Education Reform in Societies in Transition

Education Reform in Societies in Transition

International Perspectives

Edited by
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This book is dedicated to the teachers and educators who work in transitional societies, who are resilient, learn to survive against great odds and have provided lessons in courage, survival, endurance and change.

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We are pleased to share this passion with you and hope that you will benefit from the book as much as we have in putting it together.

The editors

Jaya Earnest & David Treagust

CONCEPTUALISING EDUCATION REFORM

The last decade has been a time of rapid, and quite often radical, political, socio-cultural and economic change in many parts of the world. These broad changes have had serious implications for educational policies. In all regions, common patterns of issues also arise such as science, technology and environmental education, balancing of local needs and the need to produce a generation of young educated minds who can resolve and respond to issues within their country and provide leadership at the global level (Mutua & Sunal, 2004).

A closer look at the education systems of the countries in transition, the conditions in the schools (capacities, organisation, school management), in their systemic environment (management and governance, research and development, financing and regulation, training and professional support) indicates that these systems are poorly developed and/or evolving. Generating bottom-up changes in education cannot be easily achieved in an old fashioned top-down manner; decentralisation, liberalisation and the empowerment of autonomous local personnel cannot be brought about overnight. This combined process of systemic change and of realignment of the operation of schools affects all segments of the education system and requires highly effective change management capacities (Rado, 2001).

The challenge of curriculum reform in the developing world, and especially in Africa, lies in improving the quality of education in mathematics, sciences and technology and incorporating the potential development-related functions of science education in rapidly evolving transitional societies. Such reform will involve changes ranging from enhancing rural subsistence-based activities, to equipping young people with a skill base applicable to modern and industrial technological contexts and the development of skills conducive to environmental preservation, combating of disease and self-employment (Vlaardingerbroek, 1998).

For many nations, political independence cannot be equated with economic and scientific or technological progress. For example, the situation in most of the African continent has in reality worsened as a result of internal political strife, poor leadership and mismanagement of resources. A country that is not considering constant improvement in science and technology education is running the risk of being obsolete. Nations must also show concern about possible socio-cultural tensions created through the application of science and technology, especially in Africa. The African child of today is not the same as the African child of a century ago especially with respect to knowledge. In a significant way, his/her worldview is being influenced by science and technology education. As an individual, his/her thinking processes, creativity, desire to attain excellence, receptivity to education and his/her career opportunities have widened dramatically. The community in which he/she lives is also undergoing significant changes with respect to values and interests (Ogunniyi, 1998).

CONCEPTUALISING EDUCATION REFORM

There comes a time in the cycles of societies where radical breakthrough or destruction is likely to occur. Probing the depths of educational reform at such times appears to be a linear track but becomes a new world. It is no longer sufficient to study factors associated with the success or failure of the latest innovation or policy. It is no longer acceptable to separate planned change from seemingly spontaneous occurring change. It is only by raising our consciousness and insights about the totality of educational change that we can do something about it (Fullan, 1993).

Educational reformers must not confuse a change in policy with a change in practice. Reformers must understand that in order to accept changes in practices a process of unlearning what custom, tradition, and even research have told education personnel is right, natural and proper has to take place (Saranson, 1990).

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SETTING THE SCENE

JAYA EARNEST & DAVID TREAGUST

CHAPTER 1

**SETTING THE SCENE:
PROVIDING THE FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXT**

INTRODUCTION

The Declarations of the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education and the Dakar 2000 World Education Forum called on nations of the world to broaden their concept of 'Education for All' beyond increased participation in education. These declarations emphasised the need to expand access to education and improve education quality and equity (UNESCO-IIEP, 2004). At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, a set of common objectives that focus on central global issues. At its heart were eight Millennium Development Goals that ranged from reducing extreme poverty, to improving maternal and child health and providing universal primary education. These goals form a set of simple but powerful objectives that nations must endeavour to meet by 2015 (UN, 2000). Against such a background on universal primary education and education for all, this book presents an in-depth exploration of educational reconstruction in 15 transitional societies representing every continent of the world. For each chapter of the book, the authors have provided an overview of educational processes and a distillation of education change, reform, and/or reconstruction in each transitional society. Collectively, the chapters in the book have attempted to contribute to a better understanding of the educational system in respective countries by identifying the challenges and obstacles, the policy implications, the teacher professional development needs, the curriculum reform efforts and reality for their implementation in the different contexts of each nation.

THE SPECIFIC AIMS OF THE BOOK

Framed against the background of educational change, this book proposes to examine the relationship between curriculum change, teacher professional development, policy reform and the processes of educational change (UNESCO-

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IBE, 2003). Societies in transition tend to alter and transform their school systems in order to attempt to meet these international declarations. The institution of education is in a dialectical relationship with society, for what prevails in the outside environment influences schools and what is taught and transmitted in the schools affects societies (Hamburg, 1995).

The processes of educational change aim to reflect the ways in which each society has been altered and is the crux of the education reform process (UNESCO-IBE, 2003). Consequently, the main aims of the book are to:

- Focus on educational changes and reconstruction in transitional societies that have undergone political, economic and social change in the past two decades.
- Provide a forum for the dissemination of research on education reconstruction and reform in transitional societies.
- Disseminate ideas that enhance both the practical and theoretical aspects of educational changes in these societies.
- Further knowledge and understanding of emerging trends and issues in education in these societies.
- Reflect the realities of educational scenarios in each transitional society.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on these aims we provide an analytical framework, modified from that developed by UNESCO-IBE (2003) for educational reform, that can be used to identify transitional countries and outline the key characteristics of the reform process, the dynamics of internal and external factors of educational change and the approaches to the transformation processes in education (Rado, 2001). The transition process in each of these countries is unique but is also characterised by certain similar components: the historical legacy of ethnic differences, colonisation and communism, the dramatic changes in the economic systems of each country and the impact of globalisation and the move towards market economies.

The framework shown in Figure 1 includes the background to the transition, the characteristics of the present day education system, the economic context for reform, the ways of reconceptualising the curriculum, policy dialogue and research monitoring and evaluation. In each of the chapters in this volume, with different emphases, the authors have attended to aspects of the six parts of this framework for educational transition.

