. Thus, the years after 1997 saw the endorsement of the private sector for its perceived capacity to 'manage innovation' and create growth and development. Public sector policies were introduced that:

- a) Encouraged business to get actively involved, in a leading capacity, in the management and running of areas of public services, and
- b) Advocated the appropriation of business models and discourses in the management of the public sector.

In education, these policies manifested themselves in schemes that aimed to create 'partnerships' between schools and the private sector. Private education companies were contracted to run schools and Local Education Authorities that failed their inspection; businesses were invited to sponsor certain types of schools (such as the City Academies), but also to take an active management role in these schools; and big business and industries were invited to operate as 'partners' in the launching of the Education Action Zones (EAZs). These zones were set up in order to raise educational standards in schools in disadvantaged areas. They would assume some of the functions of the local authorities, but they were intended to be led primarily by business.

The counterbalance to the above set of ideas was the 'social inclusion' agenda. In 1997 the government set up the Social Exclusion Unit, the remit of which was to 'help improve government action to reduce social exclusion', which is defined as 'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health, and family breakdown' (SEU 1997/2004). For New Labour, social exclusion is a policy theme that establishes education as a central actor in the project of 'modernization' of the government and 'national renewal'. Education is seen as a policy priority, as the main means for delivering economic competitiveness, and thereby combating social exclusion (Lister 2000).

Ozga (1999, p. 44) argues that 'government policy is largely driven by the need for global competitiveness; and nowhere is this more so than in education'. Educational achievement, alongside the transformation of people's attitudes, is seen as the

key to the social inclusion of individuals, social cohesion, and national economic growth. Such a focus suggests a conception of social exclusion (and thus of social inclusion) that (a) sees exclusion as a 'condition', and as the outcome of differential educational and employment success, and (b) is derived from primarily economic principles. The official discourses thus establish a causal relationship between social exclusion/inclusion and educational success, and posits the latter as a form of differential consumption of educational opportunities. In this way, these discourses tend to ignore or marginalize the effects of governance structures on the production and distribution of educational and labour market opportunities (Alexiadou 2002). The ultimate expression of this selective focus is the by now famous emphasis of New Labour education policy on 'standards not structures'. This phrase comes from the first White Paper published by the government after it came to power, 'Excellence in Schools' (DfEE 1997, p. 5). It signals the departure of the government from the 'old left' concerns with egalitarian education policies (and the debates about comprehensive schooling), and a move towards a 'pragmatic' and modern set of policies that draw on research on 'what works'.

The above principles and policies are summarized by the so-called Third Way, which, as Paterson (2003) argues, is an ideology that combines the themes of the New Right of the 1980s with re-interpreted themes of nineteenth-century liberalism. The policies based on the Third Way accept and welcome the inevitability of globalization and the creativity and dynamism of the market, and at the same time posit the need for strong government intervention to regulate the performance of both the economy and public services. Education was seen as the most obvious area of Third Way policies in which 'market dynamism and government action seem to meet' (Jones 2003, p. 147).

Schooling after 1997

In terms of the structures of schooling, all of the countries in the UK were still under the regime introduced by the 1988 ERA. Choice, competition, diversity, and centralization were still core concepts underlying the way the system was organized. However, England increasingly became the exception rather than the rule in the way its education system adopted these concepts. By 2000, the English system was the most diverse in terms of types of secondary schools, the most selective (with the largest private sector but also state grammar schools), and had the highest number of pupils in denominational schools compared to Wales and Scotland (although not Northern Ireland). These differences in the organization of schooling are closely related to differences in the attainment of pupils (and schools) and in social class background. Northern Ireland is similar to England in this differentiation (in terms of denomination and social class), whereas Scotland and Wales have an almost entirely comprehensive system that is much more socially cohesive (Croxford 2000). Public expenditure on education rose by 1.5% in the period 1997-2001, which is less than under the previous Conservative government.

In its 1997 White Paper 'Excellence in Schools', the government set out six principles that would define its education policies. This paper was ideologically significant in its clear departure from traditional Labour concerns. The principles

outlined in the White Paper were taken forward into the first major piece of legislation that New Labour introduced in the area of education, the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act. In this Act, the government retained most of the Conservatives' principles of organization and schooling structures, and the powers vested in central government. It accepted the market-based principles of competition, differentiation, selection, and classroom-based streaming and setting by ability. New Labour made it clear that it does not intend to attack the principle of selection (which was a theme of older Labour party policies) or to abolish grammar or private schools.

Comprehensive schools were to be 'modernized' by means of the policy of 'diversity within one campus', which in effect meant the end of mixed-ability teaching (and by implication the end of the comprehensive idea). In addition, the government was keen to strengthen the principle of 'diversity' by introducing new types of secondary schools. Thus, secondary schools could opt for 'Community', 'Foundation', 'Voluntary', 'Community Special', or 'Foundation Special' status. Schools previously funded by LEAs, churches, or central government (grant-maintained) would be newly designated as 'Community', 'Voluntary', and 'Foundation' schools (McKenzie 2001). Under these new types of schools, Muslim 'Faith' schools were first established in 1998 (other 'faith' schools existed already).

In 2001 the government encouraged the creation of 'City Academies', which are privately run institutions partly funded by the government. Specialization was also high on the political agenda, especially after 2001. Around one quarter of all secondary schools had become 'specialist' by 2003, which meant that they could select up to 10% of their pupils according to their aptitude in one of ten specialist areas: arts, business and enterprise, engineering, humanities, languages, mathematics and computing, music, science, sports, and technology. The National Curriculum was retained, but it was made more flexible to allow time for work-place learning and to make provision for pupils to develop their special talents.

Subsequent White Papers, such as 'Schools Achieving Success', and the 2002 Education Act further enhanced the principles of differentiation, specialization, and diversity. The creation of 'specialist schools' raised familiar concerns with regard to differentiation and disadvantage. Edwards/Eavis suggest that specialist schools are likely to form a new, upper layer of comprehensive schools, creating new divisions between 'winners and losers', and they ask how 'the prospect of even more disproportionate numbers of the socially disadvantaged in 'second-best' schools will be avoided' (Phillips 2003, p. 10).

Under the twin agenda of raising standards and combating 'social exclusion', the government introduced a number of initiatives, such as the EAZs (described above), 'Beacon' schools and Sure Start. The new 'Beacon' schools are schools that gained this status as a result of exceptional performance, and that are given additional funding in order to spread good practices to other schools. At the beginning of 2004 there were 1052 Beacon schools. Sure Start is a scheme designed for infants (up to the age of three), and aims to provide additional support (educational and other) to children living in financially deprived circumstances. In mainstream compulsory schooling, the government introduced a range of new tests (in addition to the standardized testing introduced by the 1988 ERA), but also brought in 'numeracy' and 'literacy'

hours in primary schools (children were required to spend an hour a day on language and number work). This latter measure is considered effective in terms of raising standards of literacy and numeracy, but it also represents the most intrusive intervention of any recent government in the curriculum and pedagogy. In addition, the government's emphasis on 'inclusion' led to increasing attention to the 'rights of the child'. This topic relates to the inclusion of pupils with special needs into mainstream schools, their integration into mainstream classrooms, and their equal treatment (Dyson/Slee 2001). Similarly, the government has been keen to encourage projects to 'widen participation' of socially disadvantaged groups in higher education, with a focus on the attainment levels of pupils and students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The above policies draw on Tony Blair's ideas on the development of human potential, and on a notion of equality that 'is not about outcomes or incomes but about equal worth'. Patterson (2003, p. 173) argues that this interpretation of 'meritocracy' on the part of the British Prime Minister makes the New Labour approach to education distinctive in combining competitive individualism, partnerships between the public and the private spheres, and the use of the State when necessary.

In Northern Ireland, a research report was published by Gallagher/Smith that identified a number of problems with the system of selection in secondary schools (McKeown 2001). Following this report, the Independent Review Body on Post Primary Education reported to the Department of Education in Northern Ireland as follows: 'We are left in no doubt that the 11+ Tests are divisive, damage self-esteem, disrupt teaching and learning, and reinforce inequality of opportunity.' Grammar schools were criticized as having a lower proportion of children from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds, and as giving rise to a long tail of under-achieving schools. The subsequent Costello Report supported these conclusions. As a result, in January 2004 Jane Kennedy, Minister with Responsibility for Education in Northern Ireland, announced that the 'last Transfer Tests would be held in Autumn 2008' (DENI 2004). McKeown (2001) argues that policy makers in Northern Ireland used two discourses to justify the end of academically based selection at the age of 11: (a) an egalitarian discourse and the need to reinforce opportunity for all, and (b) the discourse of globalization and the need to create a competitive economy through investing more in human capital and in the creation of a highly skilled, adaptable, and creative workforce.

The different historical context of Scotland and Wales with regard to schooling meant that these countries responded to the New Labour reforms differently. Even though they never realized the comprehensive ideal in any pure form (there was always school-internal streaming, and differentiation between 'weaker' and 'stronger', more academic comprehensives), comprehensive schools were always popular, and perceived as successful. Paterson has shown that the success of comprehensive schools related to (a) the provision of high quality education; (b) growing rates of staying on to post-sixteen education; (c) reduced differences with respect to social class in access to schools, in attainment, and in entry to higher education; and (d) encouragement of the development of girls (in Phillips 2003). In this respect, the comprehensive schools in Scotland and Wales had a political element, as they repre-

sented a form of social democracy that was seen as antithetical to the Third Way of the England-based government. Furthermore, compared to England and Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales experienced less social segregation in attainment, as the overwhelming majority of students attended genuinely mixed comprehensive schools.

Both Scotland and Wales were also less keen to involve the private sector in educational reforms, and they showed a higher confidence in the professionalism of teachers (Jones 2003). Thus, the Scottish Parliament recently decided to reform Scottish teachers' professional working arrangements, and offered higher pay and a greater degree of teacher autonomy in return for more flexible working arrangements (Phillips 2003). Both 'equality' and 'inclusion' are deemed to be historical properties of the system in Scotland, and are seen as still relevant and valuable political aims (Ozga 1999, Scottish Executive 2001). In Scotland there are no Education Action Zones, and no pressure for large numbers of schools to become 'specialist schools'. Instead, 'new community schools' were introduced with the aim of bringing various health and social services onto the school premises. Their remit is to create 'social capital' in order to achieve social inclusion (Paterson 2003). Similarly, in Wales 'parental choice' is to be provided by 'confident' comprehensive schools that will offer broad, high quality education to the communities they serve, because they are 'integral to community capacity building' (National Assembly for Wales, quoted in Phillips 2003, p. 11). Overall, the structure of secondary schools in both Scotland and Wales has remained that of the neighbourhood community school with limited elements of parental choice of place (*ibid.*).

Paterson (2003) argues that it is simplistic to assume that there is such a thing as a single or unified 'New Labour ideology' (or for that matter a single 'Conservative ideology'). There are instead various strands of ideas that find different expression in the education reforms of recent years, depending on the focus and scope of the reforms, but also on the historical, economic, social, and political contexts of their implementation. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the diverse ways in which reforms have been implemented in the different national contexts of the United Kingdom, to a certain extent before, but mostly after devolution in 1998. This is true of Northern Ireland and Wales with their respective Assemblies, but it is especially true of Scotland, which has a Parliament and thus the legislative authority to make education policy, and to selectively resist undesirable policies made in England.

Expansion, differentiation, and modernization in further and higher education

The view of education and training as primarily investment in human capital necessary for economic growth had a great impact on post-compulsory education, and especially further education (FE) after the mid-1970s. The assumption that the relative decline of the UK economy was the result of poor education and training brought FE into the spotlight of education policy. Furthermore, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, rising unemployment amongst young people meant a great expansion in student numbers in further education colleges. In the 1980s in particular, there was a plethora of initiatives that attempted to address not only the problem of

unemployment, but also concerns with skill shortages amongst the population, and to promote a culture of 'entrepreneurship'. Most of these initiatives aimed at making the curriculum more relevant to the needs of industry and at preparing young people for the world of employment (Esland 1996). Post-sixteen education and training has since the mid-1980s been increasingly regarded by politicians as the key strategy for responding to the rapid changes in the economy.

The greatest reform in further education since the early 1980s has been the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which removed FE colleges from the control of Local Education Authorities. Colleges were 'incorporated' as independent institutions, run by their own governing bodies and responsible for their financial affairs. The 'market'-influenced reforms that we described earlier were introduced in the sector of FE, which now operates in a fully developed 'quasi-market'. The intention of the government in introducing this set of reforms was to combine the perceived benefits of the private sector in respect of efficiency and effectiveness with an increased focus on accountability and responsiveness to both national policies and the needs of industry (Alexiadou 1999). The reforms in FE are similar to those that took place in compulsory schooling, but with more radical effects. Colleges are funded and organized on market principles that encourage high levels of competition between institutions, managerial strategies that draw on business models of organization, and stringent quality controls on the basis of 'performance indicators'. These indicators have been designed to measure institutional effectiveness in the delivery of the curriculum, responsiveness to the college's clientele (students and industry), the efficiency with which finances are run, and the contribution of the college to national targets for education and training (FEFC 1998).

