
Education, Work and Lifelong Learning ***(Education Programme of ISDUE)***

EDUCATION and SOCIETY

Education is a human, right not a privilege in society. This right has been recognised and emphasised by the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union as well as the in the constitutions of the Nation States.

We socialist teachers demand that the governments safeguard these principles.

At the same time we emphasise that education in our society faces new challenges, due to:

- the changes in circumstances surrounding growing children and young people
- sweeping technological developments and their social consequences
- stronger international competition in a uniting European and world-wide
- the opportunities for movement as a consequence of the opening of frontiers and the collapse of totalitarian systems,
- the recognisable processes of desolidarisation,
- the rise in the appearance of nationalisation and fascism (believed to have been overcome),
- the dangers to national and international peace due to the widening divide between the rich and the poor, as well as to the growing overpopulation cities and the population explosion in states and whole continents
- the destruction of the environment, but also
- growing claims to participation and self-determination

place new demands on the education systems.

This has a decisive influence on growing children and on future generations. The environment and lifestyles of children are changing due to

- increasing employment or unemployment of parents,
- the number of one parent families,
- the strengthening influence of the mass media,
- reduction of play- test- and formative spaces,
- loss of suitable withdrawal spaces and special care rooms for children and young people to which they are entitled,
- widening of social experiences in a multicultural society must be considered and managed.

From the social democratic point of view educated people are the precondition for the existence and further development of a living and democratic society.

The education of people manifests itself in their competence, their ability to make decisions and their ability to act with regard to the demands of life in both culture and society.

In this sense at least 6 dimensions of a humane education can be recognised:

- Education is the entitlement of all people and must be offered and secured for all regardless of origin, sex or religion.
- Education is not restricted only to the scientific/technical area of culture, but also extends to the spiritual/aesthetical and political/social areas.
- Education concerns not only the intellectual capabilities of the person but also the development of their needs, feelings and physical abilities.
- Education does not just encompass learning theoretical knowledge, but also the acquisition of practical skills.
- Education encompasses a general as well as a professional competence and ability.
- Education includes not only encyclopaedic learning but also has to motivate and influence pupils and young people in their methods of study

The State has to provide equal educational opportunities and requisite educational help for all people, but especially adolescents.

A broad educational process and one distributed over the total life span, should always motivate people better and enable them to better:

- recognise and test critically society's facts and its interdependencies in order to determine their foundation and then be able to make changes .
- participate in and influence decisions regarding the development of society towards greater social equality and democracy,
- learn to act productively and in a socially responsible way within the rapidly changing framework of the modern industrial and information society,
- improve the quality of life with respect to the natural environment, the working conditions and the political structure of society.

These capabilities represent the results of the learning processes which accompany and characterise the whole life of the person:

- different institutions within the society are obliged to develop and demand these capabilities in a pre-determined way during childhood and adolescence.
- appropriate provision must also be offered for adults in the light of current changes in society, in the economy and science, in art and culture, in politics and administration.



The PRINCIPLES of SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION POLICY

The goal of education from the social democratic point of view is desire for the fundamentals of freedom, equality, justice and solidarity.

The foundation of education is scientific critically approved active and interactive acquired knowledge regarding nature, culture and society. Education should make possible the inclusion of the performance in the network of society.

Freedom needs the ability and creation of the possibility for individual self-determination and social participation.

Freedom encapsulates the right of people to have a say on all matters upon which their lives depend.

Freedom makes a reality the dignity of people, which is realised through them taking responsibility for their own self.

Freedom demands politically the institutionalisation of the forms of democracy, not only with respect to the state informed opinion, but in all fields of society. Political democracy is to be extended to all areas of society in the form of social democracy.

Equality is the demand for equal freedom for everyone.

Equality entails the possibility of unlimited participation of the individual in the material and spiritual life of society.

Equality shall ensure the right of everyone to free self-development.

The opportunity for **justice** ensures for all people the necessary special proportion of support and funding.