Background to the transition
Nature of social composition
Nature of conflict and/or transition
Characteristics of the present day education system
Management system
School system
Curriculum development
Education traditions and implications for reform
Economic context of reform (internal and external)
Resource assessment
Nature of donor involvement
Reconceptualizing curriculum: changing curriculum paradigms
Changes in curriculum paradigms
Direction of curriculum change
Policy dialogue
Modalities of participation in policy reform
Identifying difficult issues with regard to sensitive learning areas.
Research, monitoring & evaluation
Monitoring policy and practice
Identifying indicators of change

Figure 1: The framework for education transition modified from UNESCO, IBE (2003)

WHY EDUCATION IN TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES?

Recent decades form a period when a number of countries across the world were coming out of colonisation into self-governance, hereby making this a critical period in terms of educational agendas (Mutua & Sunal, 2004). The key issues of globalisation, decentralisation and new modalities in international assistance have affected education world-wide in recent times, having a direct bearing on educational policies and planning (UNESCO-IIEP, 2004). Globalisation results when borders for all economic activity are abolished which in education can lead to an increased concern for quality because education is considered an activity open to market competition. Globalisation confronts societies and individuals with new learning challenges that educational planners do not readily know how to meet. Decentralisation is the second major issue that has transformed educational planning such that, over the last two decades, most countries have embarked on some form of decentralisation practices. Decentralisation, depending on the context, can lead to improvement in education or to increased inequalities. The third challenge for educational planning in the current global scenario is related to international assistance and financing, where nations have been encouraged to develop a “Sector-wide Approach” (SWAp) to education planning and implementation. SWAp attempts to encourage in donors a strong sense of local

ownership while introducing educational reform with donor support (Calloids, Goettelman-Duret & Lewin, 2003).

EDUCATION IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE WORLD

Political and economic forces have meant that the world is redefining relationships globally. These changes have contributed towards an increase in migrant, displaced and refugee populations, giving a new meaning and dimension to emergency education, development education, comparative education and international education research (World Bank, 1999). Today, some 175 million professional migrants move around the world, living in cultures that are different from their own. This situation is challenging education systems, education delivery and content in many countries. Can a relevant education be provided in this new world? Can countries develop a curriculum that is more globally focused yet has a local orientation? Such a curriculum must attempt to contribute across cultures and also attend to local needs (Braslavsky, 2003). In most transitional societies, common patterns of issues arise when a relevant science, mathematics and technology education needs to be balanced with local needs. Braslavsky (2003) describes five key criteria to meet the needs of cultural diversity:

1. *Global comprehensiveness.* All dimensions of human personality, issues on human rights, ecological principals and notions of a world of equal cultures and societies in interdependence need to be addressed.
2. *An openness of local issues and identities.* Promotion of local issues and identities is necessary so that children and youth can relate to local aspects of global, environmental, social and political issues and opportunities, and local community and cultural experiences can be contextualised.
3. *Alternate approaches to individual subjects.* New perspectives, incorporated into individual subjects such as mathematics and science, should be linked through authentic problem solving, communicative approaches in languages studies are shared, history is discussed through multiple perspectives, and multicultural and intercultural values are recognised.
4. *Cross discipline methodologies.* Many nations are beginning to realise that a genuine global and local curriculum is about bringing changes in both content and delivery.
5. *Ownership.* For curriculum frameworks to have an impact on school practices there must be ownership on the part of teachers who translate and implement the curriculum in classrooms.

The values and social structure that nations wish to encourage are complex in any democratic pluralistic society. Education today must convey the truth of human diversity, the humanity we all share and the fascination of other cultures, making understanding and respect a core attribute of their outlook on the world - including

the capacity to interact effectively in the emerging global economy (Galtung, 1996).

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

The World Conference on Science in Budapest, Hungary in July, 1999 addressed the issues of science education for development, science education in schools and science education for the future. Three main themes elucidated were: science for knowledge and knowledge for progress; science for peace, conflict resolution and sustainable development; and science in society and for society with a special consideration on ethics and gender. Within these three themes governments were expected to accord the highest priority to improving science education at all levels through their Ministries of Education.

Since the Second World War, many nations around the globe have come to associate high investment in science, mathematics and technology education with economic growth (McKenney, 2001). Caillods et al. (1996) conclude that investing in science education is a necessary condition for economic growth. Lessons can be learned from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia which have enjoyed rapid economic growth in recent decades. In addition to sound macro-economic policies, these countries have made substantial investments in education and training in general, and science and technology in particular, as a major contributing factor to their economic growth (Calloids et al. 1996). Although the causes for these developments are multi-dimensional and complex, there has been a strong and sustained commitment to science and mathematics education in these countries such that Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Hong Kong outperform other nations on international comparison tests such as TIMSS and PISA (Martin et.al, 2004; OECD, 2001).

One task faced by the Ministry of Education in most societies in transition is to promote the professional development of teachers and educators and address the lack of appropriately prepared science and mathematics teachers in their countries. Another task is to develop new curricula, teaching methodologies and resources in response to the changing educational needs of societies. Governments have a responsibility to provide basic science education for all and opportunities for lifelong learning in the sciences and mathematics. Even though these themes and expectations were stated in most policy documents, in most developing countries there was, and still is, no consensus among nations on how to structure courses that will provide quality science education for all students. Nevertheless, the participants in the Project 2000+ Forum believed that scientific and technological literacy are essential for achieving responsible and sustainable development (UNESCO-Project, 2000). Similarly, science education experts have made the following statement:

Governments that are interested in laying the groundwork for a more technically oriented economy should place heavy emphasis on Mathematics and Science. These subjects are relatively inexpensive to teach and are likely

to promote economic growth more efficiently than in-school vocational education. (The World Bank, 2001, p. 62)

Across the world, there is a recognised relationship between quality research, development in science and technology and economic stability and growth (Ware, 1992). In many countries, this recognition has resulted in additional efforts being made to support science and technology education at all levels because this can lead to a scientifically and technically skilled labour force. Such skilled personnel enable economic progress in low developing countries (Drori, 1998). Science and technology often have been perceived as the driving force behind the economic development of industrialised countries.

