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ETHNIC DISADVANTAGE IN THE TRANSITION FROM LOWER TO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION IN FRANCE

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Abstract – *This paper explores the factors underlying the differences that exist between immigrants and natives in the selective process at work in the transition from lower to upper secondary school in France. The analysis shows that the academic performance of immigrants and natives is unequal. This imbalance, in addition to the inadequate understanding of how the school system functions and the time passed since arriving in the host country, sufficiently accounts for the initial inter-group variation in grades. After controlling for class and immigration related variables, ethnicity was found to have a minor role in the explanation of educational differentials between immigrants and natives. This contradicts the prominent role given to ethnic ascription by the most recent theorising on differentials in status attainment between immigrants and natives.*

Introduction

Immigrants' disadvantage in education is a well-documented phenomenon in advanced democracies. Immigrants show lower rates of academic performance in comparison to natives (Marks, 2005). They also have high dropout rates and rarely pursue higher types of education (Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Driesen & Geert, 2000). The specialised literature depicts ethnicity, altogether with class, as a significant ascriptive source of educational disadvantage.

France is not an exception (Vallet & Caille, 1996). This is not a minor problem because the proportion of French-born citizens and residents sharing a foreign origin had reached 13.5 million by the end of the last decade (i.e., between one-fifth and one-fourth of the whole French population) (Tribalat, 2004). Over the last forty years, France has moreover consistently increased its net rate of social mobility (Vallet, 1999). In fact, as a consequence of several educational reforms, recent research on social mobility has placed France on a par with Sweden and the Netherlands in terms of absolute social mobility rates (Vallet, 2004). The question though is whether these changes have managed to erase the existing gap between immigrants and natives.

The conclusions reached so far by the French empirical literature on immigration and educational attainment are diverse. Some scholars have argued

that, controlling for class, foreign born populations living in France underachieve in comparison to natives (Thélot & Vallet, 1994). In contrast, others have concluded that immigrants are better off than natives (Mondon, 1984). The most comprehensive study in the field by Vallet & Caille (1996) concluded that, controlling for class, the immigrant population did not show any disadvantage. The present article follows this debate and tries to clarify the existing relationship between class and ethnicity. It also seeks to unravel the mechanisms responsible for ethnic differentials in status attainment, since the statistical significance of the ethnic parameters in multivariate analysis is nothing more than a black-box explanation that must be avoided due to its analytical obscurity.

This paper, which explores the educational performance of immigrants in secondary education, focuses in particular on the transition from lower to upper secondary school. I begin the paper by briefly reviewing the literature on class and ethnic differentials in education. I then present an empirical analysis that shows how immigrants and natives differ in the rates of access to non-compulsory secondary education (i.e., upper secondary school). In the next section, the unequal school performance of immigrants and natives is identified as the major factor behind the differences in the school careers at upper secondary level. This realisation leads me to examine then the group differentials in the grades obtained in lower secondary school. The final section explains these differentials through a combination of class mechanisms and a number of constraints linked to immigration, such as the poorer knowledge of how the school system functions and the year of arrival in the host country.

The insights that emerge from the present analysis indicate that there are few traces of ethnic disadvantage. It follows that the emphasis given to ethnicity in many of the recent explanations of the educational underperformance of immigrants needs to be rethought in order to possibly provide simpler and more parsimonious explanations.

Class and ethnic disadvantage: the theoretical references

The American sociology of ethnicity has been the main source of theoretical inspiration for European scholars of ethnic disadvantage. The most recent and prominent theoretical production is strongly inspired by the hindering role of ethnicity (Borjas, 1992, 1995; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Portes & Rumbaut 1996) and the existence of intra-group interactions that constrain individual chances (Borjas, 1995; Portes & Hao, 2005). Most of these theories claim that there is something intrinsic to ethnic membership that shapes individual life chances in the host

country. This would imply a kind of essentialism that marks individuals across ethnic groups.

The broad irruption of sociological explanations based on the concept of social capital (see Portes, 1998) has clearly influenced this line of reasoning. Moreover, it has favoured non-parsimonious explanations which generally assume that differentials between immigrants and natives in status attainment are provoked by ethnic-related causes instead of other factors, such as the unequal distribution of immigrants in the class structure. Contrary to this general trend, this paper argues that the role of ethnicity can only be properly assessed after controlling for both class and immigration related variables. Unfortunately, the literature on ethnic inequalities in status attainment is not in constant dialogue with other branches of sociology that focus on similar dependent variables. Sociologists of ethnic disadvantage must consequently widen their scope to incorporate in more detail the theoretical production and empirical findings of the literature that studies non-ethnic inequalities.