Today, further education is big business, with about four million students (full and part time) and 800 institutions throughout England and Wales. The continuing emphasis on education and skills in national economic strategies, and the more recent reforms of education have presented the sector with new challenges. In the mid-1990s, the government expected further education to carry out its policy agenda for lifelong learning (through a mixed offer of vocational, academic, higher, adult, and basic education courses), inclusive learning, and increased participation of groups that did not traditionally continue with formal post-sixteen education (Kennedy 1997).

Higher education followed a similar path during the 1980s and 1990s. This involved:

- A great expansion in the number of students attending higher education institutions (HEIs), and a big increase in the number of universities;
- An emphasis on the relevance of degrees to the economy, and the advocacy of a greater link between curriculum content and employers' needs for skills and expertise;
- Stronger central government control over HEIs; and
- Marketization, a dominant theme in higher education (HE) since the 1980s, and even more so throughout the 1990s and today.

In the mid-1980s, about 15% of British school leavers attended HE, while in the mid-1990s the figure had increased to 35% (Rees/Stroud 2001), and in 2002 it

reached 43% (DfES 2003). This great expansion in numbers began with the publication of the 1987 White Paper 'Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge', and took place mainly in the polytechnic sector, with a smaller increase in student numbers in the older civic universities.

The most significant reform to the HE sector between 1979 and the mid-1990s was introduced by the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which abolished the so-called 'binary divide' between universities and polytechnics. As a result of the Act, polytechnics were given university status (they are often referred to as 'new universities'), and contributed significantly to the growth of the sector. The 1992 legislation also transferred responsibility for the funding of higher education institutions from one national British funding council to separate councils for the three British countries (England, Scotland, and Wales). In Scotland this meant that, in contrast to the rest of the UK, tuition fees for students in HE were abolished, and replaced by a form of graduate tax (Paterson 2003).

Despite the commitment to growth of the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s, there was no corresponding increase in the funding of HE institutions. The additional costs had to be met by a more efficient use of existing resources, by attracting funding from business and industry, and by changes in the organization of teaching and learning, for instance, increasing the student to staff ratio (Ainley 1994). Similarly to schools and FE colleges, the funding of universities changed in ways that created a 'quasi-market' in HE based on student choice and competition between institutions. In such a system, the existing differentiation of status between institutions became more significant in the marketing of universities, and created a hierarchy of prestige and status in HE that was more developed than ever before (this had a particularly detrimental effect on the 'new universities' that had recently joined the sector). Under the Labour government, the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 set up General Teaching Councils in England and Wales, which made it possible for head teachers to be required to have a professional headship qualification, and allowed Her Majesty's Inspectorate to inspect teacher training establishments (Docking 1999).

With regard to the benefits of the HE policies of the 1980s and 1990s for students, some distinct gains can be identified, although they are as always accompanied by critique. The expansion of the HE system created an opportunity for social groups that did not traditionally opt for HE. This was helped by the creation of more flexible routes of access to HE, in addition to the conventional 'A levels'. Despite the increase, however, in the rate of participation in HE of students from working-class families, there is still a sharp differential between students from different social class backgrounds. Thus, the Dearing Report (1997) pointed out that almost 80% of an age cohort from professional occupation backgrounds (social class I) attended HEIs, and 31% of an age cohort from skilled non-manual backgrounds (social class III), but the representation in HE of young people from lower socio-economic groups was still very poor. More recent reports reveal the persistence of this pattern (Connor/Dewson 2001, DfES 2003). In addition, this differential applies not only to access to HE, but also to the type of institution that students from different backgrounds 'choose' (Brown/Scase 1994). These differentials of course reflect similar

patterns in other parts of the education system. These patterns have been documented by research over the last twenty-five years, which has demonstrated a strong link between educational attainment and social class backgrounds in Britain (Crompton 1998, Goldthorpe 1996, Halsey et al. 1980).

Entry levels to higher education of two other groups are worth reviewing briefly as a long-term result of the expansion of the sector. The first is that of women (often mature students), who have benefited significantly from growing HE provision and from alternative access routes. In the 1970s, women constituted only about one third of the student body, whereas today they make up just over 50% of students (Dearing 1997). The second social group that has benefited is ethnic minorities. Their representation in HE is higher than ever before, but here again the picture is complicated, since there are significant differences between ethnic groups, and in the types of institution they attend. Students from Indian and Chinese backgrounds are over-represented in HE compared to their numbers in the population as a whole, whereas students from Afro-Caribbean and Pakistani backgrounds are under-represented (Gillborn/Mirza 2000). Furthermore, the majority of students from ethnic minorities tend to attend 'new universities' rather than 'old' traditional ones. These patterns of differentiation become even more complex if we look at ethnicity in combination with social class and with gender, and also at racial discrimination in admission procedures (Rees/Stroud 2001).

Controversially, throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s student maintenance grants were gradually replaced by loans to be repaid by students after graduation. More recently, and under a Labour government, there have been reforms in the funding and organization of HE that have prompted heated debates about the purpose of HE in a modern economy and society, but also about its role in the pursuit of social justice. In 2003 the government published the White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education', which introduced proposals for (a) a radical restructuring of HE that would identify a small number of Universities as 'research institutions', with the rest concentrating mainly on teaching, and (b) the introduction of 'top-up' tuition fees for all HE students (with the exception of those from very poor families). After twelve months of consultation and troublesome political debates, the government passed the Higher Education Bill in January 2004, which legislated these changes. All students in HE will be charged £3,000 fees per year, but this will only be repaid after graduation, and after the graduate has found work that pays beyond a certain threshold salary.

The fear in many quarters is that marketization in HE will increase, and that the existing hierarchy of HE institutions will become even more rigid. The result could be that students will select institutions on the basis of their ability to pay, and that institutions that are already strong financially (and in terms of recruitment and status) will be strengthened in the market-place (they are already demanding the freedom to charge even higher fees for their courses) at the expense of others. Additionally, courses that do not lead to lucrative professions will find it difficult to recruit students, who might be put off by the prospect of repaying the fees. While the management of universities welcomed the latest reforms, the majority of academics are sceptical or fearful of their implications. The Higher Education Bill is certain to

bring changes that are not necessarily welcome (especially for the majority of academics, who will be working in 'teaching-only' universities). It is too early to comment on the impact of the reforms on the sector, but the future direction of universities has certainly been designed on the basis of stronger marketization and institutional differentiation.

In Scotland there are four old Scottish universities: St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh (founded in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries). Eight further universities were formally established as independent universities between 1964 and 1967, and five others were granted the title of university between 1992 and 1994. Most of the remaining higher education institutions, which all offer courses at degree level, although they are not themselves universities, were formerly central institutions. These institutions tend to specialize in particular areas, for example in teacher education, art and architecture, music and drama, health care, food, and tourism. Higher education in Scotland is also provided in further education colleges (Eurydice 2004). It should be noted here that the above reforms of student 'fees' apply to the HE sectors in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, but do not apply equally to Scottish universities. Students from Scotland and countries of the European Union apart from the UK pay no fees in advance in Scottish universities, but are charged £2,000 (British pounds) after graduation. However, undergraduates from England, Wales, and Northern Ireland who study in Scotland pay £3,600 (British pounds) in fees. This discrepancy has caused claims of 'discrimination' that are currently (2004) being investigated by the European Parliament (Hill 2004).

Some final thoughts: globalization, Europe and education in the UK

This chapter has explored the development of education policy in the United Kingdom through the lens of the changing relationship between the State, society, and schooling. Over the examined period of 'state' education in the UK, and despite frequent reforms and radical changes to the system, a number of issues continue to be relevant; indeed some are as current today as they were a hundred years ago. Thus, the old debates about meritocracy and the expectations of genuine equality of opportunity through schooling are still present in the discussions on education reform, although they have been re-contextualized and articulated in the context of 'economic competitiveness'. The currently dominant agenda of 'raising standards' of performance across the education system is connected to the government's conception of education policy as part of economic policy – aiming to increase the country's competitiveness in the global 'knowledge economy'.

Globalization and the rhetoric that accompanies it demand an education that will prepare future citizens for a world of rapid technological and scientific expansion requiring a constant up-dating of skills and knowledge. The school, still organized along the lines of a modern, 'mass system', does not easily conform to what many authors describe as a 'post-modern' world, where services need to be offered in units that are smaller, more personalized, and organized on the basis of team-work (McKenzie 2000). Increasingly, the role of schooling is defined in relation to its contribution to the creation of the 'knowledge economy', but also in terms of the

promotion of social cohesion. In these respects, debates about 'globalization', but also about the role of the European Union are highly relevant in understanding the context of education policy direction.

UK governments, and especially the Labour government after 1997, have repeatedly used the discourse of 'globalization' in order to justify unpalatable domestic reforms. 'Globalization' is promoted as an external economic constraint that is (a) inevitable, (b) requires changes that will make the country economically competitive in the (inevitable) global knowledge war, and (c) legitimizes reform of the public services and the need for modernization (Hay/Rosamond 2002). The UK government has accepted the discourse used by various international organizations (such as the World Trade Organization and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) that posits global economic changes and pressures as a 'fact'. Across the European Union, there seems to be a similar acceptance of globalization as a set of forces that nation states and the EU need to respond to. The European Commissioner Romano Prodi (2001), in a speech on globalization, has argued that 'whether we like it or not, globalization is here. Our task is to control it, to use it to the benefit of mankind'. Drawing on this theme, the majority of education documents published by the European Commission since the early 1990s emphasize the economic role of education in making Europe a globally competitive economy (Alexiadou 2005).

This insistence on the economic functions of education and its main role as a means of developing human capital has implications for more traditional educational functions such as the cultural work of schools in the creation of citizens and in the development of national traditions and national identities. The 'social' and 'civic' elements of the work of the school become marginalized, while the system encourages citizen identities based on notions of the 'consumer' and the 'flexible worker'. In the UK, the above shifts of meaning have been further enhanced by the process of decentralization, marketization, and political devolution, even though the national curriculum was aimed at balancing these with a nationally cohesive programme for compulsory schooling (the national curriculum).

Globalization discourses and related reforms in UK education politics have been mediated by local and national history and politics. This idea is developed in Jones and Alexiadou's (2001) discussion of 'travelling' and 'embedded' education policy. Travelling policy refers to supra- and trans-national agency activity, as well as to common agendas (for example, the reshaping of educational purposes to develop human capital for the knowledge economy). Embedded policy is to be found in 'local' spaces (national, regional, or local) where global policy agendas come up against existing priorities and practices. This is well illustrated by the different adaptations on the part the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies after 1999 of the English education policy agenda. Northern Ireland and Wales have ceased to publish league tables of school examination results, while the Scottish Executive Education Department has adopted a very different approach to both comprehensive, community schools and questions of teacher pay and professionalism compared to that of the English Department for Education and Skills. This selective adoption and adaptation of national and international discourses by different regions or localities suggests that established working practices often (although

certainly not always) contest global or national policy directions. And this contest might of course take place between institutions and practices established in a period of social-democratic or national-statist reform on the one hand, and the priorities of new market-orientated or managerial policy agendas on the other.

In the United Kingdom there are examples of all of the above. The political conflict over the 'comprehensive ideal' and its institutional expression (the comprehensive schools) dominated the latter part of the twentieth century. Rooted in social-democratic policies aiming at the creation of an egalitarian society, it kept changing forms under political pressure, mostly in England, that resisted its goals and its structures. Scotland and Wales have accepted it, and made it work in a way that it never 'had the chance' to work in the English and Northern Irish contexts. The 1980s brought along policies of marketization and differentiation in schooling which drew on competitive individualism and hierarchical organization, and which were modelled on business and managerial models of organization. As we have seen, since devolution in 1998 the education systems of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have diverged further and in significant respects. In parts of the UK, this has taken the form of a preference for models of schooling that are less differentiated, less diverse, less selective, and more equitable.

As for the impact of the European Union on UK education politics, it involves on the one hand the economic and employment-driven definitions of the role of education that seem to dominate the Commission publications since the Maastricht Treaty, and on the other the political commitment of the EU to combat the problem of poverty and achieve social cohesion (Alexiadou 2005). Issues to do with student and labour mobility, student and teacher exchange programmes, and the creation of a 'European identity' are frequently at the fore of EU concerns (Brock/Tulasiewicz 2000). However, so are concerns with the problems of unemployment and social exclusion across the Union. Education policy in the EU is seen as fundamental in achieving both these political objectives. The United Kingdom has a certain set of European (and other) discourses and policies available for the construction of a national strategy for equality and social justice, and seems over the last few years to have taken an approach that only modestly regulates the effects of neo-liberal policies on education and the labour market. Nevertheless, and despite the discourses of globalization, national welfare states still play a significant role in deciding social policy for their national spheres. In EU social policy there seems to be a moderation of the more *laissez-faire* language and political goals of the pre-1997 period, with increasingly ambitious aims for education and employment policies constructed for a fairer society in Europe (Brock/Tulasiewicz 2000). What this will mean for education policies in individual member states of the EU, and in the UK in particular, remains to be seen.