Many developing countries invest heavily in science, mathematics and technology education to strive for socio-economic development (Lee, 1992). The Indian Education Commission as far back as the 1960s acknowledged that economic development, welfare and security are all closely dependent on the extent and quality of education (Kothari, 1970). The science for development model put forward by Drori (1998) works on the assumption that a government envisions science education as a systematic programme for national development with a scientifically and technically skilled labour force that enables industrialisation, and in turn, economic progress.

According to Stacey (2004), mathematics education draws on many other disciplines such as psychology, human development, sociology, philosophy, epistemology, pedagogy, policy and science, and raises issues of social concern. Indeed, mathematics education internationally has strong political and social consideration and is increasingly internally driven. The economic and social goals for mass secondary education modified from Stacey's (2004) representations indicate that education, including science, mathematics and technology education, is regarded as the key to an advanced economy. Today, in most countries, more children are aiming to complete secondary school. At the same time there is a general dissatisfaction with students' results from traditional education and an urgent need for more meaningful instruction (Fensham, 2004). International educators and most departments of education are rethinking what education at school should be and how it can be taught so that students are exposed to social justice issues and there is a creation of knowledge workers.

CURRICULUM REFORM

Over the last few decades, in many countries of the world, the development of curriculum frameworks has been documented as a recent trend in educational reform. A curriculum framework stipulates the parameters that should be considered when setting curriculum goals and contents, when choosing learning methods and materials and for assessment of the attainment of education standards. Implementation involves changing the status quo by accepting and utilising a new curriculum document and putting it into practice. Implementation is a phenomenon that attempts to integrate the new curriculum into existing practice

(Print, 1993). Curriculum reform should preserve valuable features and practices of the education system, while adding and adapting valuable education experiences as they have occurred in progressive systems during the last few decades (UNMIK, 2001).

The dominance of western curricula in African countries has stemmed from colonial legacies and in recent times, increasing attention is being given to the role of context in educational change (Hargreaves, 1998). Oginni (1996) also has underlined the importance of context for science, technology and mathematics policy, stating that curriculum materials must be attuned to the socio-cultural setting of children and similarly Rogan (2000, p. 121) noted that “curricula are embedded with cultural values”. Consequently, a curriculum designed in a Western country may place value on individual development, but if adapted to the African context, for example, may be in conflict with the African notion of ‘ubuntu’, which is the pillar of traditional African values and centres round love, gentleness, sharing and caring especially in times of difficulty (McKenney, 2001). Indeed, many curriculum innovations that are adopted from outside a country have the potential of clashing with values within the country (Selvaratnam, 1988; Yolo, 1985).

The challenge of curriculum reform in the developing world lies in improving the quality of education and incorporating the potential development-related functions of education in rapidly evolving transitional societies. Such reform will involve changes ranging from enhancing rural subsistence-based activities, to equipping young people with a skill base applicable to modern and industrial technological contexts and the development of skills conducive to environmental preservation, combating of disease and self-employment (Vlaardingerbroek, 1998).

EDUCATION PATTERNS ACROSS THE GLOBE

The selection of countries in this volume was not covered by any pre-designed set of criteria. Rather, the countries in this book are an eclectic mix of post-conflict transitional nations, post-socialistic nations, nations that have experienced prolonged civil conflicts and nations that are trying to overcome a legacy of inequities and inequalities. Each of the chapters has attempted to provide detailed overviews to the background to the transition, the economic context in the country and the complexity and nature of education change. Nearly all contributors to this book are from the countries they write about or have a long association with the country. This lends an emic and insider perspective to the chapters.

The chapters in the book highlight that transitions in countries are of different types: social, political, demographic and economic. Each country represented in this book has highlighted a critical aspect of transition in the process of educational reform.

- Part 1 deals with a general overview of education reform processes in transitional societies and has been represented by the chapters on Turkey, Israel, Bhutan, Venezuela and Estonia.

- Part 2 deals with science and mathematics education reform in transitional societies and has been reported in the chapters on Nepal, Philippines and Rwanda.
- Part 3 deals with teacher education in transitional societies and is represented by the chapters on East Timor, Pakistan and Tanzania & Zimbabwe.
- Part 4 deals with education in complex transitional societies and has been addressed in the chapters on Lebanon, Tajikistan, Kashmir in Northern India and South Africa.

The challenge that education systems in transitional societies face is huge: the economic relevance of educational services needs to be recovered; the development of democratic skills and attitudes; the basic skills for Lifelong Learning and the expansion of upper secondary education. In conclusion, in the words of Rado (2001), education reform is an inherent component of the overall transition agenda. In many cases it is an almost complete systemic and structural change and can be driven by ideological and political considerations. The real challenge for nations in the transition of education is that all domains of the educational system (school structure, management, financing, curriculum reform, teacher training and assessment) are reconstructed in a perpetually changing environment, in a coherent way with desirable outcomes for all learners. It is our anticipation that all readers would find the book stimulating and enlightening, as we have found it to be as the chapters evolved into a book. Some chapters will evoke mixed reactions, agreement and possibly disagreement. If this happens then the aims of the book have been satisfied, namely to generate discussion and debate of emerging trends and issues in education in transitional societies and to reflect the realities of educational scenarios in each transitional society.

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PART I

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION REFORM PROCESSES IN TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES

NECMI AKSIT & MARGARET SANDS

CHAPTER 2

**ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATION IN
TURKEY**

ABSTRACT

Turkey is situated between east and west. It has a history of 80 years as a republic, founded by Atatürk who ensured that the country was shorn of its old customs and ideas and turned instead to the west. It is currently amending its laws to become eligible for consideration for entry to the EU. There are great inequalities between different areas of the country in terms of access to education and health care. The economy is emerging from a period of high inflation and the repayment of high levels of loan. The population is pyramidal, with 40% below the age of 18, thus putting a strain on the country's limited financial resources. Some aspects of the system provide excellent models, which are prevented by various constraints from being implemented nationwide. The picture is one of fragmentation. New structures may be superimposed on old systems to suit the aims of a particular government. Meanwhile the high number of young people have to be supported in their education and training. The chapter discusses the political, social, and economic factors which affect education, then considers recent changes in three strands in the education system, and relates them to the factors above: the system itself, teacher education, and the curriculum. The chapter ends by discussing the systemic implications of changes.