Without any normative implication, a scenario is defined as free of ethnic disadvantage when the educational differentials between immigrants and natives are due to the unequal class stratification of these two groups (and, in its case, by immigration related variables), but not to ethnic factors. This argument is anchored in the finding that the individual stock of human capital is not perfectly portable as part of it is country-specific (Friedberg, 1996). Immigrants may thus need a period of adaptation to overcome this handicap that is linked to the migration process itself (Chiswick, 1988).

FIGURE 1: Possible scenarios that cause educational differentials

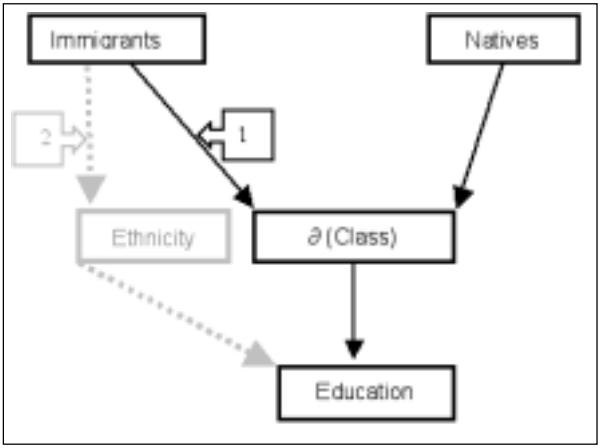


Figure 1 presents two different explanations for educational differentials. Let us first describe the scenario where ethnicity does not account for the different level of attainment (i.e., arrow no. 1). In this case, class is the only source of educational differentials. This means that immigrants are stratified according to their class of origin plus a discount factor ∂ ($\partial = 1$ for natives and $\partial \leq 1$ for immigrants). This discount factor introduces the effect of the handicap derived from the status of being immigrant. ∂ is a function of several variables – such as, having been born in the host society or elsewhere and the type of parental couple, whether it is made up of two immigrants or an immigrant and a native (i.e., mixed) (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004). If class and immigration do not represent a complete account of educational differentials between immigrants and natives, then ethnicity may play a significant role (i.e., arrow no. 2).

Different theoretical frameworks can apply to each of these two scenarios. The literature on class differentials in education identifies a plethora of causal mechanisms, such as material and cultural deprivation and different tastes for education. *Material inequalities* can still be a cause of disadvantage, even in advanced societies where the direct costs of education are null up to upper secondary school. Although the effect of social origins on the transition from primary to secondary education declined as the completion of secondary education became a universal possibility in many countries, the social selectivity of the educational system did not disappear with regard to access to upper secondary education (Raftery & Hout, 1993). For whenever a certain level of education is universal, the class conflict is replicated in the following stage because individuals relentlessly accumulate resources to face further competition (Lucas, 2001).

Cultural inequalities are also frequently cited as a relevant factor in the study of educational disadvantage. Bourdieu argued that the distribution of cultural capital is unequal among classes. This happens because of the different disposition that generates practice in accordance with the structural principles of the social world (*habitus*). These disparities are, at the same time, due to diverging socialisation practices across social groups (Bourdieu, 1974; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The empirical literature has confirmed that unequal stocks of cultural resources shape educational outcomes (Halsey, Heath & Ridge, 1980; Di Maggio, 1982; De Graaf, 1986; Sullivan, 2001)[1].

The third main block of explanations for the existence of inter-group differentials in education highlights the importance of *preferences for education*. Some authors argue that individuals from more privileged social strata value education more strongly than those coming from deprived contexts (Pearlin, 1971; Willis, 1977; Murphy, 1981, 1990; Gambetta, 1987). In contrast, other scholars support the view that preferences for education are homogeneous across groups,

and that groups differ only in the social distance they have to cover in order to reach similar goals or in their aversion to risk (Boudon, 1974; Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997).

In spite of the pre-eminence in the debate on the heterogeneity of preferences for education across social groups, there is sufficient empirical evidence to reject the hypothesis of immigrants' under-ambition with respect to natives. Immigrant families hold high educational expectations with regard to their children's education (Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Vallet & Caille, 1996). It is thus rather unlikely that the unequal distribution of preferences for education is responsible for the poorer educational performance of immigrant groups in relation to the native population.