In this sense **justice** means not only equal starting chances, but is eliminating existing injustices. The principle especially of equality must also be taken into account by taking measures to ameliorate the disadvantages of women in many areas of society.

Knowledge regarding injustice and disadvantage on the national and international level must cause alarm.

Solidarity entails getting involved and giving active help to the person concerned, as well as participation in ensuring the happiness of the individual.

Solidarity requires initiatives to produce for others those measures of freedom, equality and justice that one demands for oneself.

Each member of the cultural society and democratic state must be thus directed towards the capacity of self-determination, participation and solidarity within the

framework of a general education. In a society decisively built on social democratic fundamentals, everyone has the right to the widest development of his rational, emotional and social, as well as creative, communicative and practical capabilities.

Everybody must, therefore, be enabled to develop their individual performance potential in the educational process in the best possible way, i.e. many faceted and extensive. But exceptional performance potential must oblige people to solidarity, in order to improve and broaden the living conditions for all members of society, especially for those of lower potential.

The STATE as a GUARANTOR of EDUCATION

The state bears the responsibility for the educational system.

- The state ensures free access to all educational provision of varying lengths and on different levels as the individual right of each adolescent citizen.
- By providing the finances it fulfils part of the necessary agreement between the generations.
- The obligation of the state is to pay attention to ensuring quality in the educational system.
- Adequate funding should be established for schools, which would be supplemented for proposals for special activities (integration of disabled pupils, stress on intercultural learning, full-time care, offering special funding measures, etc.).
- To increase autonomy, and in compliance with the principles of further education (e.g open access and free study), the administration of personnel and finance should be transferred to the Universities and Colleges of Further Education.
- Achievements such as the interchangeability of elements of the education system, the general recognition of rights which have been gained, the educational rights of minorities and the integration of handicapped and disadvantaged pupils in the comprehensive school must be preserved.

PRINCIPLES for the DEVELOPMENT of the EDUCATION SYSTEM

Three fundamental principles must direct the further development of the education system with a social-democratic aspect:

Democratisation and Participation

- Many people today are disinterested in politics; some treat the state and the political parties with reservations and mistrust. School has a responsibility for new forms of political education in the schools, further education and adult education, education for democracy, which involves the education of active, responsible citizens, must be intensified.
- Education for democracy requires the transmission of knowledge about the constitution of the community and the state,
- Education must develop attitudes such as tolerance, respect for the dignity of people solidarity, as well as the development of capabilities to formulate one's own thoughts and convictions, to test arguments, to critically appraise, to respect points of view, and to withstand threats to democracy.
- All institutions in which growing youngsters are brought up and educated must constitute a living example of democracy. Decision making and management structures must be changed in the direction of more participation and self-determination by the participants. By widening autonomy a democratisation process is put in gear, in which, however, the responsibility of the whole society must always be taken into account.
- All educational provision of a democratic society must be available to all of its members, depending on their wishes and abilities, regardless of social origin and cultural background.
- Regarding the necessity of life-long learning, all people are guaranteed the right to paid education time.
- In the field of further democratisation of the school system, more decision making is to be delegated to the individual schools. A new relationship between central, all-embracing regulations and local/regional means of decision making for problem solving on the spot is necessary.
- Decisions regarding the reasonable distribution of personnel and material resources will be transferred to the school association. Contractual arrangements must balance the rights of pupils and parents vis-à-vis the school.

Integration and compensation

- The pluralistic, multi-cultural society, with its dynamic changes demands a large measure of integration from the educational provision. To live together in mutual respect and tolerance, led by the principle of mutual help, must be learned and nurtured. For all young people in compulsory education the comprehensive school provides the best conditions for this to occur.
- Special compensatory measures must secure the social integration of all disadvantaged and handicapped people. The measures needed are to be provided in the schools - perhaps through extra teachers and smaller pupil numbers - but also in vocational education and in integration into work. The integration at school cannot succeed without the understanding and co-operation of parents. Therefore, preparative and supportive initiatives for the information and motivation of parents are necessary.
- School must represent a reflection of a society which does not exclude anybody as a failure or loser, but ensures that the pupil stays in equal social integration with the more able and successful.