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TURKEY: EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSITION

Background: A country facing West

On October 6 2004, the European Union (EU) Commission accepted a report on the progress Turkey had made in the previous two years towards meeting the Copenhagen criteria. The Commission recommended that Turkey be considered by the EU leaders in December 2004 for candidate status for the EU, ready to open membership negotiations. Thus Turkey entered into a new cycle towards EU membership.

In the few weeks before October 6 the Turkish Parliament had offered ammunition to those in EU countries opposing its acceptance by attempting to insert adultery as a crime in the revised penal code. Here truly is a country still in transition, a transition which began with the great reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as Turkey was pulled, at the end of World War I, from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and the machinations of the Allies and formed into a modern republic founded on pro-western ground.

In the least developed parts of the country, amongst the population of 72 million, there still remains a different culture with various perspectives, for example, of women's rights and social structure. Imprisoning adulterous men may not be accepted, but so-called honour killings of women who have transgressed the cultural borders of their community are.

This is only one aspect of the transition, albeit one which rapidly caught the attention of the west when reported in the media. Since the foundation of the republic in 1923, much endeavour has gone into transforming the new Turkey into a secular western country in all walks of life. Over the years, since 1923, Turkey has formed political and economic alliances with western countries. In 1945, Turkey joined the United Nations (UN), and in 1952 it became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Since the 1960s, Turkey has wanted to become a member of Europe. In 1963 the head of the European Economic Community (EEC) said, while in Ankara the capital of Turkey, "Turkey is part of Europe". But it has been a winding and rough road since then. The rate of progress has varied, due in part to the internal fluctuating political and economic status of the country over the decades, but latterly also to resistance from within Europe.

Even in 2004, the opponents of Turkey's entry to the EU argued that Turkey's population is too large for the EU to absorb (it will be the most populous EU country in due course), it does not belong to Europe culturally as it is a Muslim country, its economy is low and will take much in the way of EU resources to develop to EU standards, and its location on the edge of Europe will extend the EU borders to the unstable Middle East.

The wavering road to Europe is seen in this brief summary of major events since the early 1960s. In 1963 Turkey signed an association agreement with the then EEC. In 1970, Turkey and the EEC signed an accord which should have led to Turkey's eventual full membership of Europe. However, it was followed in 1979 by Turkey declining to join while its neighbour Greece, invited at the same time, joined in 1981. In 1987 Turkey applied for full EEC membership; the application was deferred (1989) and, in 1997, denied by EU leaders. In 1999 the Helsinki summit recognised Turkey as an applicant country, but stated that many reforms had to be carried out and gave no date for negotiations.

Thus this long winding road, where economy, politics, education, technology and social structure are all intertwined, is finally entering the home straight. The EU has communicated standards to aspirant countries in many areas including economy, law, trade and education. Turkey began to make transformational changes to meet these standards prior to 2004, in order to be eligible for consideration as an EU candidate country. Private and public organisations in Turkey are in the process of making alterations in their systems to meet EU standards, a process which will accelerate from 2005.

At the same time, over all these decades, following the lead set by Atatürk, Turkey has been making changes without any reference to groups of other countries. The new nation, 81 years ago, was set firmly on the path to modernisation. Democracy replaced the autocracy of the Sultan's court and the transformation within the country began. What is now happening is that the in-country transformation has regained momentum, and internal debates are polarising and accelerating on the EU requirements.

Internal Controversies

Throughout this present transitional period, internal controversy over some of the new economic, political, technological, educational and social policies is to be expected, as all sections of this large population come to terms with the changes. For example, the debate concerning the penal code reform bill in Turkey, noted above, brought considerable tension not only between Turkey and the EU but also within the country, resulting in economic instability as the markets reacted.

Another controversy has ensued over the intention to improve public services. Radical reforms devolving many centralised responsibilities of the state to local governors and municipal authorities, private sector and non-governmental organisations have been proposed. At the time of writing, the bill is still under scrutiny, and its radical nature causes concern. To some people, for example, it would lead to both disintegration in society and further inequality in the provision of public services such as education and health. To others, it is an opportunity to have their voices heard and to influence local change.

Education is also controversial. The Ministry of National Education (MONE) has revised a part of the primary education curriculum, and in 2004 launched the first five-year pilot programme in six cities. The new curriculum introduces more student-centred teaching methods and develops students' critical thinking skills. It

will require teachers to use information and computer technology on a day-to-day basis as part of their teaching. Pre-service and in-service teacher training will have to be revised to reflect the changes. The MONE is now in the process of reviewing the rest of the primary school curriculum and will soon re-examine the secondary school curriculum.

Still another major controversy in Turkey, as in France, is about headscarves. Women in headscarves are banned from state institutions including universities and from teaching in schools. The headscarf is seen by those opposed to it, as a symbol of fundamentalism and a move to eliminate secularism. Those who wear it, and their male supporters, see its ban as an infringement of human rights. The issue has been taken to the European Court of Human Rights. The Court, in June 2004, ruled that banning the headscarf was not an abuse of human rights and was valid for opposing fundamentalism.

SOME HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Turkey has been a secular country since 1924. The population of 72 million is estimated to rise to about 100 million people in 30 years. About 30% of the population (21 million) is within the age range of 0 to 14 years. A further 47 million people (65% of the population) are between 15 to 64 years. Only about 4 million (5%) are over 65 (United Nations Human Development Report, 2003). Ninety nine percent of the population are Muslims.

With regard to Turkey's economic performance, the country has gone through a series of economic crises over the past 30 years. The last one was in 2001, resulting in many small businesses folding, bankruptcies, a higher unemployment rate (currently 10.5% of the labour force) and leading to an inflation rate of more than 80%. Since then, the economy has gradually improved, following numerous changes in laws governing the economy and finance. Still, the average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 2003 was only \$2,230, and purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita was \$5,890 (United Nations Human Development Report, 2003).