If class of origin and immigration leave any unexplained variation in the educational attainment of these two groups, ethnicity may play a significant role. The literature on ethnic disadvantage has also identified several mechanisms that may account for ethnic differentials in socio-economic status including diverging *cultural predisposition towards effort*, *discrimination* and broader factors that differentiate collective dynamics. *Culture* is maybe the most well known among them. Following the Weberian logic of the Protestant ethic (see Weber, 1985), some suggest that certain cultural constructs are plagued by absenteeism, tardiness or the rejection of effort, while others hold values that enhance the likelihood of success (Sowell, 1981, 1996; Jelen, 1993).

On the contrary, a number of scholars think that the roots of ethnic disadvantage are situational and that *discrimination* is the key to explaining group differentials (Steinberg, 1981). Discrimination can happen at the school level (Troyna & Carrington, 1990) or at the labour market level if there are different returns to education (Heath & MacMahon, 1998; Betts & Lofstrom, 2000).

More recent theorising on the effect of ethnicity on status attainment tried to overcome the traditional dichotomy between culture and discrimination. This is what Chiswick (1988) does in his *child investment model*, inspired by the widely accepted trade off between quantity and quality of children. In this model, what is specific to ethnic minorities is that fertility control may have a different psychological cost across ethnic boundaries, depending on the religious credo in which the group is embedded. Nonetheless, Chiswick also suggests that the importance of religion may vary from generation to generation. A different argument came from Borjas (1992), who defined the concept of ethnic capital. For Borjas, ethnicity is an externality in the human capital accumulation process which operates through what he calls *ethnic capital*. Ethnic capital refers to the quality of the ethnic environment – the average level of human capital – where the immigrants and the children of immigrants are raised (Borjas 1992). Finally, the celebrated *Ωodes of incorporation* by Portes & Rumbuat (1996) hypothesise that

the way in which first-movers are incorporated into the host society shapes the status attainment of future-comers and second generations. The modes are a function of the immigration policies at work against specific groups and their ability to neutralise it through their social capital.

Data and categories for this study

Research on ethnic minorities is hindered by the lack of datasets that are sufficiently large to make inter-group comparisons. France has a long tradition in the production of datasets for the study of all sorts of inequalities in education. For instance, the recent *Panel d'Élèves du Second Degré* (Panel 95) includes in its recruitment questionnaire (1995) explicit information about the family's migration history and allows a proper study of ethnic disadvantage in education (see Caille, 2003).

The survey sampled 18,730 students entering into lower secondary education – the *collège* – in 1995. The information was collected in several stages. Unfortunately, the sampling design is a source of lost cases. A 'recruitment questionnaire' was filled up with administrative data for each student in 1995. Each year from 1995 to 2000, a questionnaire surveyed the students' school performance. In 1998, a 'family questionnaire' extracted more information about the students' family entourage. Approximately 12,981 completed this questionnaire[2]. In spite of the fact that the survey did not over-sampled ethnic minorities, it still provides adequate figures for this study.

TABLE 1: Type of student by immigration category

Immigration Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Children of father and mother born in France (French)	12,672	72.19
First generation/mixed parental couple (first-mixed)	87	0.50
First generation/immigrant parental couple (first-immigrant)	426	2.43
Second generation/mixed parental couple (second-mixed)	2,381	13.56
Second generation/immigrant parental couple (second-immigrant)	1,987	11.32
Total	17,553	100.00

Source: Panel 95

Table 1 identifies five types of students according to their parents and their own country of birth. The French-born type, or natives, are children of a French-born father and mother. First and second generation type immigrants can be from mixed (immigrant + French) or immigrant (immigrant + immigrant) parental couples. The logic behind the inclusion of these categories is fairly common in the specialised literature. Being born in the host country has a potentially beneficial effect because the individual's early socialisation happens already in the receiving context (Borjas, 1992; Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004). For similar reasons, mixed parental couples – which are a well-known context for acculturation and increasing integration and understanding of the functioning of the host society – have an effect on any indicator from religious practise to language proficiency (Tribalat, 1995; Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004).

Ethnicity is defined according to the parental country of birth. The children of mixed parental couples are grouped following the ethnic background of their non-native parent. Table 2 gives the ethnicity of the students sampled in Panel 95. Although in some cases the sub-samples by ethnic origin were small, it was decided to include the maximum number of ethnic groups available in order to have sufficient inter-group variation in terms of cultural background and immigration histories.

TABLE 2: Ethnic groups (father/mother's country of birth)

Ethnic Group	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
France	12,672	80.19
Algeria	828	5.24
Spain	148	0.94
Northern Europe[3]	184	1.16
Indochina[4]	154	0.97
Italy	124	0.78
Morocco	614	3.89
Portugal	391	2.47
Sub-Saharan Africa[5]	316	2.00
Tunisia	240	1.52
Turkey	131	0.83
Total	15,802	100.00

Source: Panel 95. There were 1751 immigrants whose ethnic group was not sufficiently numerically relevant to be included in the analysis.