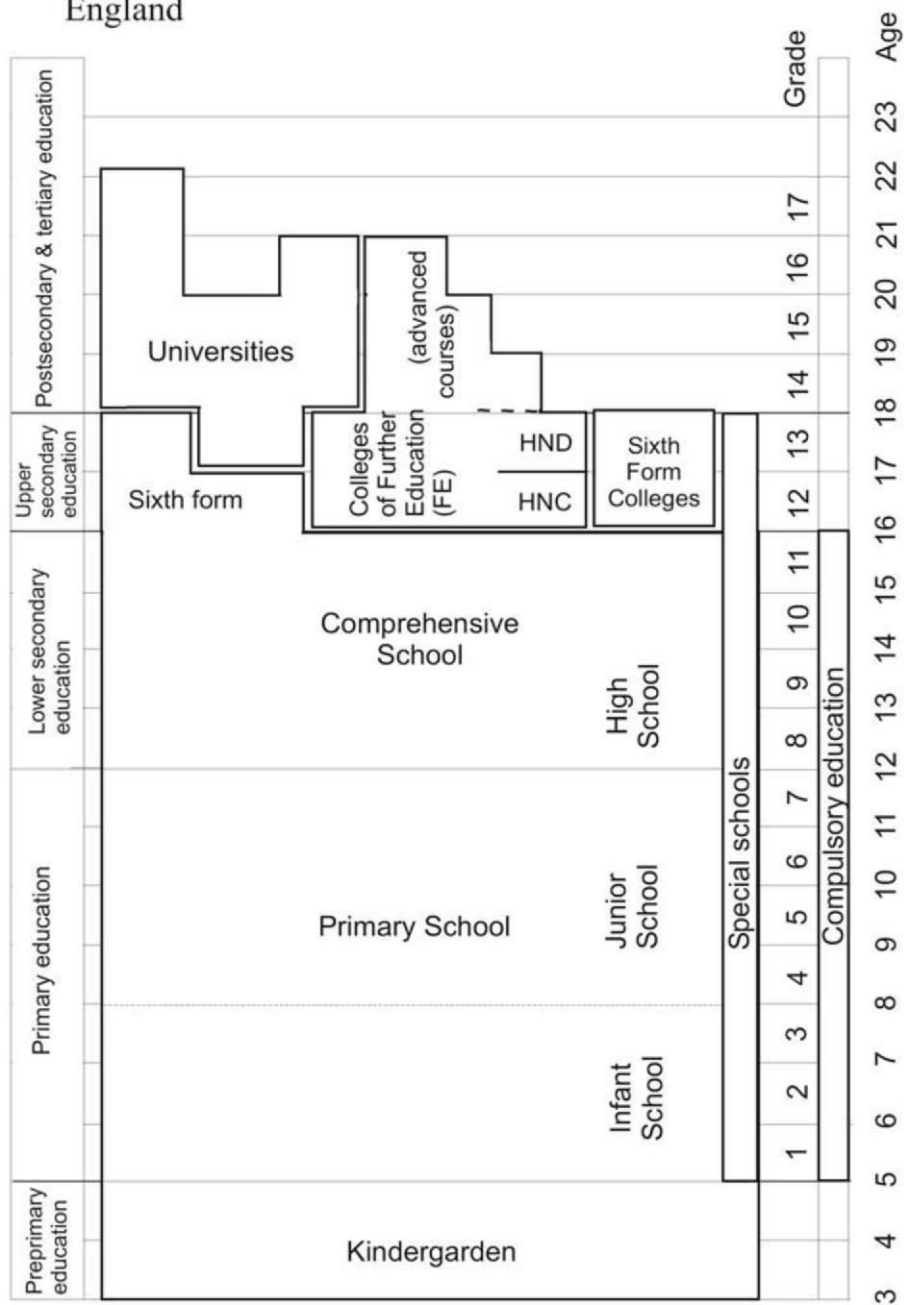
References

- Ainley, P.: *Degrees of Difference: Higher Education in the Nineties*. London 1994.
- Adnett, N./Davies, P.: *Schooling Reforms in England: From Quasi-markets to Co-opetition?*
In: *Journal of Education Policy* 18 (2003) 4, pp. 393-406.
- Alexiadou, N.: *Situating Further Education within a Changing Public Sector*. In: Alexiadou, N./Brock, C. (Eds): *Education as a Commodity*. John Catt Educational Limited. 1999.
- Alexiadou, N.: *Social Inclusion and Social Exclusion in England: Tensions in Education Policy*. In: *Journal of Education Policy* 17 (2002) 1, pp. 71-86.
- Alexiadou, N.: *Social Exclusion, and Educational Opportunity: The Case of British Education Policies within a European Union Context*. In: *Globalisation, Society and Education Journal* 3 (2005) 1, (forthcoming).
- Alexiadou, N./Ozga, J.: *Modernising Education Governance in England and Scotland: Devolution and Control*. In: *European Educational Research Journal* 1 (2002) 4, pp. 676-691.
- Arnot, M./David, M./Weiner, G.: *Closing the Gender Gap: Post-war Education and Social Change*. Cambridge 1999.
- Ball, S. J.: *Politics and Policy Making in Education*. London 1990.
- Bowe, R./Ball, S./Gold, A.: *Reforming Education and Changing Schools: Case Studies in Policy Sociology*. London 1992.
- Brock, C./Tulasiewicz, W. (Eds): *Education in a Single Europe*. London 2000.
- Brown, P./Scase, R.: *Higher Education and Corporate Realities: Class, Culture and the Decline of Graduate Careers*. London 1994.
- Chitty, C.: *Selection by Specialization*. In: Chitty, C./Simon, B. (Eds): *Promoting Comprehensive Education in the 21st Century*. Stoke-on-Trent 2001.
- Connor, H./Dewson, S. et. al.: *Social Class and Higher Education: Issues Affecting Decisions on Participation by Lower Social Class Groups*, Research Report No.267, Department for Education and Employment. 2001.
- Crompton, R.: *Class and Stratification: An Introduction to Current Debates*. 1998.
- Croxford, L.: *Inequality in Attainment at Age 16: A 'Home International' Comparison*, Centre for Educational Sociology Edinburgh, Briefing 19 (2000).
- Dale, R.: *The State and Education Policy*. Buckingham 1989.
- Dearing R.: *Higher Education in the Learning Society: The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education*. London 1997.
- DfEE - Department for Education and Employment: *White Paper: Excellence in Schools*, London: Stationery office, Cm 3681 (July). 1997.
- DfES - Department for Education and Skills: *White Paper: The Future of Higher Education*, London: Stationary Office. 2003.
- Department for Education, Northern Ireland (DENI): *Press Release, 26/01/04*
<http://www.deni.gov.uk/pprb/index.htm>.
- Docking, J.: *What is the Solution? An Overview of National Policies for Schools, 1979-99*. In: Docking, J. (Ed.): *New Labour's Policies for Schools: Raising the Standard?* London 2000.
- Dyson, A./Slee, R.: *Special Needs Education from Warnock to Salamanca: The Triumph of Liberalism?* In: Phillips, R./Furlong, J. (Eds): *Education, Reform and The State: Twenty-five Years of Policy and Practice*. London 2001.
- Esland, G.: *Education, Training and Nation-state Capitalism: Britain's Failing Strategy*. In: Avis, J./Bloomer, M./Esland, G./Gleeson, D./Hodkinson, P. (Eds): *Knowledge and Nationhood*. London 1996.
- Eurydice: *The Information Network on Education in Europe*. 2004. <http://www.eurydice.org>.

- FEFC (Further Education Funding Council): Report of the Quality Assessment Committee for 1996-97, Circular 13 (1998).
- FEFC: A Landmark Year, Annual Report 1999-2000, 1082 (2000) (<http://www.fefc.ac.uk>).
- Gewirtz, S.: *The Managerial School: Post-welfarism and Social Justice in Education*. London 2002.
- Gewirtz, S./Ball, S./Bowe, R.: *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*, Buckingham 1995.
- Gillborn, D./Mirza, H. S.: *Educational Inequality: Mapping Race, Class and Gender, A Synthesis of Research Evidence*. OFSTED 2000. (www.ofsted.gov.uk).
- Glennester, H.: *Social policy*. In: Seldon, A. (ed.): *The Blair Effect: the Blair Government 1997-2001*. London 2001.
- Goldthorpe, J.: *Problems of Meritocracy*. In: Erikson, R./Jonsson, J. O. (eds.): *Can Education Be Equalized? The Swedish Case in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford 1996.
- Halsey, A. H./Heath, A. F./Ridge, J. M.: *Origins and Destinations: Family, Class and Education in Modern Britain*. Oxford 1980.
- Hay, C., Rosamond B.: *Globalisation, European integration and the discursive construction of economic imperatives*. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 9 (2002) 2, pp.147-167.
- Hill, P.: *English complaints lead EU to review differences in fees*. In: *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 27 February 2004.
- HMSO: *Educational Statistics for the United Kingdom*. London 1989.
- Jones, K.: *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present*. Cambridge 2003.
- Jones, K./Alexiadou, N. : *Travelling policy – local spaces*. Paper presented at the Congrès Marx International III: *Le capital et l'humanité*, Université de Paris-X Nanterre-Sorbonne, 26-29 September 2001.
- Kennedy, H.: *Learning Works: Widening Participation in Further Education*. Further Education Funding Council. 1997.
- Lawton, D.: *The Tory Mind on Education 1979-94*. London 1994.
- Lister, R.: *Strategies for Social Inclusion: Promoting Social Cohesion and Social Justice?* In: Askonas, P./Stewart, A. (eds.): *Social Inclusion: Possibilities and Tensions*. Houndmills 2000.
- Lowndes, G. A. N.: *The Silent Social Revolution: An Account of the Expansion of Public Education in England and Wales 1895-1965*. Oxford 1969.
- MacKinnon, D./Statham, J./Hales, M.: *Education in the UK: Facts and Figures*. London 1996.
- McKenzie, J.: *Changing Education: A Sociology of Education since 1944*. Harlow 2001.
- McKeown, P.: *Schools in Competition: Open Enrolment in an Academically Selective School System*. Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, 24-27 September, Frankfurt am Main 1997.
- McKeown, P.: *Time for a change? A Case Study of High Stakes Testing in Northern Ireland*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA. April 2001.
- McNay, I./Ozga, J. (Eds): *Policy-making in Education: The Breakdown of Consensus*. 1985.
- Ozga, J.: "Two nations? Education and Social Inclusion-Exclusion in Scotland and England", *Education for Social Justice* 1 (1999) 3, pp. 44-51.
- Paterson, L.: *The Three Educational Ideologies of the British Labour Party, 1997-2001*. In: *Oxford Review of Education* 29 (2003) 2, pp.165-186.
- Phillips, R.: *Education, the State and the Politics of Reform: The Historical Context, 1976-2001*. In: Phillips, R./Furlong, J. (Eds): *Education, Reform and the State: Twenty-five Years of Policy and Practice*. London 2001.
- Phillips, R.: *Education Policy, Comprehensive Schooling and Devolution in the disunited Kingdom: An Historical 'Home International' Analysis*. In: *Journal of Education Policy* 18 (2003) 1, pp.1-17.

- Phillips, R./Daugherty, R.: Education Devolution and Nation Building in Wales: a Different 'Great Debate'. In: Phillips, R./Furlong, J. (Eds): Education, Reform and the State: Twenty-five years of Policy and Practice. London 2001.
- Prodi, R.: Globalisation. Speech delivered on 20/7/2001: http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/prodi/articles/globalisation_en.htm.
- Rees, G./Stroud, D.: Creating a Mass System of Higher Education: Participation, the Economy and Citizenship. In: Phillips, R./Furlong, J. (Eds): op.cit., 2001.
- Roach, J.: Secondary Education in England: 1870-1902. London 1991.
- Rowntree Foundation: Inquiry into Income and Wealth. York 1995.
- Scottish Executive: National Priorities in School Education. 2001. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/education>.
- Simon, B.: The Politics of Educational Reform: 1920-1940. London 1974.
- SEU - Social Exclusion Unit (2000) <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu>
- Tawney, R.H.: Secondary Education for All: A Policy for Labour. London 1922.
- Tooley, J.: Reclaiming Education. London 1999.

England



Wolfgang Mitter

Education in Europe: The Way Ahead

The 'elastic' borders of Europe and the diversity of its 'educational map'

On the base of long discussions the authors of this handbook have decided for an extensive concept. It comprises the education systems, in particular the schools, in Europe in a geographical dimension, whose borders essentially coincide with those uniting the member states of the Council of Europe. The education systems described, with their foci on primary and secondary schools, call attention to a concept of Europe, which is extended from the North Cape to Crete and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Caspian Sea. Therefore it is oriented to the notion of 'elasticity' whose applicability is, in particular, demonstrated by the inclusion of the Transcaucasian republics as well as of the two 'bi-continental' countries: the Russian Federation and Turkey. This 'elasticity' (Fernández-Armesto 2002, p. 13) is reflected by the diversity of the individual country studies with regard to the historical emergence and development of 'national education systems' in their specific political, legal, socio-economic and cultural frameworks. As regards their structures, significant differences are, above all, typical of both secondary levels of schooling: at the lower level the preference for integration versus vertical (bi-partite or tri-partite) structuring, at the upper level the specific kind of interrelations between institutions of general (liberal) and vocational education. In this context particular mention should be made of the pre-school level inside or outside the legally established 'education systems'. Finally, the mainstream of diversity had its significant impacts on curricula and syllabi, time-tables, examination systems and the ways of instruction and education.