There is significant inequality in income share. In 2002, the richest 10% of the population earned 30.7% of the country's income. The amount earned by the poorest 10% of the population was 2.3% (United Nations Human Development Report, 2003). There are also regional variations and inequalities. The west of the country is a lot more developed than the east. For example, the State Institute of Statistics figures give the GDP in Kocaeli, a western city, as \$7,556 in the year 2000. In Muş, an eastern city, it was only \$725. This inequality has serious repercussions on the provision of education in poorer regions, resulting in migration to western parts, which also places a heavy burden on educational facilities there. Educational expenditure as a share of GDP is only 6.8% and the total government expenditure on education is 16.2%, a large majority of which is spent on personnel. The adult literacy rate is 85.5%, the male and female rates being 93.7% and 77.2% respectively (United Nations Human Development Report, 2003).

THE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

There are two governing bodies responsible for education in Turkey. One is the Ministry of National Education (MONE), which is in charge of formal primary and secondary education, as well as non-formal education. The MONE is composed of central, provincial, overseas organisations, and affiliated establishments. The minister is a member of parliament appointed by the Prime Minister.

The second governing body is the Higher Education Council (HEC), which is in charge of tertiary education. The president of the HEC is a non-governmental person and is appointed by the President of Turkey.

The education system in Turkey is composed of formal education and non-formal education. Formal education is divided into four levels: pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. Non-formal education provides educational opportunities for those who have never been within the formal systems, who are at a particular stage of their education, or who dropped out (Ministry of National Education, 2001).

Formal education may be preceded by a non-compulsory pre-school year. The overall pre-school education enrolment rate is currently 9.8%, dropping to 2.1% in the south-east of the country. The MONE (2001) has made some provisions to increase this to 16% in five years' time.

In 1997, compulsory primary education was increased from five to eight years, starting at age six, and by 2004, about 90% of the primary school age population was enrolled in school. There are now more than ten million children in some 35,000 primary schools (public and private) with 375,500 teachers (Ministry of National Education, 2002). In public schools, primary education is free.

Secondary education is not compulsory and runs for three years in general and four in a few cases. Those who want to continue on from primary education may go to general high schools, which prepare students for institutions of higher education. There are some 1.5 million students, nearly 37% of the age range, in about 2,637 general high schools with 72,609 teachers.

Alternatively, after primary education, students may go to vocational and technical high schools which provide specialised instruction. There are about 820,000 students (about 23% of the age range) in 3,428 vocational and technical high schools, with 68,176 teachers. Enrolment at general, and vocational and technical high schools together is almost 60% of the relevant population (Ministry of National Education, 2002).

At the level of tertiary education, there is a highly competitive entrance examination called ÖSS. The examination places students in universities offering 4-year, 5-year or 6-year degree programmes, vocational colleges offering 4-year degree programmes, or the Open University. In 2003, about 1.5 million students took this examination; in 2004, the figure was nearer 1.9 million. Unfortunately, only about 400,000 students per year are placed in universities, vocational colleges or the Open University. The large number of applicants for tertiary education is a direct result of the pyramidal population of Turkey, where 40% are under the age of 18.

There are 53 state universities and 19 private (foundation) universities. In the institutions of tertiary education, including the Open University, there are some 1.5 million students with about 60,000 academic staff. Enrolment in tertiary education, including graduate programmes, is about 28% (Gürüz, 1999). In summary, there are approximately 17.5 million students in formal and non-formal education comprised of 12.9 million students at the formal primary and secondary education levels, 3.2 million at the level of non-formal education, and 1.5 million students at the tertiary level. If one considers combined primary, secondary and tertiary education, the gross enrolment rate in Turkey is 60%, - females 54% and males 65% (United Nations Development Programme, 2003).

EMERGING ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Education in many ways is vulnerable to social, political, technical and economic forces as well as to constantly changing priorities. A new government was elected in 2002 by a substantial majority. The new MONE is in the process of initiating further changes in many parts of the education system, while taking into consideration some practices in EU countries. The issues related to education can be briefly analysed from the viewpoint of administration, curriculum and teacher education.

Administration

The education system in Turkey is highly centralised, being the most centralised educational system of any Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member state (Fretwell & Wheeler, 2001). Hierarchically structured, the MONE is divided on the principle of functional specialisation. Each department has its own clear structure with defined roles and responsibilities and clear lines of command or communication. For example, a number of departments are in charge of different types of vocational and technical high schools. Another department has responsibility for state primary schools, and another for private schools. The ministry and its departments centrally plan, organise, command, coordinate and control educational means and ends.

The MONE appoints principals of state schools, who are mainly responsible for implementing central or provincial decisions. State schools cannot recruit their own teachers. The MONE recruits teachers centrally through a national examination and appoints teachers based on regional needs or relocates them if there are more teachers than needed in an area. In addition, the ministry plans and implements pay schemes for educational staff. The ministry determines the curriculum, too, with set instructional and assessment procedures, and provides professional development opportunities through conferences, in-service courses and seminars.

Without incentives or rewards, teachers have a relatively low status. Pay scales range from \$300 to \$600 a month, the lowest paid of any OECD country, for a total of 830 teaching hours per year (Fretwell & Wheeler, 2001; OECD, 1996). In

addition, school and teacher accountability is also monitored through inspectors, who report to central or provincial authorities of the MONE. The centralised structure of the MONE often makes it difficult to implement changes to meet the varying needs of society, or to respond quickly to an emerging situation.

To address some of the issues, the government wishes to give local authorities more power to make educational decisions, thus helping to meet local needs. These will include decisions from recruitment to professional development and from remuneration to termination of employment. Such intentions, however, are strongly resisted by most universities and some non-governmental organisations. They argue that local administration could result in a diversified provision of education. They maintain that it is the responsibility of the state to offer a unified system of education and provide equal educational opportunities to all. This cannot be delegated to governmental or non-governmental local authorities, including the private sector. It is also said that such a decentralised approach, in the long run, would politicise the education system more than it is at the moment, and, more importantly, jeopardise the treasured secularity. They claim that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure a contemporary education system free from any form of political agenda.