The analysis

Differences in the track chosen in upper secondary school

Secondary schooling in France is divided into two blocks: lower secondary education (i.e., the *collège*: 6th to 3rd year for ages from 11 to 16) is compulsory and universal, but upper secondary education is a track system (i.e., the *lycée*: 2nd to final year). At the end of lower secondary school, a board formed by teachers and inspectors (*class council*) decides which track the student is invited to follow in upper secondary. The decision is made within the so-called *orientation process*. This selective process, which is becoming increasingly more demanding, is the cornerstone of the French school system (Prost, 1992). The orientation process begins when the students' families express their preferred option. The class council makes the final decision in the light of the family's preference and the student's performance in lower secondary school. Although this very rarely happens, in case of disagreement with the final decision, the families can launch an objection, thus opening an administrative process (Masson, 1997). Some French authors have criticised this process for amplifying the effect of family level constraints leading to inequality (Duru-Bellat & Kieffer, 2000; Merle, 2002). In the 1990s, some 89.3% of the children from top-executive classes followed the upper track, compared to only 54.6% from a manual background. Again, while 65.1% of French natives proceeded to the academic track, only 51.7% did so among the immigrant students (Duru-Bellat & Mingat, 1990)[6]. Some sociologists have argued that the family's expectations work as a 'binding information' and this is why students from lower social strata have a greater likelihood of being sent to the vocational option rather than to the more academic one (Duru-Bellat & Mingat, 1985, 1988).

Two different dependent variables were used to study this process: one for the family's preference and another one for the final decision made by the class council. A dummy variable *family-choice* is set to 1 if the first option desired by the family at the beginning of the orientation process is the academic track, and 0 if otherwise. Merle (2002) has argued that the study of the democratisation of access to upper secondary education in France cannot focus on leaving or staying at school after the *collège* period, but has to take into account the different tracks followed as deprived families are more likely to prefer shorter and more applied educational options.

Table 3 introduces stepwise the ethnic (M1) and immigrant (M2) groups to measure group differentials in the likelihood of choosing either of these two tracks with respect to the children of French-born families (*reference category*).

TABLE 3: LOGIT – family's first wish in the orientation process

Family Choice 1: academic 0: vocational	**M1**	**M2**	**M3**	**M4**
Algerian	-0.7187***	-0.1860	-0.2169	-0.0969
	0.103	0.126	0.129	0.149
Tunisian	-0.6024**	-0.0260	-0.0896	-0.1245
	0.198	0.209	0.210	0.242
Moroccan	-0.6510***	0.0239	-0.0150	0.1847
	0.126	0.151	0.153	0.170
Spanish	-0.4058	-0.0144	-0.0833	-0.1570
	0.224	0.237	0.241	0.276
Portuguese	-0.4248*	0.1705	0.1031	0.3295
	0.172	0.188	0.188	0.201
Italian	-0.1388	0.2176	0.1624	0.2492
	0.253	0.264	0.272	0.256
Northern	0.0961	0.5066*	0.3363	0.0211
	0.192	0.206	0.209	0.234
Indochinese	0.1730	0.8202**	0.7525*	0.4487
	0.274	0.287	0.295	0.315
African	-0.1864	0.3846*	0.3478	0.4691*
	0.179	0.194	0.201	0.227
Turkish	-1.3640***	-0.5793	-0.6855*	-0.3650
(Reference category: French)	0.295	0.311	0.320	0.338
First-immigrant		-0.8838***	-0.8258***	-0.7712***
		0.187	0.191	0.202
Second-immigrant		-0.8499***	-0.7896***	-0.6148***
		0.109	0.111	0.123
First-mixed		-0.5414	-0.4769	-0.4453
		0.305	0.303	0.354
Second-mixed		-0.3226***	-0.2549**	-0.2015*
(Reference category: French)		0.081	0.082	0.090
Log(income)			0.5897***	0.3157***
			0.047	0.051
Level family-estimation				0.1750***
				0.042
Mean-former				0.3062***
				0.013
Repeats-college				-0.2627***
				0.018
Constant	0.3503***	0.4027***	-0.1011*	-3.7062***
	0.073	0.024	0.047	0.132
N	9465	9465	9465	9465
R^2	0.0091	0.0149	0.0277	0.1898
χ^2	108.55***	175.44***	318.01***	161.70***

β & *SE*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The column marked M3 introduces information about the household income. Indeed, families may differ in their willingness to make economic sacrifices for their children's education (Hauser, 1993; Kane 1994). The value of the variable *income* is set to 1 when the respondent to the 'family questionnaire' thinks that the resources available at the household level are 'very insufficient' for the student to continue his studies for as long as he wants (it is set to 2 if considered 'insufficient', to 3 if 'sufficient', and to 4 if 'perfectly sufficient'). Given the non-linear effect of this variable, it is introduced in its logarithmic form.