Diversity in modern Europe traces back to the emergence of the 'national education systems' with the foundation of schools by absolute princes in Germany in the 17th and 18th centuries, gradually expanding all over Europe. England and Wales joined this trend comparatively late, namely in the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries. It has been further complicated by the temporal differences concerning the beginning of nation-states and 'national education systems'. It was only in the course of the 20th century that this process was pushed by the collapse of the multinational and multicultural empires at the end of World War I and the constitution of new nation-states on their former territories, and completed by the collapse of the Soviet-dominated 'Eastern bloc' and Yugoslavia at the beginning of the nineties (Mitter 2004a).

Observing comparable features of diversity should not, however, obscure the widespread range of commonalities interlinking the current education systems. First of all in the whole of Europe compulsory school attendance has been enacted, and it is still in the process of expansion. Everywhere schools are horizontally structured by primary, secondary and tertiary levels, regardless of their individual extensions and demarcations. It is true that curricula and syllabi are characterised by wide-

spread variety, as regards extent, content and sequence of subject matter. Nevertheless they indicate essential similarities of their cores. In all countries they are composed of mother tongue (and national literature) teaching, mathematics, sciences, history and, nowadays as a rule, foreign languages. In particular, most of the national education systems share impacts of the big Educational Reform Movement (Reformpädagogik, Éducation nouvelle, etc.) of the beginning 20th century, but at the same time, however, survival and obstinacy of its traditional predecessors and its opponents. Finally, it is true that the 'national educational sovereignty', as monopolised by the modern state, has laid the foundations of all the diversities we get aware of in the current period. On the other hand adopting and implementing them has ended up in the commonality that formal education is the responsibility of the individual modern states.

Predictions at the beginning of the 21st century

In the current period education systems are affected by growing influence of global changes, concerning both their internal processes and their positions in the perceptions by the society. Since this trend is ubiquitous and marked by strong dynamism, exact predictions on times to come are very difficult. The following considerations are made on the proviso that they need to be revised even in the near future. They are based upon the evaluation of quantitative and qualitative findings whose interpretations are restricted to issues of short and medium range. This statement deliberately includes interdependencies and overlaps between these two categories. The predictions are focused on six *criteria* which are interrelated and do not pretend to any completeness. The combination of both range-bound categories explains that the present approach is oriented to the claim of empirical legitimacy. On the other hand subjective judgments are not excluded, as far as they are tenable.

Educational sovereignty

Europe's schools have been institutionalised in 'education systems' which are subjected to the 'educational sovereignty' of the modern nation-state. Nowadays, however, this status is relativised by several parallel and counter-current trends. Answering the question, if these are to be considered as 'liberating' or 'threatening' is dependent on the expounder's historical, sociological or ideological standpoint. The processes indicating relativisation of 'national educational sovereignty' is to be observed in the regional and global dimension. As regards the *regional* level, one has to make a distinction between its *intra-national* and *international* range.

The *intra-national* range includes, on the one hand, centuries-old territorial units, to be exemplified by Germany with its 'federal states' (*Bundesländer*) and Switzerland with its 'cantons'. On the other hand modern forms of regional units have been constituted, such as the 'communities' in Belgium and the 'autonomous provinces' in Spain and Italy. In their status as 'sub-sovereign' legal bodies they bear responsibility for legislation, administration and supervision of their education systems. In this respect they must be demarcated from emerging decentralised units on the map of 'Europe of Regions' in form of local self-government with greater or lesser compe-

tencies. 'Educational sovereignty', however, remains with the super-ordinate national or regional authorities. Political decentralisation has also stimulated the emergence of border-crossing *Euroregions*. It is true that they do not question the sovereignty of the nation-states involved, but they are initiative in launching educational projects in the field of bilingual instruction and intercultural education (Mitter 2004b).

The *international* range of regionalisation is mainly represented by the European Union with its 25 constitutive member states (since May 1st, 2004). In the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) whose essentials were confirmed by the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) education has been explicitly included in the EU's legal responsibilities, with its general and vocational sectors (Mitter 2004a; 2004b). In particular this innovation has become manifest in articles 126 and 127 declaring the contribution of the EU to 'the development of an advanced education' as a prior task of European policies. In this respect these agreements go beyond the strategy that had been already pursued by the previous European Communities in the field of vocational education, including higher education. That strategy had concentrated on the elaboration of mutual acknowledgement of professional qualifications and higher education diplomas, achieved in the framework of the common employment and labour market policies and oriented to mobility of the workforce within the EC.

Compared to the economic competencies that the EU has been provided with in the last decade, its educational competencies have hitherto remained formally insignificant which is due to the central position, allocated to the principle of 'subsidiarity' in article 3b of the Treaty of Maastricht. This formal restriction can be regarded as one side of the coin. The other side, however, points to article 149 and to how it has been made use of in the past decade. It deals with the EU's contribution to the development of 'quality education' which has opened 'something of a loophole that has been more recently used' (Dale/Robertson 2002, p. 25). This subcutaneous trend has materialised in the establishment of the separate Directorate General for Education and Culture in 1999 and the introduction of the new *Open Method of Co-ordination* (OMC), adopted by the Lisbon Summit in 2000, as a tool to develop common indicators and benchmarks (ibid., p. 26). Furthermore this Summit has also commissioned a report on the future of general and vocational education. Based upon the recommendations of that report, the post-Lisbon Summits have initiated a working programme (Heidemann 2001; BiBB 2002).

Furthermore, one has to look at the multifarious activities extending the EU's sphere of action below the upper level of formal decision-making. This 'lower level' is demonstrated by exchange programmes for teachers and students in higher education as well as of trainers and trainees in vocational education of the secondary and post-secondary levels. Finally, the European Commission continually publishes memoranda whose medium-term impacts on the educational policies of the member states should not be underestimated, the less so as these publishing activities are getting associated, in particular in the framework of OMC, with the invasion of international evaluations of achievement into the decision-making procedures (see below). In this connection further mention should be made about the comprehensive Commission Report of November 2001 containing the programme of 'creating a European space of lifelong learning' (Kommission 2001a; cf. Eurydice 2001 and

Kommission 2001b). All these documents reveal a change in the self-identification of the EU, namely to grow, beyond economic, social and political integration, into an 'educational and cultural community' (Hochbaum 1993) and, consequently, into a 'European space' (BMBF 2001).

The exceptional status of the EU among the international organisations to be described in the following paragraphs is rooted in its supra-national competencies within the legal provisions including issues of instructions to the member states. It is this supra-national status, which distinctly defines its singular position among all the other regional organisations. Among these the Council of Europe can be regarded as the 'elder brother' (and rival!) of the EU. It was founded already in 1949. It is true that the absence of any 'supra-national' competence certainly curtails its influence on national educational policies. Yet, its territorial extension and the greater number of its member states enable the Council of Europe to act as a connecting link between the regional and global dimension in the current shift of paradigm. Beside the West, Central and all the Southeast European countries the Council of Europe also includes Norway, Iceland and Switzerland as well as Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the Transcaucasian republics.

The 'governmental level' of the *global* dimension (Borden/Mc Ginn 1999; Carnoy/Rhoten 2002) is occupied by the educational activities of the big trans-continental world organisations, which are only outlined in this chapter, since they are not particularly limited to Europe. To begin with, the numerous programmes and projects of UNESCO are widespread and multifaceted. In recent years OECD and World Bank have attained growing weight in their capacities as promoters of education as well as contributors to policy-oriented educational research. Their decisions are dependent on the formal consent of the member states concerned, which does not directly affect their educational sovereignty. This restriction, however, does not exclude interventions of these world organisations, in form not only of budgetary injunctions, resulting from financial grants, but also of recommendations concerning curricular or structural aspects. In particular educational policies of East European countries (in their widest range) have been affected by such interventions. Furthermore, mention has to be made about the informal area of restricted national educational sovereignty, arising from the growing acceptance of international findings of educational assessment studies (Astiz/Wiseman/Baker 2002; Benveniste 2002). This is why not only the official international organisations, such as OECD, but also international associations, such as IEA (*International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement*), exert, at least indirectly, distinct influence on national policies in their capacities as informal informants.

As regards the concept of 'educational sovereignty' in general, political analysis gives insight into an educational map, revealing tension between the traditional 'national sovereignty', in the European Union legitimated by the principle of subsidiarity and supported by conservative perseverance, on the one hand and by the aforementioned interventions in the regional and global dimensions on the other. Historical comparison is offered by the competition between church-bound dominance, inherited from pre-modern periods, and the, in the end successful, challenge by the nation-state.

Educational goals in the tension between quality assurance and equity of educational opportunity

Promotion of educational achievement and equity (or equality) of educational opportunity has determined educational policies in their capacities as rivalling goals and tasks to be observed in the introduction and implementation of curricula and the enactment of school-leaving examinations, distinctly beginning in the second half of the 20th century. The 1960s and the 1970s were dominated by the priority of equality (afterwards equity) of educational opportunity, linked with the foundation of comprehensive schools (in the widest meaning) in most European countries. The advancement of neoliberalism and globalisation in the nineties of the 20th and its expansion in recent years have, however, entailed a wide-reaching change of priority in favour of achievement promotion and quality assurance, this time motivated by disclaim of its ties to personality education having dominated educational philosophies in former periods, both in selective and elementary schools. Issues of 'economic precedence' in individual nation-states play a focal role in current debates, this trend being likely to gain growing importance in the predictable future. Advocates of including education in this trend are in a favourable position, insofar as empirical evidence of educational achievements have made remarkable progress in the past decades and, even more, in recent years with special regard to their international range. Therefore the outcome of the TIMS and PISA studies have caused, for example in Germany (Baumert et al. 2000; Deutsches Pisa-Konsortium 2002), great attention and even excitement, which is significant, the more so as the outcomes of the first mathematics and science study (FIMS) had been accepted by disinterest and resistance three decades before. Emphasis has to be laid on allocating the progress in quantitative achievement research to the all-European goal of quality assurance. *Assessment, benchmarks, ranking and league tables*, as explicitly underlined by the aforementioned Lisbon Summit (2000), have become ubiquitous tools, conceived by international expert teams and materialised in comparative inquiries.

Increasing pressure of the global labour markets reinforces the progress of neoliberal educational ideologies propagating one-sided selective policies in education. The 'commercialisation of education', hitherto associated with parts of the private school sector only, has recently encroached on the state sector too. National policies themselves contributed to this trend, insofar as schools are demanded to acquire curricular modules as well as qualification schemes on the 'market'. Further reinforcement is indirectly provided by the educational efforts of OECD and World Bank and directly promoted by WTO (*World Trade Organisation*) and, in particular, its associate GATS (*General Agreement on Trade and Services*). According to its policy, defining, developing and implementing curricular modules and qualification schemes have become feasible (von Kopp 2002).

Opening of schools

The criterion dealing with the opening of schools conceals a trend occurring on the micro-level of schools and local communities. It has to be derived from the *top-bottom* reduction of state competencies and, at the same time, the desire of a growing civil society for participation in the *bottom-top* development of schools to self-

governing bodies in economic-organisational, curricular and pedagogic matters. In this desire means of *intern* evaluation and decision-making play a particular role. Taken as a whole, this trend is not at all void of contradictory, ideology-based motivations and objectives. It is rooted in the aforementioned neoliberal conceptions and is connected with the global trend of people's geographical and social mobility. On the other hand it reveals attitudes of tradition-oriented persistence, based upon demands for 'a return to the good old school'. Finally, it indicates widespread sympathies for overall concepts of *democratisation* and *autonomy*, in this case related to management and formation of individual schools (Döbert/Geißler 1997), whereby the rank of the persons responsible is exposed to controversially discussed approaches. Should self-government be restricted to the 'inner' circle consisting of head teachers, teaching staffs and (also) students' bodies, or should the range be extended to the 'outer' circle with local communities, parents' bodies and governing boards (representing professional, political, social or religious interests)? While compromises have to be sought and attained in identifying the participating groups and their members, other problems are posed, as regards the range of competencies, in particular in the fields of school management and financing as well as of decisions on curricular and pedagogic objectives. The appointment (and dismissal) of teachers has become an important item, as having been practised in Switzerland for a long time. National (and federal) authorities, in principle, support all these efforts aimed at local self-government, whereby, however, not only the encouragement of democratisation, but also considerations to delegate budgetary responsibilities play an important role. Moreover, the withdrawal of national educational sovereignty is compensated by the advancement of the aforementioned 'new sovereigns', exercising external assessment and, at least factually, casting the hitherto governmental competencies of inspectorates or other supervisory bodies into the shade. Finally, opening of schools means opening the doors of classrooms to excursions, interdisciplinary projects, school festivals and visits on the one hand and invitation of experts from 'outside' to hold special lessons or courses on themes of their own professional expertise.

Curriculum development

Curriculum development is another field indicating various intern tensions and conflicts. Compromises are inevitable by the mere fact that the time factor compels compliance with condensations of subject matter, even in whole-day schools. Moreover, evidence grows that the years of full-time school attendance, including pre-schools, primary and secondary levels, should not be prolonged furthermore, but rather shortened. It is this pressure to restriction on the whole, however, which makes decisions in the concrete case even more crucial.