It is also the intention of the current government to change the status and composition of the HEC, which has been functioning outside the political framework since the constitution of the Republic was changed in 1982. The HEC sets its own agenda and works independently. The current government wishes to have a say in the practices of the HEC and matters of tertiary education. For example, the MONE would like to change admission policies to universities, giving vocational and technical high school graduates, including those from Islamic high schools, the same access to tertiary education institutions as those from general high schools. The HEC, some political parties, universities and various non-governmental institutions resist this plan, stating that such a change would give more advantages to the vocational and technical graduates in the whole education system. They also argue that it will jeopardise the secular ideology of the country. All these changes initiated by the government, however, are interpreted as back to square one by the HEC and the universities. They say that the status of the HEC was made independent when it was set up in 1982 to bring stability by stopping governments from intervening with the practices of higher education. The HEC and universities say that a reform is needed but the proposed changes should not be rushed. Such changes need to be discussed in detail to ensure that they are in line with current policies and related international practices.

The MONE also intends to simplify the classification system of general, and vocational and technical high schools. Currently, there are seven general high school types. The situation, however, is more complicated when it comes to vocational and technical high schools. There are five types of technical high schools for boys and five for girls. Also, there are nine types of commerce-tourism high schools. Additionally, there are three types of religious schools at secondary level. The MONE would like to reduce the number of school types drastically, and

shift the emphasis from type of school to type of programme, which has already gained some support from the faculties of education at different universities.

Curriculum

The main problem often expressed about the national school curriculum is that there is a lot of content and too much emphasis on transmitting it. The stated objectives are narrow in scope and many are at the level of recall. Neither does the national curriculum give enough room for contemporary teaching strategies. Lessons are mainly teacher-centred and content-driven. Additionally, educational materials and resources for effective teaching are limited in many schools. Further, assessment of the national curriculum promotes memorisation and reproduction of large amounts of content. As well as the ÖSS, there are national examinations in the system, giving the curriculum an examination-driven nature.

We will first look at the present school curriculum and how it is taught, to set the scene from the past, and then take it into the future. The MONE determines the scope of the national curriculum for every subject area. An intra- rather than an inter-disciplinary approach is practised, with little cross-reference to other subject areas. The MONE also determines the sequence of units, and the number of lessons to cover units, in most subject areas. Teachers are required to prepare yearly plans to follow the given sequence, unit by unit, within the time frame given. Teachers complain that the scope of each subject is too wide for them to cover, as well as for students to digest, in the time given. This forces them to use didactic, teacher-centred methods.

With regard to curricular objectives, the curriculum has an outcomes-driven nature with curricular objectives determined centrally and stated as part of the published curriculum. The objectives are narrow in their cognitive coverage, many emphasising recall. They are stated in terms of what teachers are to explain or transfer, not in terms of what students will do or gain. The accumulation of knowledge seems to take precedence over using knowledge through higher level cognitive skills such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bloom et al, 1971). Objectives are the same for all students with little or no variation to meet different student needs. This does of course ensure equality across the country. But within the same class or grade level, students are expected to proceed at the same pace.

The most-used teaching methodology is deductive rather than inductive. Teachers are the sole authority in the classroom. They are seen as all knowing, and disseminators of knowledge. Teachers put a lot of emphasis on explicit teaching of content, and tend to conduct their lessons by explaining, plus questions. Student growth through knowledge transmission rather than through experience is favoured and students are usually expected to listen and remember what is transmitted. Even if they are encouraged to get involved, there are constraints of time and class size. The class size in primary education ranges from 26 to 43 (Ministry of National Education, 2002).

Educational materials and resources are considered to be an essential component of effective teaching. As regards textbooks, there are several approved course books covering the content of a grade level. Schools can choose from approved course books only. In most cases, in each subject area, one main textbook is used. There are rarely teacher guides or supplementary material for classroom use. There is a shortage of educational technology. Many schools do not have access to computers, printers, televisions, video cassette recorders or overhead projectors. Schools that do have IT facilities may not have teachers trained to use them effectively in student learning.

Another important part of instruction is assessment. The assessment system is mainly composed of written examinations, oral examinations, participation and other work done outside the classroom. The MONE specifies the minimum and maximum number of written and oral examinations to be administered at each grade level. It is the responsibility of the teachers to prepare the examinations. The questions tend to follow the teaching, and test memorisation and reproduction of content. Few students do projects that would help them contextualise topics and understand them better.

Teachers' use of formative assessment during their lessons is an aspect of the learning process which needs to be developed. Giving feedback to reinforce learning or remedy weaknesses is not an essential part of the system, either. In fact, teachers usually move quickly from one unit to another in order to cover the syllabus. There is no time to go back and re-teach areas imperfectly understood by students.

Examinations are set at various grade levels for limited quality education opportunities. There is a national examination after grade 8 for placement in prestigious state or private schools. There is another national examination after grade 11 for placement in tertiary level institutions. There are yet others given by private schools to recruit students at any grade level. The national curriculum may therefore be regarded as an examination-driven curriculum.

The main result of the competition by many students for too few places in universities is the emergence of private establishments called *dershanes*, which provide additional support to students for their examinations. Some also give career guidance in terms of which subject area to choose, based on one's abilities, aptitude and interests. Those parents who can afford it, send their children to *dershanes*. Depending on the quality of the *dershane*, a family may pay \$1500 to \$5000 per year. There are about 2,165 *dershanes* in the country, with about 735,000 students and 19,000 teachers (Ministry of National Education, 2002). As fee paying institutions, the *dershanes* create inequalities in education. Some are also able to pay more than state schools and therefore poach the best teachers.

Over the years, the grade 11 curriculum has more or less disappeared, as the final grade in school has turned into a year of preparation for the university entrance examination. Currently, the grade 11 curriculum is not tested in this examination, and students prefer to attend *dershanes* rather than school. In 2004, the MONE increased the number of days of permitted absence from school from 30 to 45 weekdays, thus giving students extra time which may be spent in *dershanes*.

for examination practice. Some schools therefore have only a few students attending grade 11, especially in the second semester of the year, forcing teachers to combine classes.