Finally, the column marked M4 introduces a complete set of academic-performance controls. The literature has shown that the student's subjective perception about the probability of succeeding is a determinant factor in the educational choices decided within families (Morgan, 1998; Breen, 1999). The variable *level-family-estimation* is the family's estimation about the student's performance[7]. To correct for any information deficiency about the student's performance, the model also controls for the mean grade obtained in the examinations that take place at the end of lower secondary school (i.e., the *brevet des collèges*). The *mean-brevet* ranges from 0 to 20, and the number of years that the student has repeated in lower secondary education (i.e., *repeats-collège*) ranges from 0 to 6.

The first model (M1) reveals a strong pattern of ethnic disadvantage. The Algerian, Moroccan, Portuguese, Tunisian and Turkish groups are significantly less likely to wish their offspring to follow the academic track. Also, most of the non-significant ethnic groups hold negative signs (African, Italian and Spanish) – the Indochinese and the Northern groups are the only two exceptions. Nevertheless, the second model (M2) shows that this predominance of negative signs is mostly due to different migration experiences rather than to ethnic membership. Students coming from non-mixed parental couples are the most likely to be sent to the vocational track. The second generation immigrant students from mixed parental couples are also significantly more likely to do so, but this effect is clearly smaller in size. The third model (M3) shows that these differences are not clearly explained by the different economic resources that each household devotes to education. Although the sign obtained for log(*income*) is the predicted one, the third column demonstrates its scant effect on the immigration categories, which remain highly significant.

The last column (M4) shows that after controlling for the student's school performance, the Africans (positive correlation) are the only ethnic group to present any significant difference with respect to the native population. Again, students coming from exclusively immigrant parental couples remain significantly less likely to follow the academic track. Thus, contrary to what the cultural literature on ethnic constraints suggests[8], the present results provide no empirical grounds for arguing that ethnic groups differ in their preferences for education. In any case, the differences that remain significant after controlling for academic merit are mostly an immigration effect, but not an ethnic one[9].

The weaker students may drop out before reaching the end of lower secondary education. If this is the case, the above models can suffer from an endogenous selection bias. For that reason, these models were re-run using bi-probit estimation in STATA 8.2. This is an application of the well-known Heckman's selection models. This technique is able to correct for potential biases derived from a

TABLE 4: LOGIT – final choice in the selection process at the end of the lower secondary school

Family Choice 1: academic 0: vocational	**M1**	**M2**	**M3**	**M4**
Algerian	-0.4342***	-0.0234	0.2940	0.2175
	0.107	0.129	0.174	0.291
Tunisian	-0.2814	0.1633	0.3405	0.3222
	0.209	0.223	0.323	0.331
Moroccan	-0.4894***	0.0482	0.4306*	0.3839
	0.127	0.151	0.209	0.250
Spanish	0.0579	0.3554	0.4438	0.5197
	0.260	0.273	0.333	0.395
Portuguese	-0.4693**	0.0034	0.2382	0.1832
	0.172	0.189	0.239	0.283
Italian	-0.1088	0.3575	0.0688	0.1096
	0.266	0.280	0.315	0.410
Northern	0.6535*	0.9358***	0.1382	-0.0091
	0.258	0.272	0.310	0.316
Indochinese	0.1910	0.6952*	0.2655	0.0454
	0.304	0.315	0.379	0.471
African	-0.3044	0.1398	0.3743	0.1555
	0.182	0.193	0.244	0.320
Turkish	-1.4456***	-0.8400**	-0.5971	-0.7729
(Reference category: French)	0.258	0.273	-0.375	0.415
First-immigrant		-0.6640***	-0.3704	0.2312
		0.174	0.215	0.263
Second-immigrant		-0.6995***	-0.1680	0.2742
		0.108	0.144	0.173
First-mixed		-0.1709	0.4394	0.6477
		0.375	0.397	0.541
Second-mixed		-0.2299***	0.0170	0.1504
(Reference category: French)		0.088	0.114	0.134
Mean-brevet			0.8009***	0.7539***
			0.020	0.023
Repeats-college			-0.1663***	-0.0256
			0.020	0.023
Family-choice				3.4062***
				0.097
Constant	0.9949	1.0367	-7.4514	-8.2043***
	0.025	0.027	0.212	0.254
N	9827	9827	9827	9827
R^2	0.0071	0.0108	0.3937	0.5942
χ^2	73.14***	119.09***	2048.59***	2554.00***

β & SE
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

deficient measurement in the dependent variables, such a dropouts. It improves the estimation by enlarging the sample with those cases where the dependent variable is lost. But no changes were detected with respect to sign and statistical significance[10].