Advocates of traditional curriculum conceptions engage in retaining ancient and mediaeval history, ancient languages and 'classical canons' in the literature courses concerned. Nevertheless a shift of hitherto privileged subject-matter seems to be evident. Firstly, 'new' subjects focused on modern information and communication technologies ('computers to all schools!') have been propagated and implemented. Social studies and political education have been admitted to curricula too, even in

countries, such as England and Wales, where their inclusion had been hitherto thought to be neglected. In this context further mention should be made of the extension of foreign languages. The EU and the Council of Europe plead for 'trilingualism' of all European citizens, but its implementation raises controversial arguments. Advocates of 'open individual choice' (with certain preferences to teaching the languages of neighbouring countries) are quarrelling with their opponents who want to give English the exclusive and irreplaceable position against all other options. It seems that the latter argument is unbeatable, due to options by parents and youngsters as well by the 'market' and irrespective of recommendations by official authorities of national or regional status. On the whole debates on curriculum development are increasingly reinforced by considerations of *standards* and their implementation in sets of *core curricula* and examination systems, with reading comprehension (related to the instruction medium), mathematics, foundation of sciences and one foreign language as obligatory foci. They should occupy the first place in the syllabi against the other obligatory and the optional subjects.

Beyond the debate on priorities concerning content and sequence within individual subjects, current considerations signalise a regression, if not the end of the monopoly of the traditional curriculum, based upon individual subjects. The 'canonisation' of subjects which had arisen from academic disciplines in the course of the 19th century, has led to the present state that a few topical academic disciplines are not reflected in the school curricula, such as law and economics, appearing there only as components within history or social sciences, frequently taught by unqualified teachers. Psychology, to mention another example, has not got any entry into the curriculum. There has not been any consistent conceptualisation of subject-crossing curricula so far, but reforms in the (natural) sciences and social sciences areas indicate partial alternatives at least. Comparable approaches can be discerned in foreign languages tuition, aimed at developing this sector into a coherent learning area. It is based upon elementary courses in the tuition of the first foreign language including methodical foundations for the students' acquiring further languages without having always to start from the 'bottom' of elementary rules. Within the current curricular structures there is still too much space for duplication and inconsistency which need to be overcome.

Innovations in knowledge teaching are reinforced by progress in imparting creative and critical thinking, constructive learning and, as a consequence of its implementation, practical action (e.g. in the planning and execution of action-oriented projects or the application of computers in *all* subjects). In this context particular attention is called to the outcomes of the international assessment inquiries, the more so as these explicitly underscore the interdependence between knowledge acquisition and problem solving. Finally, the list of curricular deficits includes necessary gaps in organising classroom instruction, such as excess of frontal teaching and underestimation of group and individual learning. These deficits are remarkable, the more so as the aforementioned alternatives were demanded and practised by the prominent innovators of the European Reform Movement and pioneers of Progressive Education in the United States and other countries one hundred years ago. The 'study house', as recently identified as the organisational focus at the university-

bound sector of upper secondary education in the Netherlands points the way to revival and advancement of those 'old' projects.

How are the prospects of a 'European Curriculum' to be estimated (LcLean 1993; Mitter 1996; Lowe 1999; Astiz et al. 2002)? Short-term and also medium-term predictions should be rather cautious, as regards formal harmonisation. The aforementioned trends, however, suggest that border-crossing mobility of students and teachers, linked with the overall cross-national developments in economy, science, technology and political co-operation, are likely to accelerate 'Europe-oriented' networks in certain learning areas. Such tendencies are to be expected in the sciences rather than in the humanities, due to their tradition-bound roots in national cultures. On the other hand the various projects aimed at harmonising national history syllabi textbooks, mainly initiated by *Deutsches Schulbuch-Institut* (German Textbook Institute) in Brunswick, are worth to call particular appreciation.

Intercultural socialisation and education

In Western Europe the streams of border-crossing migrant workforce have expanded, for a long time already, by those of refugees and asylum seekers. Central Europe is likely to be included in this trend rather soon. The Russian Federation is worth mentioning too in this connection, because it is confronted with the challenge to integrate millions of ethnic Russians 'returning' from former non-Russian Soviet republics. The receiving countries have initiated more or less effective strategies to integrate the newcomers into their new surroundings. On the whole the effects hitherto attained are far from meeting the migrants' needs and reaching acceptance among the nationals. Nevertheless intra-European mobility and intercontinental migration, affecting Europe to a growing degree too, exercise continuous impacts on the receiving national societies, as regards the compatibility of national and ethnic (and cultural) identities and the (re-) stabilisation of national cohesion. Anyway, multiculturalism and, consequently, the need for multicultural education, have become *real* phenomena in many European countries, even where national governments or political parties are reluctant to transfer this reality to political programmes and legal measures. Schools are immediately affected by this development, in particular by the task to provide adequate education and instruction in 'mixed' classrooms, apart from the growing existence of classes attended by 100% or so of 'foreigners':

Recent inquiries have given evidence that the, frequently expressed, hope for coping with the 'migrant issue' merely by legal and administrative provisions, turns out to be illusory in the everyday reality, unless they are supported by permanent educational efforts. They concentrate on imparting the language of the receiving nation to the migrants' children by systematised efforts without neglecting the promotion of competencies in their vernacular as a basis for building up stable 'dual' identities in the children's personalities. (Gogolin et al.1991 ; Tulasiewicz 2001; Weber 2004). One-sided actions leaving their socio-cultural background disregarded are hardly helpful. On the other hand promoting awareness of 'multiculturality' needs to apply not only to the newcomers, but also to the 'locals' (in the widest meaning). Strategies of bilingual education, differentiated to specific existential and

co-existential conditions, needs and aims, can benefit from countries having, frequently long-lasting, experiences with language instruction in schools of indigenous ethnic minorities (Mitter 2003). It is true that intercultural socialisation and education are distinctly dependent on efforts related to language competencies. However, they are doomed to failure, unless they are extended by further fields of educational action, such as teaching of history and social studies related to the 'European dimension'; human rights and peace education; provision for religious instruction (outside or inside the classroom); parents' participation; finally teacher training and education for the special requirements of intercultural education.

Teaching profession and teacher education

All the critical statements and innovative approaches, related to the present criteria and their interdependencies lead to the focal criterion concerning the 'teacher's future'. The outcomes of the PISA studies and the conclusions to be drawn from them for the improvement of education and instruction have intensified the particular relevance of this criterion. The debates concentrate on the quality of pre-service teacher education, the teacher's professional activity and the needs for comprehensive and continuous in-service training. The more or less controversially discussed individual themes are oriented to the following issues to be only outlined in this context: differentiation of training profiles according to school types or (horizontal) school levels; interrelation among subject-bound, curriculum-bound (didactic) and pedagogic training (to be completed by psychological, sociological and political science study units); interdisciplinary orientation of subject courses (as a base for the trainees' abilities to hold subject-crossing classes in schools); concurrent versus consecutive organization of the training on the whole. Special attention is furthermore called to modular models, as recently introduced into the Swedish teacher training and conceived as an overall approach by the Bologna Declaration of 1999 (on the reform of higher education; Kirkwood-Tucker 2004) and the corresponding devices. Prospective teacher training needs to be based upon a solid balance of the training components between theory studies and practice-oriented exercises (in particular by practica). Finally, today's training is widely suffering from the fact that trainees are not tested in proving basic pedagogic abilities before beginning their studies; the Finnish example offers the alternative way, apparently with remarkable success (Väljärvi et al. 2002). Up to now most training schemes are related to a teacher's profile, which is limited to his classroom work. Alternative models to be observed and discussed, are aimed at the roles of a teacher who, beside his abilities to teach and to fulfil pedagogic services in the whole school institution, has acquired social competencies enabling him to co-operate with parents and other members of the local community on the one hand, and to fulfil diagnostic tasks in his everyday practice.

The range of these desiderata is wide-reaching, and the tasks to be solved require knowledge, initiative and commitment, let alone that intuitive capacity that qualifies the teacher to cope with unexpected challenges in and outside his classroom. However, warnings of illusory expectations are imperative, if they are associated with images of the 'good old village teacher' who, though under pre-modern circum-

stances, was helpful to his local community because of his particular knowledge (literacy, numeracy, reading comprehension etc.). Nevertheless this analogy is useful to a certain degree, since it highlights the complementary relationship between specialised knowledge and all-round informative and social competencies in situations where quick decisions are required. The ability to handle drug abuse in classroom and school can be taken as another example in this context. All teachers should be familiar with the basic requirements to recognise drug problems in a given case and to call in the school psychologists or a colleague who has acquired special knowledge in this field during his pre-service or in-service training. Intercultural education could be tackled in a similar way. It would be unrealistic to expect extensive competence of every teacher; on the other hand his training must have enabled him to act in 'mixed' classrooms even in emergencies which make sudden reactions necessary – before calling an 'experienced' colleague for help or referring himself to handbooks or other information materials. All these considerations end up in paying growing attention to efforts and projects in the field of in-service training to accompany the teacher throughout his professional career. Beside the usual forms of extern courses in in-service training centres or at universities, the alternative of intern efforts and projects have recently emerged and are likely to expand. Prospects of modern teaching should be concluded by reference to the need for promoting teachers' mobility in geographical (including border-crossing) and professional terms; in this context the recruitment of people with required experience gained in other professional fields has turned out to enrich the competencies of the teaching staff.

Whether all the aforementioned requirements and expectations are realistic and tenable, widely depends on the conditions under which the teacher exercises his everyday tasks and, moreover, on the status he enjoys in the national and international community. In this context his professional satisfaction needs to be considered as an essential which consists of adequate remuneration on the one hand and social prestige on the other. In this respect the school map of Europe is still full of dark spots, not only in its Eastern, but also in its Western regions. Deficiencies in school reality are often caused by people underestimating the challenges the teacher has to cope with in his everyday work, and, furthermore by tendencies to make him a scapegoat for evils whose roots must be sought not with teachers, but with the society on the whole, parents included. This particular remark is legitimate in regard of the widespread burnout syndrome and of early retirement. To sum up, for the sake of progress and dynamism in education teachers need encouragement and care to be continuously confirmed by the local, national and international community. Needless to add that in a good number of European countries special qualifying measures for head-teachers, supervisors and inspectors have been taken as a further contribution to amelioration.

An exemplary comparative excursion: United States, Australia, Canada

The analysed criteria mirror trends to be observed in all European education systems. They do not yet allow the conclusion that they appear everywhere in equal intensity and simultaneousness. Therefore investigations into individual national

systems will remain to be an essential subject of educational research and assessment to explore not only integrative trends, but also relapses, conflicts and overlaps within the national systems and in the all-European dimension. In this context a few exemplary thoughts should be devoted to the demarcation of Europe as educational space in its own right against the 'rest of the world'. The following comparative approach, though in rough outlines, concentrates on the United States, Australia and Canada as comparative counterparts. This choice seems to be legitimate, since these three countries have managed to constitute themselves as independent nations equipped with democratic political institutions and national identities of their citizens and, at the same time, to retain their 'European heritage' in philosophical and cultural terms. This peculiarity can be regarded as a distinctive mark, when being compared to nation-states having emerged from indigenous cultural roots, such as China and Japan, or from colonial rule without constituting any substantial ties to a European heritage. The Latin American countries with continuing ties to their Hispanic or Lusitanian cultural roots, take an intermediate position between both configurations.

Which are the main constitutive marks of Europe in the present comparison?

History: Europe, in particular the European Union, is about to grow into a region provided with trans-national or even supra-national responsibilities. This process, however, is based upon a history of more than one thousand years (to begin, in this context, with the early Middle Ages), characterised by wide-reaching political diversity of principalities and, later on, nation-states with sovereignties of their own. This historical diversity explains why it has never become a 'nation' with 'national education systems' as essential components, unlike its comparative counterparts in the 'New World' (in this context including Australia). Irrespective of the recent trends towards harmonising quality standards and qualifying certificates, there is no substantial change in sight indicating readiness of European states to dispense with their inherited – or even recently obtained – educational sovereignties. Consequently, education in Europe (more correctly: in the European nation-states) must be defined as an 'association of national education systems', though on the way to be restricted towards border-crossing co-operative tendencies.

Governance: It seems that the European Union is developing into a supra-national federation of sovereign countries. Some of them retain or develop intern federal structures, which indicate distinct similarities to the intern federal structures of the three comparative counterparts. However, differences show up in regard of existence and degree of decentralisation and delegation of self-government to the local (communal) levels of school governance. It is true that recent developments in Europe signalise increase in this direction too, but up to now national and regional authorities have asserted their constitutionally based competencies to a comparatively high degree.

Structure: Let alone the establishment of uniform schools in the former communist countries (with their impacts on the post-communist development), the history of education in Western Europe indicates the foundation of integrated schools consisting of primary and lower secondary levels and opening wide access to the upper level of secondary education. This trend has reached its most distinct form in the

Nordic region. On the other hand the centuries-old dualism of selective academic schools (Grammar Schools, Lycées, Gymnasien etc., originally connected with special preparatory institutions or classes) and non-selective elementary schools (Volksschulen etc.) has given way to pervious structures. However, as a fundamental principle it has survived in many countries, above all in Germany, Austria and the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland. The education system of the United States is essentially based upon idea and reality of 'common schools' (Horace Mann) for all members of the young generation to be traced back to the first schools in the early colonial period. This system starts with integrated kindergartens and elementary schools and is centred in the comprehensive high school which John Gardner – in his exemplary definition – called 'a peculiarly American phenomenon... because it offers, under one administration and under one roof (or series of roofs), secondary education for almost all the high school age children of one town or neighbourhood... It is responsible for educating the bright and not so bright children..., both academic and vocational...' (quoted in Conant 1967, p. 3). Australia and Canada share this 'American phenomenon' by having established comparable 'common schools'.