We turn now to the future. The changes currently being addressed verify that school education in Turkey is in transition, moving from outdated to more contemporary perceptions of learning. For a start, the whole curriculum from grades 1 to 11 is currently being re-written. The new curriculum will emphasise student-centred teaching methods and techniques and include appropriate assessment methods. The MONE also intends to write new textbooks, and to integrate educational technology and the Internet into the instruction methodology. This could be the start of long-term curriculum development and change in teaching and learning approaches. The MONE also intends to increase the period of secondary education from three to four years and increase compulsory education from 8 to 12 years overall.

Major universities have pointed out that a huge curriculum endeavour such as the above requires considerable time to develop, implement and evaluate. They have also highlighted the need to address the teacher training implications. Without a shift away from transmitting content to learners, and focused instead on training in monitoring student progress, giving feedback for formative purposes and training in the use of new educational materials, such a massive investment in curriculum development could fall by the wayside.

Educational materials are regarded as important, and the MONE gives extra support to students and schools in rural areas. Last year about 2,300,000 students at primary schools in rural areas were given free course books, and about 4,400 of the schools were provided with laboratory equipment, lockers, shelving, dictionaries, maps, books and school bags. In about 3,000 schools from all cities in Turkey, information technology (IT) classes were set up in 2000 and provided with computers, printers, scanners, educational software, televisions, video cassette recorders and overhead projectors, with manuals showing how to use all the technological materials and resources (Ministry of National Education, 2002).

Regarding the issue of the grade 11 curriculum, starting from September 2004, the grade content will be included in the university entrance examination. This will probably reduce the rate of absence at schools and make the *dershanes* unhappy. Also, the MONE tells *dershanes* from time to time, with regard to the amount of work allocated by them, to reduce the pressure on students. However, to some non-governmental organisations, the above are only interim solutions; more drastic measures are needed to channel students into formal education at secondary education level.

Teacher Education in Transition

Teacher education in Turkey has been in transition since the early 1990s. The previous system produced too few teachers for the burgeoning school population of a country where 40% is under the age of 18. With the increase in compulsory schooling from five to eight years in 1997, even more teachers were required to

staff the new classrooms. At one point there was a shortfall of 97,000 teachers, mainly for grades 1-8, but also English and computing teachers.

In this period, too, there were two major changes in the length of teacher education. In 1992 teaching became an all-graduate profession when the two-year college training was lengthened to become a four-year undergraduate programme. However, the length of training for elementary and high school teachers remained equal only until 1998, after which teachers of most high school subjects had to be educated and trained via a five-year undergraduate and masters (without thesis) programme. The upgrading of professional expertise in the production of teachers over the period has thus been in transition from a shorter, more generalised education, to a longer and more directly targeted one.

Of course, cash is always transitional. For such an expansion, both of the means of educating teachers and the school population, large quantities were needed. Buildings, equipment, teachers' salaries, and all associated expenses increased dramatically, almost overnight, in a country where there were two severe financial crises within the decade.

Arguably, of more long lasting effect is the transition of ideas. Teacher education, especially in the larger faculties of education where some staff have been trained abroad, became more outward looking. Resources, including the increasing use of the Internet, encouraged the import and impact of new ideas both in the education of teachers and of school students. To cope with the increasing number of students in the faculties of education, the number of teacher trainers themselves had to increase, and the training or re-training of teacher educators also constituted a hurdle to be overcome.

Why the Need for Change?

Was there a need for change? Yes; the old system of teacher education had served well from the middle years of the Republic. But by the end of the twentieth century the number of young people in school necessitated increased numbers of teachers and a more effective training program. There were too few teachers for grades 1 to 8 in the new elementary schools. The implementation in 1997 of an Act passed many years earlier (1973) finally increased the length of statutory schooling from five to eight years. Changing socio-political-economic times made it urgent that disadvantaged children, who had previously failed to participate fully in schooling, children of poor families, and those in some rural areas, especially girls, were actively sought out. Newly-trained elementary teachers needed to be trained in skills which would meet the needs of the new school population. This included teachers who could teach more than one subject in the newly-enlarged middle grades, 6 to 8, as well as those for pre-school children. At high school level, changing views of teaching and learning necessitated a new look at the training of high school teachers, both in their subject area knowledge and their pedagogical skills, and a longer and more effective period of induction into the classroom.

The old system of teacher training was based on a four-year programme in faculties of education. But it was subject-orientated, with education looking like a poor relation. Instructors, the teacher trainers, were specialists in their subjects, usually with no formal education training or experience of schools. Their research and their interests lay in their speciality. The education component too frequently lagged behind. The result was that scarce resources were duplicated in education faculties, leaving little to be channelled to educational materials. Subject area equipment such as scientific apparatus for research, and the research output of the education faculties, lay mainly in the same subject areas as the arts-science faculties and not in education.

The actual training of teachers therefore was not seen as the task of most education faculty instructors. The situation changed dramatically from 1998 and onwards with a restructuring which meant that students took their subject courses in the arts and science faculties. The education faculty and its teachers concentrated on the pedagogical aspects of teacher education and preparation, especially the methodology of teaching the subject and becoming familiar with schools and the life of the classroom.

Another, and more important, poor relation in the education package was student-teacher work in schools. A small amount of time, only one day a week over two semesters, had been given to education students' actual time in school classrooms, most of it observation rather than practice. Newly qualified teachers found themselves not adequately prepared for daily life in a real classroom when they began employment.

One complicating factor in the production of the country's teachers is that two different state organisations are involved. The HEC has been responsible for universities since 1982 and therefore for the staffing, student numbers and all the programmes within the faculties of education. Anything to do with pre-service teacher training comes under the HEC. The employment of teachers is of course the responsibility of the MONE, as is the further training of teachers during their professional life.

The Ministry and the HEC work together in some areas, including admitting to universities the number of student-teachers required by the Ministry forecasts. There are still, however, places where cooperation and consultation are limited, giving rise to serious hiccups in the effective training and supply of teachers.