We now examine the school board's final decision. The dummy variable *final-choice* is set to 1 when the final decision taken by the class council is the academic option, and 0 if otherwise. The same protocol as in the previous analysis was followed. Thus, after first introducing ethnic membership, the immigrant status

variables were introduced. Following this, the model included two measures of successful school outcomes: the number of times any course was repeated in lower secondary school (the *repeats-collège* ranging from 0 to 6) and the grades obtained in the general examinations taken in the 3rd year (the *mean-brevet* ranging from 0 to 20). Finally, the family's preferred option expressed at the beginning of the process was introduced in order to test if this preference has a determinant effect on the board's decision, thus reinforcing the constraints placed at the household level.

The results shown in Table 4 are somewhat similar to those in Table 3. The first model (M1) shows a clear pattern of ethnic disadvantage: the vast majority of the groups hold negative signs, even if only the Algerian, Moroccan, Portuguese and Turkish coefficients are significantly negative. These negative signs disappear, however, after controlling for the dummies for the immigration categories (M2). In fact, with the only exception of the Turkish, all groups become either non-significant or significantly positive. Although the larger disadvantage exists among the students coming from non-mixed parental couples, *second-mixed* is also a moderate source of disadvantage. Not surprisingly, after controlling for the student's previous academic performance (M3), there is no unexplained variance among ethnic and immigrant groups. The Moroccan coefficient is now significantly positive. As can be seen the ethnic and immigration disadvantage disappears without making further reference to any additional factor.

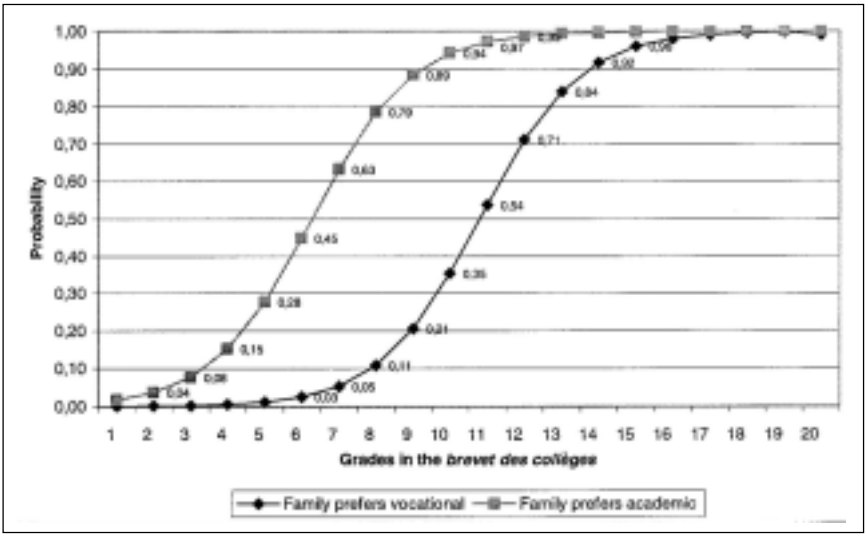
The fourth model (M4) shows that the track which any native or immigrant student will follow in upper secondary school is simply a function of his performance in the *brevet* examinations and his family's wishes (which depend in turn on the family's impression about his or her academic success)[11]. The graph in Figure 2 shows the determinant effect of the family's first choice on the final decision made by the class council[12].

As this graph shows, the probability of following the academic track is higher than that of being sent to the vocational one when the grades obtained in the *brevet* examinations reach the value of seven for the families that expressed the preference for the academic track, while it is over twelve for those that preferred vocational education. This gap of five points shows how the family's preferences work as a shaping element of the final school decision.

These models were also re-estimated using bi-probit selection models. Again, no changes were detected with respect to sign and statistical significance[13].