Curriculum: The PISA studies have demonstrated the world-wide progress of the demand for competencies-based curricula, according to the output-oriented concept of learning aims and objectives. In Europe this recent trend, though to various degrees, has to cope with the perseverance of the traditional content-based and input-oriented principle of curriculum development. This shift of paradigm is closely connected with the trendsetting replacement of the separate teaching of individual subjects (derived from the academic discipline structure of the 'classical' universities) by the introduction of subject-crossing and practice-oriented learning units. In this respect the three education systems in comparison, with their articulate preference for project instruction (based on subject-crossing approaches) seem to be better 'prepared' for the new challenges that characterise the current shift of paradigm. This trend, however, should not be mistaken for any assumption saying that the continuous tension of content versus method, to be discerned in modern history of education, has come to an end.

Culture: The United States and Australia share the eminent contribution their education systems make to the national coherence and stability. In both cases they have significantly contributed to the formation of national unity and solidarity, in spite of their multi-ethnic composition. In both cases educational policies are focused on efforts of cross-curricular range including national history, citizenship education (social studies) and, not to forget, the transmission of one national language as the official and nation-wide medium of communication. It is the language criterion that may be awarded the highest rank in the identity-building endeavours of the education systems. In comparison with this achievement, European history gives ample evidence of the enormous role language diversity and language conflicts have played in the interrelations among European nations, let alone the troubles to integrate indigenous ethnic minorities or, in the current period, migrants with national ties to their home countries. Taken as a whole, these are much stronger and more pronounced than similar appearances in the nations compared. This is, of course, a

rough statement, concentrating on the mainstream and deliberately neglecting 'exceptional' trends having recently emerged, such as the United States', confrontation with the advancement of the Spanish language as a concomitant of mass immigration 'from the neighbouring South'. While this process, however, can be considered as a 'particular' item, language diversity is constitutive for many European countries and, moreover, Europe on the whole. In this respect the Canadian case with its English-French bilingualism comes near the European model, the more so as it has become closely linked with the issue of migrants' (in Canada: immigrants') languages.

Concluding remarks: The global dimension of European education

The concise excursion into the comparative domain, as discussed in the preceding part, immediately points the way to the global dimension of European education. The present considerations have been focused on the assumption that educational developments of short or medium range will continue to take place in the framework of education systems, as established with the emergence of the modern state. This assumption entails the prediction that education will be, in principle, transmitted in well-organised schools (in the widest meaning), though gradually relaxing into intern diversification with regard to regulations of compulsory attendance, intern organisation (in classrooms and other groupings), temporal sequence (with advanced placement arrangements, etc.). The ubiquitous progress of culture, economy and technology suggests doubts that society will manage without compulsory school attendance per se in the predictable future. However, there are signs indicating radical innovations within the 'traditional' education systems, as to be concluded from the current trends already. These are, for example, related to wider-reaching remodelling of instruction patterns with individualised learning (focused on the students' different learning speeds) and enhanced use of electronic media, distance learning and early beginning of elementary learning in various forms. There cannot be any doubt that progress in research of learning psychology and learning theory will accelerate such changes, let alone findings in the domain of brain research to be expected. Finally, reorganisation of the customary curriculum systems, in particular the definition of core, obligatory and optional subjects, will become more urgent as a consequence of changes in the academic teaching and vocational education, in form of the projection of new subjects and learning areas, etc.

Can globalisation, pluralisation and individualisation be regarded as driving forces stimulating the 'end of schools', as predicted by the 'deschoolers' a few decades ago (Illich 1971)? While Illich's argumentations were based upon socio-philosophical theorems, the range of such considerations have been recently extended to empirical research, embedded in theoretical analyses, first of all in genetics and informatics. At this spot, however, we enter the domain of speculation. Is a 'world without schools' conceivable in the sense of 'Real Utopia'? As long as we limit the concept of 'school' to the customary institutionalised school, the answer can, in principle, be in the affirmative indeed, although predictions of short or medium range do not indicate the probability of such radical shift. However, respective predictions of long range are unrealistic as well. Posterior generations are unlikely to

manage without 'schools', for even educational institutions having realised all the aforementioned alternatives will remain to be 'schools' in the fundamental meaning of learning places (even in their distance variation) with targeted categories. These considerations end up in the prediction that the topic of 'educational sovereignty' is unlikely to disappear from the agenda, although radical changes will pose new questions enforced by changes in the economic, political and cultural domains. The editors and authors of 'Education systems in Europe' (respectively their successors) will have to cope with all these new questions, when being asked to revise their chapters and to end up in an entire re-conception of the present handbook.

References

- Astiz, M. F./Wiseman, A. F./Baker, D. P.: Slouching toward decentralization: Consequences of globalization for curricular control in national education systems. In: *Comparative Education Review* 46 (2002) 1, pp. 66-88.
- Baumert, J./Bos, W./Lehmann, R. (Eds): TIMSS/III. Dritte Internationale Mathematik- und Naturwissenschaftsstudie – Mathematische und naturwissenschaftliche Bildung am Ende der Schullaufbahn. Third international mathematics- and science study – Mathematical education at the end of school career (TIMSS/III). Volumes I and II. Opladen 2000.
- Benveniste, L.: The Political situation of assessment: Negotiating state power and legitimacy. In: *Comparative Education Review* 26 (2002) 1, pp. 89-118.
- Borden, A. M./McGinn, N. F.: Bereit zum Wandel? Bildung und Erziehung am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts (Ready for change? Education at the end of the 20th century). In: *Bildung und Erziehung* 52 (1999) 4, pp. 395-410.
- Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) (Ed.): *Europäischer Bildungsraum. Grenzenloses Lernen und Arbeiten (European educational space. Learning and working without borders)*. Bonn 2001.
- Carnoy, M./Rhoten, D.: What does globalization mean for educational change? A comparative approach. In: *Comparative Education Review* 46 (2002) 1, pp. 1-9.
- Conant, J. B.: *The comprehensive high school. A second report to interested citizens*. New York 1967.
- Dale, R./Robertson, S. L.: The varying effects of regional organizations as subjects of globalization of education. In: *Comparative Education Review* 46 (2002) 1, pp. 10-36.
- Deutsches PISA-Konsortium (Ed.): *PISA 2000. Basiskompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern im internationalen Vergleich (PISA 2000. Basic competencies of students in international comparison)*. Opladen 2001.
- Döbert, H./Geissler, G. (Eds): *Schulautonomie in Europa (School autonomy in Europe)*. Baden-Baden 1997.
- Eurydice European Unit (Ed.): *National actions to implement lifelong learning in Europe*. Brussels 2001.
- Fernández-Armesto, F.: The European civilization: is there such a thing?. In: *European Review* 10 (2002) 1, pp. 3-13.
- Gogolin, I./Kroon, S./Krüger-Potratz, M. (Eds): *Kultur- und Sprachenvielfalt in Europa (Cultural and language diversity in Europe)*. Münster 1991.
- Heidemann, W.: *Europäischer Rat Stockholm: Neue Ziele für die Bildungssysteme. Weitere Europäisierung der Bildungspolitik (European Council of Stockholm: New goals for the education systems. Continuing Europeanisation of educational policies)*. Frankfurt am Main 2001.

- Hochbaum, I.: Neue Wege der Zusammenarbeit. Die Bildungs- und Berufsbildungspolitik in Europa nach Maastricht (New ways of co-operation: The educational and vocational-education policy in Europe after Maastricht). In: *Bildung und Erziehung* 46 (1993) 1, pp. 19-37.
- Illich, I.: *Deschooling society*. New York 1971.
- Kirkwood-Tucker, T. F.: Toward a European model of higher education. Processes, problems and promises. In: *European Education* 2004, pp. 51-69.
- Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften (Commission of the European Communities): Die konkreten künftigen Ziele der Bildungssysteme. Bericht der Kommission (The concrete future goals of the education systems. Report of the Commission), 31 January 2001. KOM(2001) 59 final. 2001a.
- Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften (Commission of the European Communities): Einen europäischen Raum des lebenslangen Lernens schaffen. Mitteilung der Kommission (Creating a European space of lifelong learning. Information of the Commission), 21 November 2001. KOM(2001)678. Manuskriptdruck (manuscript printing). 2001b.
- von Kopp, B.: Education, transformation and GATS-New paradigms in government and administration. In: Reuter, L./Doebert, H. (Eds): *After communism and apartheid. Transformation of Education in Germany and South Africa*. Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 207-229.
- Lowe, J.: International Examinations, national systems and the global market. In: *Compare* 29 (1999), pp. 315-330.
- McLean, M.: Das europäische Curriculum (The European curriculum). In: Schleicher, K. (Ed.): *Zukunft der Bildung in Europa. Nationale Vielfalt und europäische Einheit (The future of education in Europe. National diversity and European unity)*. Darmstadt 1993, pp. 261-276.
- Mitter, W.: Bildungspolitik nach Maastricht – Die Konsequenzen und Herausforderungen der europäischen Einigung für das Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Educational policy after Maastricht – The consequences and challenges of the European unification to the education system of the Federal Republic of Germany). In: Knoll, J. H. (Ed.): *Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung (International yearbook of adult education)*, vol. 22. Köln;Weimar;Wien 1994, pp. 63-81.
- Mitter, W.: European curriculum. Reality or dream? In: Winther-Jensen, Th. (Ed.): *Challenges to European education. Cultural values, national identities and global responsibilities*. Frankfurt am Main et al. 1996, pp. 295-312.
- Mitter, W.: Sprachenfragen und Sprachenkonflikte in europäischen Bildungssystemen (Language issues and language conflicts in European education systems). In: Döbert, H. et al.(Eds): *Bildung vor neuen Herausforderungen (Education facing new challenges)*. Neuwied 2003, pp. 322-331.
- Mitter, W.: Rise and decline of education systems: a contribution to the history of the modern state. In: *Compare* 34 (2004a) 4, pp. 347-369.
- Mitter, W.: Nation-states versus regions in European education. In: *European Education* 36 (2004b) 3, pp. 5-12.
- Tulasiewicz, W.: Language diversity. Implications from international communication and language education. In: Beck, C./Sofos, A. (Eds): *Neue Medien in der pädagogischen Kontroverse (New media in educational controversy)*. Mainz 2001, pp. 170-184.
- Väljjarvi, J./Linnakylä, P./Kupari, P./Reinikainen, P./Arffman, I.: *The Finnish success in PISA – and some reasons behind it*. Jyväskylä 2000.
- Weber, P.J.: Bildungspolitik und Sprachenpluralismus in der Europäischen Union – Notwendigkeiten einer transnationalen und plurizentrischen Bildungspolitik (Educational policy and language pluralism in the European Union – Necessities of a transnational and pluricentrist educational, policy). In: *Bildung und Erziehung* 57 (2004) 1, pp. 5-25.

Education Systems of Europe: Statistical Profile

Table 1a: Regular age group in respective school level/type (Prescribed by regulations or majority of children/students of the respective school type and level in this age

Country	Pre-Primary (ISCED 0)	Primary (ISCED 1)	Lower secondary (ISCED 2)	Upper secondary (ISCED 3)	Post secondary (ISCED 4)	Tertiary (ISCED 5)
Albania	3-6	6-10	10-14	14-18/19	-	18+
Armenia	3-6	7-9	10-15	15-19/20	-	19+
Belarus	3-6	6-10	10-14	14-16/17	-	18-22
Belgium	2,5-6	6-12	12-14	14-18	-	18-22
Bosnia	3-6/7	6/7-10	11-14/15	14/15-18/19	-	19-25
Bulgaria	3-6	7-11	12-14/15	15/16-19/20	18-30	18-30
Cyprus	3-5	6-11	12-14	15-17	-	20-24
Czech Republic	3-5	6-10	11-14	15-18	-	19+
Denmark	3-6	6-12	12-15/16	16-18	16+	18+
Finland	3-6	7-12	13-15	16-18	18-30	18-30
France	2-5	6-10	11-14	15-19	19-21	19+
Georgia	3-6	6-14	10-17		-	19+
Germany	3-6	6-10/12	10/12-16	16-19	19-22	19-30
Great Britain	3-5	6-12	12-16	16-18	-	18+
Greece	4-5	6-12	12-15	15-18	15-20	18-24
Hungary	3-6	7-10	11-14	14-18	18-25	18+
Iceland	3-6	6-13	13-16	16-20	20-30	20-30
Ireland	-	4,5-11	12-15	16-18	18+	18-26
Latvia	3-6	7-10	11-15	16-18	17-19	19-27
Lithuania	3-5	6-10	10-14/16	14/16-18	-	18+
Luxembourg	3-6	6-12	12-15	15-19	19+	19+
Netherlands	4-5	6-12	12-15	15-19	18-30	18-30
Norway	3-6	6-12	13-15	16-19	-	19+
Macedonia	3-6	6-10	10-15	15-19	-	19+
Malta	3-6	5-10	10-16	16+	16+	18-23
Moldova	3-6	7-10	10-15	16-18	18-21	18-24
Montenegro	3-6	7-14		15-18	-	19-27
Poland	3-7	7-13	13-16	16-19	19-22	18-30
Portugal	3-5	6-9	10-14	15-17	-	19-23
Romania	3-6	7-10	11-14	15-18	19-23	19+
Russian Federation	4-6	6-9	10-14	15-17	-	18-30
Serbia	3-7	7-14		15-18	-	19-30
Slovakia	3-5	6-9	10-14	15-18	19-20	19-27
Slovenia	3-5	6-10	11-14	15-19	20-24	20-24
Spain	3-6	6-12	13-16	17-18	18-20	18-22
Sweden	3-7	7-13	13-16	16-19	-	19+
Switzerland	4-6	7-12	13-15	16-19	-	19-24
Turkey	3-5	6-14	-	14-17	-	17-28