Strategies to Reform

The OECD report of 1989, *Review of National Policies for Education: Turkey* (1989) criticised both teacher training programmes and the methods used in Turkish classrooms. The government responded to the concerns about teacher training and school teaching by requesting a loan from the World Bank, which funded the National Education Development Project. Separate parts of the Project were administered by the HEC (for pre-service teacher training) and by the Ministry.

More recent injections into the system have come via the World Bank and the European Union. This funding has continued the fast pace of educational development and joined with the desire and resources for change already given from amongst those working in the system. Since the early 1990s, and ongoing, there have been increasing numbers of people in the field of education from all parts of Turkey working to improve the preparation of teachers, the opportunities for children, school and classroom situations and the education system itself. Buildings and teaching developments are included, as well as addressing the inequalities of educational provision across the country.

The programmes and curricula within education faculties have been subjected to scrutiny, revision, and restructuring (Günçer, 1998; Eğitim, 1998; Sands, 1999). Many faculty members have been sent abroad to experience at first hand the recent changes in teacher education in Europe and the United States. Very many more have attended in-service training in-country. There are new and exciting programmes of teacher education as models, both pre- and in-service, and new developments in encouraging professional educators and teacher trainers to exchange views and experiences at conferences and via publications. Research emanating from education faculties is increasingly related to educational issues (Sands & Stevens, 2004).

Within the teacher education programmes, emphasis has moved further towards working with schools. A national faculty-school partnership programme was set up in 1998, and training provided for those associated with it (Koç et al, 1998), to obtain the full and willing cooperation of schools in teacher training. Student-teachers now have twice as much experience in schools than before (which was one day per week for two semesters), although the teacher education programmes are still heavily weighted towards theoretical campus courses. Another issue waiting to be addressed is the school experience of the trainers themselves. Most have come to education via the traditional academic pathway of Masters and PhD. There are not many who have taught in schools before they began to train teachers, and even fewer who teach in schools (or work in schools for other reasons such as research or advising) alongside their teacher training duties.

At the same time, a new system of standards in education faculties was developed and a series of accreditation visits initiated.

The Future

The last 15 years have been turbulent ones for teacher education in Turkey. There was a great desire for change, resulting in a massive inquiry into current practice. On the one hand, it was fuelled by a swelling need to change teaching in schools, and on the other hand by exposure to the changing teacher education scene elsewhere as experienced by overseas visits, books and articles, or other international contacts, most recently the educational programmes of the EU such as Comenius or Socrates.

Change does not come quickly amongst a large group of professionals, but each move towards increased effectiveness results in better trained teachers and

therefore – as these teachers move through the system – a more effective teaching force.

Some of the changes have already been institutionalised, and will be not only sustained but also carried forward. What today may be the edge of development will also be incorporated as capacity continues to be built.

IS EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSITION?

Because of economic and political instability, Turkey has had short-lived governments. New ministers of education may have initiated some changes, discarding the previous initiatives; others were not in office long enough to see their ideas implemented.

Over the years, there have been various changes of different magnitude across all aspects of education, but the main structure with its practices has not changed much. However, the present government, which has a large majority in parliament, has the power to make changes in the national curriculum, the administrative structure of the MONE and the roles and responsibilities of the HEC.

The changes put forward by the current government are different from those proposed by previous governments in that they aim to remove a deeply established set of educational philosophies. For example, the principle of a unified approach to education, which has been in effect since 1924, may no longer continue. The curriculum may no longer be uniform. The hierarchical structure will be more decentralised if the MONE delegates some of its responsibilities to local authorities. Government may have more say in higher education again, after about 25 years of the MONE having full authority.

The MONE points out that the alterations need to be made for the benefit of the country as part of the efforts to become a member of the European Union. However, some political parties, non-governmental organisations and universities disagree. To them, before changing the system into a different direction, it is essential to discuss and understand the basis of the new philosophy which will replace the old. These are major changes after so many years and there is a need to think through their likely effects. Questions often asked are: What exactly is the new philosophy? Why do we need it? What will then be the purpose of education? Will the ends be based on the needs of local communities or society in general? Is this the only way? What choices do we have? How about the outcomes? How about students' needs and wants? Will the students who emerge from this practice be better learners? Will there be more material resources? Will the teachers teach better and be more accountable? How about the role of universities and teacher education programmes? How about teacher in-service training implications?

All the proposed innovations may promise a better future. However, it is costly to rethink all the problems in education and start from scratch each time there is a new government. For years, Turkey has had a fragmented approach to reform in education, perhaps buying into practices used elsewhere in the world, without fully considering the repercussions. Every time there has been a sense of change in the

air, stakeholders within the community have had reasons to resist some of the changes. Many times solutions to problems have become new problems to be addressed at a later stage in the cycle.

It seems what Turkey needs to do is to discuss the educational problems of the present system with a view to reaching a consensus about what kind of new philosophy of education is needed. In the light of that discussion, decisions may be made about what reforms to implement in primary, secondary and tertiary education, preferably making use of effective international practices. Planning and decisions can thus be made in a holistic way, involving all the interested parts and parties. Once the initial stages are successfully negotiated, developments of curriculum, instruction, assessment procedures and tools, teacher education programmes, administrative structure and approach, can follow. It would be a matter of choosing between the alternative methods and strategies within the framework of the established educational philosophy. All these in the long run may help efficient use of resources allocated to education, and improve the accountability of the system of education.

However, it may be more complicated than this. The existing educational philosophy in Turkey has brought about a system of understanding and practice with its sub-systems of inputs, processes and outputs. Changes in any of these sub-systems have always affected the others over the years, necessitating knock-on changes in other parts. The crux of the matter currently in Turkey is that the government wishes to alter the main system, or the main philosophy, not the sub-systems under the existing philosophy, which will eventually be replaced by the new philosophy.

The other side of the coin is that this major philosophical change in the area of education will have repercussions on other areas such as economy, politics, law and the socio-cultural structure. Education may be a system itself with its own philosophy, but it is not a discrete entity; it is part of a larger system, which encompasses society. Changes in the philosophy of education will ultimately extend into and through all parts of society. Present changes will reach far into the future and one can truly say that the education system in Turkey is one which is in transition.

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