In sum, school results (i.e., grades) are the main reason for the unequal distribution of immigrant and native students in the academic-vocational tracks in upper secondary school. This confirms the findings of previous studies of high school choices arguing that pre-high school academic performance is a key variable determining future educational paths (Zietz & Joshi, 2005).

FIGURE 2: The effect of school performance on the probability of following the academic track across family's preferences



Source: M4 in Table 4. The remaining independent variables and controls are set equal to the mean value given in the sample included in the models.

Consequently, the crucial question is why immigrants obtain lower grades in secondary school.

Differences in school performance: grades in French language

At the beginning of lower secondary school, the students undergo a number of evaluation examinations in order to make the teachers aware of possible deficiencies and particular needs that should be addressed before entering upper secondary school. The study of grades is normally done using the registers from mathematics and language[14]. Panel 95 collected information on the grades obtained in examinations in both subjects at several points in time[15]. This paper only includes the results of the analysis for French language[16]. The grades in French ranged from 0 to 78.

Table 5 presents the results of a number of linear regression analyses. While column M1 includes ethnic groups, column M2 controls for the immigration dummies. The third model (M3) controls for a number of class related factors. For the sake of analytical clarity, class was not operationalised using any of the standard class schemes that are built from the head of the household's occupation.

Instead, it was decided to use some of its most widely accepted proxies in the field of class differentials in education.

Income, *accommodation*, *siblings* and *mother-works* capture the constraining effect of material-economic-disadvantage on educational attainment.

- Log(*income*) corresponds to the variable already presented in the previous section. Recall that *income* is only the respondent's view about the sufficiency of the economic resources available at household level for the student to continue studying for as long as he or she wants to (variable values are set from 1 to 4, with 1 representing 'not sufficient' and 4 representing 'perfectly sufficient'). As such, this variable is appropriate for the analysis of the family's preferences in upper secondary school. But a finer approach is required for the study of school attainment, because the mechanisms in place could be less evident. For this reason another control corrects for any bias, such as, unequal family willingness of affording the material costs of education across groups.

- *Accommodation* measures the respondent's satisfaction with the family residence (variable values are set from 1 to 4, with 1 representing 'not at all satisfied' and 4 representing 'very satisfied'). In order to control for the possible bias linked to the different availability of space in rural and urban areas, it was decided to introduce *town-size* which registers the population in the family's area of residence. *Town-size* ranges from 0 (rural area of less than 5000 inhabitants) to 7 (cities with less than two million inhabitants); the value assigned to Greater Paris is 8.

In order to control for the beneficial effects of cultural resources existing at the household level, the 'parental level of education' and the 'consumption of highbrow activities' was included. The concept of cultural capital has traditionally been operationalised in many different ways because of the obscurity of Bourdieu's work (Jenkins, 1989). An effort was made to capture the effect of the elusive concept of cultural capital by the combination of two variables.

- *Father's education* introduces the highest diploma obtained by the father[17]. Although taking the father's education as a proxy for cultural capital maybe is not the finest option, it is a common practise in the literature (Halsey, Heath & Ridge, 1980)[18].

- Another way of thinking of cultural capital is by attendance at highbrow cultural activities (De Graaf, 1986). *Art-activities* is a dummy variable that is

TABLE 5: OLS – grades in French in the evaluation examinations (i)

French Examination (0 – 78)	**M1**	**M2**	**M3**
Algerian	-2.7018***	0.2411	1.2148
	0.630	0.776	0.686
Tunisian	-2.8955*	0.3664	-0.2456
	1.410	1.419	1.262
Moroccan	-5.7210***	-1.6295	0.5656
	0.729	0.890	0.814
Spanish	-2.6688*	-0.8230	-0.3419
	1.196	1.310	1.143
Portuguese	-2.5411***	0.8581	1.5912
	0.730	0.903	0.859
Italian	-2.4706	-1.3333	-1.0762
	1.508	1.597	1.341
Northern	2.5310*	3.8194***	1.5639
	0.990	1.147	1.039
Indochinese	1.0530	5.0669***	5.3050***
	1.213	1.317	1.171
African	-3.8113**	-0.6081	-0.6226
	1.193	1.213	1.096
Turkish	-10.9289***	-5.5523**	-2.8658
(Reference category: French)	1.842	1.941	1.903
First-immigrant		-6.1417***	-4.1569***
		1.235	1.104
Second-immigrant		-5.4135***	-1.7724**
		0.684	0.625
First-mixed		1.7206	1.1541
		2.097	1.677
Second-mixed		-0.7320	-0.7436
(Reference category: French)		0.538	0.479
Log(*income*)			2.0303***
			0.244
Father's education			1.8624***
			0.070
Town-size			-0.0671
			0.038
Accommodation			0.4516**
			0.164
Art-activities			2.6245***
			0.213
Siblings			-0.8621***
			0.109
Sex			4.0457***
			0.201
Constant	47.7109***	47.8522***	36.0362***
	0.119	0.122	0.756
N	9848	9848	9848
R^2	0.0184	0.0291	0.2094
F	14.87***	16.79***	108.12***