Table 1b: Percentage of the respective population in the single school form/type (NER: Net enrolment ratio)¹

Country	Pre-Primary	Upper secondary academic	Upper Secondary non-academic	Post-secondary	Tertiary short cycle	Tertiary long cycle	Tertiary postgraduate
ISCED 97 level	0	3a	3b	4	5a	5b	6
Albania	47,0	56,0*		n.a.	16,0*		
Armenia	30,0*	76,0*		n.a.	27,0*		
Belarus	92,0	60,0*		n.a.	62,0*		
Belgium	100,0	156,0*		n.a.	61,0*		
Bulgaria	71,0	113,0*		n.a.	39,0*		
Cyprus ²	56,0	96,3*		n.a.	6,7/ 28,6*	28,7/ 0,6*	0,6/ 1,1*
Czech Republic	80,0	94,0*		n.a.	36,0*		
Denmark ³	92,0	31,5	27,0	31,5	44,3	51,8	3,4
Finland	55,0	152,0*		n.a.	86,0*		
France	82,9	75,8	23,7	12,0	39,0		
Georgia	41,0*	62,0*		n.a.	36,0*		
Germany	73,3	25,2	33,2	12,4	13,7	2,0	n.a.
Great Britain	79,0	240,0*		n.a.	64,0*		
Greece	68,0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	68,0*		
Hungary	79,0	109,0*		n.a.	51,0*		
Iceland	89,0	122,0*		n.a.	55,0*		
Ireland	-	111,0*		n.a.	50,0*		
Latvia	72,0	89,0*		n.a.	73,0*		
Lithuania	56,0	102,0*		n.a.	72,0*		
Luxembourg	73,9	94,1	81,9	n.a.	12,0*		
Macedonia	26,0	70,0*		n.a.	27,0*		
Malta	94,0	76,0*		n.a.	28,0	30,0*	
Moldova	44,0	62,0*		n.a.	30,0*		
Montenegro	22,0	28,0	69,0	n.a.	15,0		n.a.
Netherlands	87,0	110,0*		n.a.	58,0*		
Norway	84,0	129,0*		n.a.	81,0*		

¹ The figures are based on the statistical information given by each author of the respective country essay. Additional data, that could not be provided by the authors, was taken from the „Global Education Digest 2005. Comparing Education Statistics Across the World” published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in Montreal. (http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=6100_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC)

² The second values for the Tertiary levels represent the percentages of cyprriot students abroad.

³ Figures for upper secondary and postsecondary schools: percentages of all students in all types and forms of ISCED 3 and 4 together (recounted). Figures for tertiary institutions: percentages of all students in all tertiary institutions together.

Country	Pre-Primary	Upper secondary academic	Upper Secondary non-academic	Post-secondary	Tertiary short cycle	Tertiary long cycle	Tertiary postgraduate
ISCED 97 level	0	3a	3b	4	5a	5b	6
Poland	47,0	41,1 (16-18)	46,6 (16-18)	9,1 (19-21)	n.a.	39,7	n.a.
Portugal	69,0	109,0*		n.a.	53,0*		
Romania	76,0	75,0*		n.a.	35,0*		
Russian Federation	58,1	101,0*		n.a.	69,0*		
Serbia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	
Slovakia	86,4	18,1	77,2 ⁴	42,2	42,2		
Slovenia	72,1	75,4		0,3	19,2	12,4	n.a.
Spain	96,5	94,1 ⁵		56,8	38,0		n.a.
Sweden	89,0	182,0*		n.a.	76,0*		
Switzerland	77,0	85,0*		n.a.	49,0*		
Turkey	8,0*	77,0*		n.a.	28,0*		

* Gross enrolment ratio (GER): In contrast to the net enrolment ratio (NER) gross enrolment ratios are calculated as the number of pupils enrolled in a given level, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the "theoretical" age group for the same level. Gross enrolment ratios can exceed 100% if there are substantial numbers of pupils not in the official age range and thus overstate the actual share of the school-age population participating in school.

n.a. = not applicable

⁴ 39,8 % vocational schools with "matura", 37,4% apprentice training, no matura

⁵ Second cycle of ESO, Bachillerato LOGSE and Formative Cycles of FP (14-18 years old) are jointly considered.

Table 2: Majority-/ minority students in percent of the total enrolment

Country	students of the titular nation	minorities	migrants
Belgium ¹			
primary school	81,7		6,4/ 11,9
lower secondary school	83,3		4,3/ 12,4
Bulgaria			
primary school	86,0	14,0	n.a.
lower secondary school	89,0	11,0	n.a.
Cyprus			
primary school	91,6	n.a.	8,4
lower secondary school ²	92,3	n.a.	7,7
Czech Republic ³			
primary school	99,0	n.a.	1,0
lower secondary school			
Denmark			
primary school	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
lower secondary school ⁴	94,5	n.a.	5,5
France			
primary school	-	n.a.	5,9
lower secondary school	-	n.a.	4,3
Germany			
primary School	88,1	n.A.	11,9
lower secondary school	90,7	n.A.	9,3
Greece ⁵			
primary school	89,4	2,0	8,6
lower secondary school	89,8	3,3	6,9
Hungary			
primary school	91,9	7,6	0,5
lower secondary school ⁶	97,3	1,8	0,9
Iceland			
primary school	97,0	0,0	3,0
lower secondary school			
Latvia			
primary school	69,8	30,2	n.a.
lower secondary school			
Luxembourg			
primary school	60,8		39,2
lower secondary school ⁷	68,9		31,1
Malta			
primary school	99,5	0,2	0,1
lower secondary school ⁸	99,1	0,2	0,3

¹ The figures show the percentage of minority and migrant groups (combined) in the Flemish/ French Community in Belgium.

² Grade 8

³ With Minorities in Bulgaria Turks and Gypsies are meant.

⁴ Grade 8

⁵ With Minorities in Greece repatriates are meant.

⁶ (Total) Secondary general schools

⁷ Total Secondary

⁸ Total Secondary

Country	students of the titular nation	minorities	migrants
Poland			
primary school	98,9	1,1	n.a.
lower secondary school	99,2	0,8	n.a.
Romania			
primary school	93,6	6,4	n.a.
lower secondary school	93,4	6,6	n.a.
Norway			
primary school	98,1	n.a.	1,9
lower secondary school	95,7	n.a.	4,3
Portugal			
primary school	91,4	0,7	7,9
lower secondary school	92,2	0,7	7,1
Slovakia			
primary school	93,06	6,73	0,21
lower secondary school	93,22	6,62	0,15
Sweden			
primary school	87,2	n.a.	12,8
lower secondary school	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Switzerland			
primary school	74,9	n.a.	25,1
lower secondary school	78,4	n.a.	21,6

Table 3: School time

	days per year	weeks per year	teaching units ("hours") per week: nominal	teaching hours per week: actual time (hr = 60 min.)	hours spent in school per week	Home work* (hr/week)
Belarus						
primary school	175	35	21-25	12,25-18,75 ¹	n.a.	n.a.
lower secondary school	180/216 ²	36	28-32	21-24	n.a.	n.a.
Belgium						
primary school	182	37	28	23,3	n.a.	1-2
lower secondary school	182	37	28-34	23,3-28,3	n.a.	1-2
Bosnia						
primary school	175	35	~30	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
lower secondary school ³	165	33	~30	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Bulgaria						
primary school ⁴	155-160	31-32	22-25	22-25	26-29	2
lower secondary school	170	34	30	30	34	3
Cyprus						
primary school	173	35	35	23,3	27-42**	n.a.
lower secondary school	191	38	37	26,4	30**	n.a.
Czech Republic						
primary school	n.a.	33	20-25	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
lower secondary school	n.a.	33	27-30	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
France						
primary school	180	36	26	not fixed	n.a.	n.a.
lower secondary school	210	36	28	25,7	n.a.	n.a.
Germany						
primary school	194	39	27,4	20,6	n.a.	n.a.
lower secondary school	194	39	33,1 - 35,9	24,8 - 26,9	n.a.	n.a.
Greece						
primary school	175	33	23-30	17,25-22,50	38-45 ⁵	n.a.
lower secondary school	175	29	35	26,25	n.a.	n.a.
Hungary						
primary school	182	26	23,6	17,7	32,0**	7,0
lower secondary school	182	26	26,8	20,1	35,0**	9,0
Iceland						
primary school	180	40	30-35	20	27,3	1,6
lower secondary school	180	40	35	23,2	32,3	2,1
Latvia						
primary school	n.a.	34-35	20-26	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
lower secondary school	n.a.	35-37	28-24	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Lithuania						
primary school	170	34	22-27	n.a.	n.a.	1 ⁶
lower secondary school	195	39	27-30	n.a.	n.a.	1,5-2,5
Luxembourg						
primary school	180	36	28	25,7	28	n.a.
lower secondary school	180	36	30	25,0	30	n.a.
Macedonia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Malta						
primary school	179	31	27,5	n.a.	30	n.a.
lower secondary school	179	31	19,5	n.a.	33,5	n.a.

¹ Classes last 35 minutes in grade 1 and 45 minutes in grades 2-12.

² 180 days for basic secondary schools (5 days per week), 216 days for grammar schools (6 days per week)

³ Grade 8

⁴ There is a difference in the amount of school time in the primary sector according to the grade. The lower value therefore refers to the 1st and (considering "hours of schooling per week" and "weekly hours spent in school") 2nd grade

⁵ All-day-schools

⁶ There is no homework in 1st and 2nd grade.

		days per year	weeks per year	teaching units ("hours") per week: nominal	teaching hours per week: actual time (hr = 60 min.)	hours spent in school per week	Home work* (hr/week)
Moldova	primary school	175	35	18-24	n.a.	26-28	n.a.
	lower secondary school	175	35	22-30	n.a.	32-34	n.a.
Montenegro	primary school	170	34	20-28	13,3-18,7	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school	170	34	30-32,5	20-21,7	n.a.	n.a.
Netherlands	primary school	204	41	23,3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school	200	40	32	n.a.	40	8
Norway	primary school	n.a.	n.a.	38	38	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school	n.a.	n.a.	38	38	n.a.	n.a.
Poland	primary school	n.a.	39	26,5	19,9	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school	n.a.	39	31,1	23,5	n.a.	n.a.
Portugal	primary school	180	36	25 ⁷	n.a.	25	n.a.
	lower secondary school	180	36	17 ⁸ +18 ⁹	n.a.	17+18	n.a.
Romania	primary school	179	36	18-20	15-17	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school	179	36	24-26	20-22	n.a.	n.a.
Russian Federation ¹⁰	primary school	n.a.	33-34	20-25	12-19	n.a.	1-5 ¹¹
	lower secondary school	n.a.	34-37	26-32	19-24	n.a.	
Serbia	primary school	180	36	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school	185	37	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Slovakia	primary school	192	41	25	18,8	27-36	1-2
	lower secondary school	192	41	28	21	35-37	2-4
Slovenia	primary school	190	38	20-26	n.a.	~50 (all-day)	1
	lower secondary school	190	38	29,5-30	n.a.	35	2-3
Spain	primary school	n.a.	36	25	22,3	29	n.a.
	lower secondary school	n.a.	35	22,3	27,3	35	n.a.
Sweden	primary school	178-190	40	n.a.	18,53	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school	178-190	40	n.a.	18,53	n.a.	n.a.
Switzerland ¹²	primary school	185-200	37-40	26-32	22-26	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school					n.a.	n.a.
Turkey	primary school	180 (min.)	36 (min.)	30	20	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary school						

*outcomes from studies if available

**estimated data

⁷ Morals and Religious Education and Enrichment Activities (such as a Foreign Language) are optional. They should be added to the 25 hours.

⁸ 2nd cycle of Basic Education

⁹ 3rd cycle of Basic Education

¹⁰ The figures show the timetables, which were adopted in 2004 and will be enacted stepwise from 2006 on.

¹¹ The numbers represent 81,4% of the students (2003).

¹² The figures describe minimum and maximum values.