Internationalisation and orientation towards future

- Overcoming many problems of the future, such as protection of the environment, procurement and preservation of peace, abolition of poverty, reducing the lowering of living standards and the sluggishness of the economy, is only possible through international co-operation within the global context. International learning by the exchange of research results and technologies, and inter-cultural learning in the sense of understanding and valuing cultures and ways of life of other human societies, is indispensable. It is necessary to demand a greater mutual understanding by pupil, apprentice and student exchanges, and by intensive participation in international education and research programmes. In the progress of international co-operation access to national educational provision is to be opened up to the youth of all countries.
- Foreign languages not only represent an essential medium for communication, but they make accessible the culture and forms of society of foreign countries. Learning foreign languages is therefore to be demanded and expanded in all schools. The development of multilingualism is to be specially supported. Apart from world languages more regard is to be paid also to the languages of neighbouring countries and to ethnic minorities.
- In the field of further education, the disadvantaging of students with respect to the world of work must be prevented through differentiated offers to students, sufficient student grants and effective education.

FROM FIRST EDUCATION to FURTHER EDUCATION (LIFE-LONG LEARNING)

The ever faster changes in all areas of society require the existence of a process of education for people throughout their entire lives. Three dimensions mark out the learning process of people after completion of the first qualification:

- Furthering political participation,
- Raising the quality of cultural life,
- Securing and improving professional qualification e.g. by mobility

Adult education with its wide variety of offers and diverse institutions (further education, higher qualification, re-training, etc.) takes care of this important task in society.

The responsibility for the provision of adult education has to be constitutionally based. The financial provision by the state has to be made legally binding. Funding is to depend upon the nature of the programme and the quality of the institutional offer. Possible financial contributions from the participants have to take account of their incomes, and are, in well-founded cases, taken over in whole or part by the state.

The institutions used for first education, such as schools, colleges and work training places are to be made accessible for adult education. Colleges have to give special regard to the duty of further education, especially for their own graduates.

The offer of education for the purpose of second-chance opportunities, for example, completion of basic education or obtaining qualifications to allow further study , are to be borne by the state. Evening schools for working people as a means for adult education must offer free access.

Legitimate adult education is to be carried out by appropriate teaching methods, and a modular curriculum.

Through close co-operation between schools and further education on the one hand and institutions for adult education on the other, attention must be paid in society to the fact that education and work phases change several times in life, and that consequently a new distribution of the total time spent in education arises. The institutions of adult education have thus to be closely tied into the system of educational institutions which give qualifications.

The offers of adult education have to be geared especially to the needs and expectations of the students, whereby particular regard must be paid to fitting in with work times and family obligations for both women and men.

Motivation towards education is part of the most important task of adult education. Many people being demotivated by their educational experience and social circumstances have first to be attracted to learning and be convinced of the necessity of learning in their own and society's interest. Legal provisions are to ensure the demand for free adult education.

Modern teaching and learning methods are especially important for the task of adult education. New developments in information technology make possible more effective forms of distance learning.

Access to libraries is to improve by the building up of library networks. An established education information service is to give access to educational offers and the possibilities of gaining support for all those interested.

The further development of technologies, which constantly change production and administrative processes and place new demands on people, also demand education alongside work to preserve and extend professional competence just like newly appearing needs within the social and cultural spectrum do.

In future the time invested in education and training will be just as important for the productivity of the firm as the amount of time worked. In the interest of securing and furthering competitiveness, the professional further education of the workers must be supported by the employers side.

A special target group for further education for which the state bears a specific responsibility are the unemployed, those threatened with unemployment and those disadvantaged by society, especially women.