Table 4: Distribution of teaching time (school time units) devoted to subjects (subject groups): percent of the total teaching time: Primary school 1st year / lower secondary school 1st year

	Mother tongue/ official language	2nd official language	Foreign language	Math.	Science s	Social Science s	Fine Arts, Music	Other	Grand total
Albania									
primary	47,6	-	-	23,8	-	4,8	9,5	14,3	100,0
lower secondary	37,5	-	-	25,0	-	16,7	8,3	12,5	100,0
Belarus ¹									
primary	30,0	5,0	-	20,0	5,0	-	15,0	25,0	100,0
lower secondary	20,0	20,0	8,0	20,0	4,0	4,0	8,0	16,0	100,0
Belgium ²									
primary	32,0	-	-	17,8	10,7	-	12,4	27,1	100,0
lower secondary	18/ 21	21/18	18/ 17	11/ 17	4/ 8	7/-	21/ 21	18/ 21	100/ 100
Bulgaria									
primary	31,8	-	-	18,2	4,5	-	18,2	27,3	100,0
Lower secondary	16,6	-	13,3	13,3	8,4	10	13,3	25,1	100,0
Cyprus									
primary	28,6	-	5,7	17,1	5,7	17,1	11,4	14,3	100,0
lower secondary	23,0	-	14,9	10,8	13,5	13,5	5,4	18,9	100,0
Czech Republic									
primary	45,0	-	-	20,0	10,0	-	10,0	15,0	100,0
Lower secondary	14,8	-	11,1	14,8	59,3 ³			100,0	
Denmark ⁴									
primary	300	-	60	150	30	-	30	n.a.	600
lower secondary	180	-	90+90	120	-	150	-	n.a.	660
France									
primary	34	-	3,7	18,9	11,3		11,3	20,8	100,0
lower secondary	17,9	-	14,3	14,3	5,4	10,7	7,1	26,8	100,0
Germany ⁵									
primary	22-32	-	0-5,3	21-30	5-15	-	5-20	14-30	100,0
lower secondary	13-20	-	10-28	12-20	4-18	4-18	7-17	10-30	100,0
Greece									
primary	35,9	-	-	16,0	-	19,9	16,0	12,0	100,0
lower secondary	14,2	-	17,2	11,4	5,8	11,5	5,7	34,2	100,0

¹ The data provided include only compulsory subjects; they exclude both optional subjects and subjects offered as part of the "school component".

² While in the primary level only numbers for the French Community are reported, because in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium there are no longer fixed timetables, the data for the secondary level displays differences between the Flemish/ French Communities.

³ In lower-secondary classes the headmaster allocates the number of hours so that all of these subjects in the given grade are all taught within the range of minimum and maximum.

⁴ Hours - time (60 min.) - prescribed minimum hours, therefore differences between schools.

⁵ Due to the educational federalism in Germany and the differences between the school-types of each „Bundesland“ there are 16 different schedules/timetables in the primary and more than 50 in the lower secondary education sector. The figures therefore show minimum and maximum values for each subject group.

	Mother tongue/ official language	2nd official language	Foreign language	Math.	Science s	Social Science s	Fine Arts, Music	Other	Grand total	
Hungary	primary	36,0	-	-	23,0	-	-	18,0	23,0	100,0
	lower secondary	18,0	-	13,0	20,0	8,0	8,0	14,0	19,0	100,0
Iceland	primary	20,0	-	-	17,0	13,0	10,0	13,0	27,0	100,0
	lower secondary	14,0	-	16,0	14,0	14,0	8,0	11,0	23,0	100,0
Ireland	primary	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	lower secondary	20,0	-	10,0	10,0	12,5	10,0	7,5	30,0	100,0
Latvia	primary	40,0	-	-	20	5,0	-	25,0	10,0	100,0
	lower secondary	23,3	-	12,5	18,8	6,0	6,0	6,3	27,1	100,0
Lithuania	primary	30,4	-	13,0	21,7	-		17,4	17,4	100,0
	lower secondary	15,6	9,4	9,4	9,4	12,5	12,5	15,6	15,6	100,0
Luxembourg	primary	3,6	-	28,6	21,4	10,7	-	10,7	25,0	100,0
	lower secondary	1,7	-	33,3	15,0	6,7	13,3	11,7	18,3	100,0
Macedonia	primary	15,1	-	18,9	11,3	22,6	15,1	(11,3) ⁶	17,0	100,0
	lower secondary	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Malta	primary	20,0	20,0	-	20,0	8,0	12,0	12,0	8,0	100,0
	lower secondary	15,7	18,7	12,8	15,7	12,8	9,1	9,1	6,1	100,0
Moldova	primary	44,5	- ⁷	-	22,3	-	5,5	11,1	16,6	100,0
	lower secondary	21,7	8,7	8,7	17,4	4,4	17,4	8,7	13,1	100,0
Montenegro	primary	28,6	9,5	-	19,0		14,3	14,3	14,3	100,0
	lower secondary	12,5	6,3	12,5	14,1	18,8	4,7	6,3	25,0	100,0
Norway	primary	26,9	-	5,6	16,3	6,2	7,4	15,4	18,3	100,0
	lower secondary	23,0	-	7,1	14,9	7,5	8,7	13,5	19,7	100,0
Poland	primary				75,0				25,0 ⁸	100,0
	lower secondary	14,9	-	9,6	12,8	12,6	13,8	3,2	33,1	100,0

⁶ Music- and arts-lessons belong to the compulsory-optional activities, and can require 3 hr/week (maximum) approximating 11,3% of the school-time at the most.

⁷ Another language (the National language in the this case) is taught in the schools for minority students (for example, in Russian schools, 3 hours in class 1 are set aside for teaching the National language).

⁸ Beside the 'integrated lessons', which demand 75 percent of the total teaching time, 25 percent are devoted to religion/ ethics (8,3%) and free disposal (16,6%).

	Mother tongue/ official language	2nd official language	Foreign language	Math.	Science s	Social Science s	Fine Arts, Music	Other	Grand total
Portugal primary ⁹ lower secondary	- 29,5:3 ¹⁰	- -	- 29,5:3	- 41,2	- -	- 29,5:3	- 16,6	- 32,4	-
Romania primary lower secondary	30,0 25,0	- -	10,0 5,0	15,0 20,0	5,0 5,0	10,0 20,0	15,0 10,0	15,0 15,0	100,0 100,0
Russian Fed. ¹¹ primary lower secondary	36,0 35,5	- -	- -	20,0 16,0	- 6,5	- 6,5	8,0 6,5	36,0 29,0	100,0 100,0
Serbia primary Lower secondary	18,0+14,0 ¹² n.a.	- n.a.	9,0 n.a.	18,0 n.a.	9,0 n.a.	n.a. n.a.	13,0 n.a.	28-29,0 n.a.	100,0 n.a.
Slovakia primary lower secondary	34,6 20,8	- -	19,2 20,8	15,4 20,8	- 16,7	- 8,3	7,7 8,3	23,1 4,2	100,0 100,0
Slovenia primary lower secondary	30,0 15,0	- -	- 15,0	20,0 15,0	15,0 13,3	- 13,3	20,0 13,3	15,0 15,0	100,0 100,0
Sweden primary lower secondary	22,4	-	7,2	13,5	12,0	13,3	6,9	14,2	100,0
Turkey primary lower secondary ¹³	40,0 18,5	- -	- 14,8	13,3 14,8	- -	16,7 11,1	13,3 18,5	16,7 22,2	100,0 100,0

⁹ At this level of education, the process of learning is integrated. No exact time is devoted to any particular area.

¹⁰ Languages and Social Studies constitute an area; each school decides upon the exact time for each discipline. In the same way Mathematics and Sciences constitute such an area as well.

¹¹ Implying the predominant timetables from 1998.

¹² Minorities attend additional lessons in Serbian language.

¹³ There is no lower secondary education level in Turkey, therefore the sixth grade of primary education is presented.

Information about Editors and Authors

Editors:

Hans Döbert, Dr. – German Institute for International Educational Research, Berlin, Germany

Wolfgang Hörner, Dr., Professor – University of Leipzig, Faculty of Education, Germany

Botho von Kopp, Dr. – German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Wolfgang Mitter, Dr., Emeritus Professor – German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Authors:

Nafsika Alexiadou, M.A. – University of Hull, U.K.

Rudīte Andersone, Dr. – University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

Katarina Batarilo, M.A. – University of Heidelberg, Germany

Christopher Bezzina, Dr., Lecturer – University of Malta, Malta

Stefan Brauckmann, M.A. – German Institute for International Educational Research, Berlin, Germany

Ingo-Eric Schmidt-Braul – NGO Knowledge Transfer and IBA International Media and Book Agency, Berlin, Germany

Günter Brinkmann, Dr., Emeritus Professor – University of Bolzano (Faculty of Bressanone), Italy

Colin Brock, Dr., Professor – University of Hull, U.K.

Silwa Claesson, Dr., Associate Professor – Göteborg University, Sweden

Emilija Černova, Dr. – University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

Lucien Criblez, Dr., Professor – University of Applied Sciences Aargau, Switzerland

Christiane Brusselmann-Dehairs – University of Gent, Belgium

Hans Döbert, Dr. – German Institute for International Educational Research, Berlin, Germany

Lulzim Dragidella, Diplom-Sozialpädagogin, Doctoral Student – University of Munich, Germany

Laura Dumbraveanu, Dr. phil. – National Institute of Educational Research, Bucharest, Romania

- Ferdinand Eder, Dr., Professor* – University of Linz, Austria
- Carlos Nogueira Fino, Dr., Associate Professor* – University of Madeira, Portugal
- Elyvra Giedraitienė, Dr., Associate Professor* – University of Klaipėda, Lithuania
- Grace Grima, Dr., Lecturer* – University of Malta, Malta
- Emina Hebib, M.A.* – University of Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro
- Wolfgang Hellwig* – Human Resources & Social Development, GOPA Consultants
- Tamás Hives, Dr. phil.* – University of Debrecen, Hungary
- Wolfgang Hörner, Dr., Professor* – University of Leipzig, Germany
- Mária Hrabinská, PhD.* – Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, Youth and Sport, Bratislava, Slovakia
- Pertti Kansanen, Dr., Emeritus Professor* – University of Helsinki, Finland
- Yasemin Karakaşoğlu, Dr., Professor* – University of Bremen, Germany
- Ragnheidur Karlsdóttir, Dr., Associate Professor* - Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway
- Tine Bering Keiding, Dr., Associate Professor* – University of Aalborg, Denmark
- Anastasia Kesidou, Dr. phil.* – University of Thessaloniki, Greece
- Maureen Killeavy, Dr., Professor* – University College Dublin, Ireland
- Dalia Kiliuvienė, Dr., Associate Professor* – University of Klaipėda, Lithuania
- Siggi Koenig, Reg.-Rat* – Coordinateur général, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Formation professionnelle, Luxembourg
- Botho von Kopp, Dr.* – German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
- Tamás Kozma, Dr., Professor* – University of Debrecen, Hungary
- Franz Kroath, Dr., Emeritus Professor* – University of Innsbruck, Austria
- Dascha Kuhn, M.A.* – University of Leipzig, Germany
- Volker Lenhart, Dr., Professor* – University of Heidelberg, Germany
- Janna Lipenkowa* – Berlin, Germany
- Matti Meri, Dr., Professor* – University of Helsinki, Finland
- Wolfgang Mitter, Dr., Emeritus Professor* – German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
- Jože Mlakar, Dr. phil.* – Sv. Stanislava College, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Michael Schmidt-Neke, Dr.* – Landtag, Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel, Germany
- Inetta Nowosad, Dr.* – University of Zielona Góra, Poland
- Natalia Odobescu, Dr.* – Berlin, Germany
- Wolf Oschlies, Dr., Emeritus Professor* – Kerpen, Germany

-
- Marko Palekčić, Dr., Professor* – University of Zagreb, Croatia
- Petros Pashiardis, Dr., Professor* – University of Cyprus
- Aleksandra Petrović, Dr.* – Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro
- Nikolay Popov, Dr., Professor* – University of Sofia, Bulgaria
- Jan Průcha, Dr., Professor* – Charles-University of Prague, Masaryk University of Brno, Czech Republic
- Väino Rajangu, Dr., Professor* – Technical University of Tallinn, Estonia
- Imre Radacsi, Dr. phil.* – University of Debrecen, Hungary
- Magdolna Rébay, Dr. phil.* – University of Debrecen, Hungary
- Gerlind Schmidt, Dr.* – German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
- Kirsten Sivesind, Senior Lecturer* – University of Oslo, Norway
- Jesus Maria Sousa, Dr., Professor* – University of Madeira, Portugal
- Vera Spasenović, M.A.* – Institute for Educational Research Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro
- Rada Spasić, M.A.* – Berlin, Germany
- Wendelin Sroka, Dr.* – German Institute for International Educational Research, Berlin, Germany
- Thorarinn Stefansson, Dr. Associate Professor* – Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway
- Claudia Strümpfel, M.A.* – University of Leipzig, Germany
- Štefan Švec, Dr., Professor* – Comenius-University of Bratislava, Slovakia
- Josef Thonhauser, Dr., Professor* – University of Salzburg, Austria
- Maria Jesús Martínez Usarralde, Dr., Associate Professor* – University of Valencia, Spain
- Martin Valcke, Dr., Professor* – University of Gent, Belgium
- Bob van de Ven, Drs.* – Lid College van Bestuur Willibrord Stichting, Netherlands
- Tobias Werler, Dr., Associate Professor* – University of Kristiansand, Norway
- Panos Xochellis, Dr., Professor* – University of Thessaloniki, Greece
- Nenad Zekanović* – Croatian Ministry of Education and Sport, Zadar, Croatia
- Irēna Žogla, Dr.* – University Latvia, Riga, Latvia