β & *SE*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

given value 1 if the student has attended any of these activities: conservatories, school of music and dancing, youth cultural associations and courses of artistic disciplines in 1998. The survey did not include information about parental attendance at this type of activities. It was assumed that the correlation between the children's attendance at these activities and the parents' cultural capital is likely to be strong.

Finally, the student was assigned value 1 if female and value 0 if male. This *sex* distinction was based on the understanding that women tend to show higher educational results than men (see Tizard el al., 1988; Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 1994).

The column M1 signals the existence of a significant degree of ethnic disadvantage: the results of Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians, Italians, Turks, Portuguese and Black Africans in French are significantly worse than those of native students. For the Spanish the sign is also significantly negative, but it is close to the consensual level of statistical significance. As before, the subsequent models try to provide an explanation for this finding.

The second model (M2) shows how this initial disadvantage is absorbed by the variables that measure the immigration characteristics. The size of the ethnic parameters decreases enormously and many of them become not significant. Only the Turks remain significantly negative, while the Indochinese and the Northern European immigrants present positive and significant coefficients. As for the immigration categories, again those students coming from immigrant + immigrant parental couples suffer greater disadvantage, especially for first generation ones. Second generation immigrant students from mixed parental couples also obtain lower grades in French than the children of French-born families, but this effect is not significant. Finally, the third model (M3) shows that stratification effects absorb part of the immigration effect. After controlling for class factors, none of the ethnic statistically significant coefficients present negative signs. This indicates that the underperformance of the pupils from immigrant origin is mostly due to their unequal stratification across social strata, and a number of constraints derived from the migration process. Ethnicity does not seem to have a major negative impact. On the contrary, the only group that presents a significant difference with respect to the native population are the Indochinese, whose sign is positive. This is probably due to the very particular nature of the Indochinese fluxes that arrived in France[19].

With respect to the class independent variables, all the initial hypotheses are confirmed here. Both material and cultural disadvantages appear statistically linked to poorer school performance[20]. The results obtained in the last model (M3)

in Table 5 also reject the importance of ethnicity in explaining grades differentials between ethnic and native groups. After controlling for this set of class variables, only the Indochinese coefficient remains significant.

Some could argue that ethnicity is only relevant when in combination with low socio-economic profiles or depending on the family structure (Chiswick, 1988). Nevertheless, Appendix A includes an expanded version of this model that tried to find interaction effects with some of the class variables (*father's education*, *income*, *number of siblings* and *sex* – see Table A.3). None of these interactions were significant[21].

The unequal distribution of information about the educational system

The results so far have shown how the ethnic disadvantage in education is mostly reducible to disadvantage resulting from the immigration process itself. Therefore, the roots of the statistical effect identified as ethnic disadvantage are not ethnic-group specific, but common to all immigrant students and their families. Socio-economic disadvantage is able to account for the largest share of the ethnic and immigration categories. However, the reasons why first and second generation immigrants from non-mixed parental couples obtain lower grades than the natives is still unexplained.

The hypothesis being put forward here is that immigrants, in comparison to natives, lack the appropriate information about the functioning of the educational system. This means an extra source of disadvantage that will increase the value of the discount factor (∂) mentioned at the beginning of this paper. To test this hypothesis, an index consisting of three indicators that measure the information that parents have about the educational system was constructed. The value given to the variable *information* ranges from 0 (i.e., the family scores 0 in all three indicators) to 3 (i.e., the family scores 1 in all three indicators). This index was created using data about school choice behaviour and parents-teachers relations[22]. These two variables have specific importance given the particularities of the French educational system, especially in secondary education. The three indicators of the index were:

- **School choice behaviour** is a good proxy for parental information about the school system. Freedom of school choice is thought to increase class inequalities in education because more advantaged families profit from their greater knowledge of the school system to place their offspring in better positions (Coleman, Schiller & Scheneider, 1993). In France, the debate about the normative desirability of the recognition of the right to choose any school was central during the 1980s and the 1990s (Ballion, 1986). Nowadays this

right is widely recognised. One of its main consequences has been the existence of a rating of school desirability leading to schools ranging along a continuum depending on their attributes[23]. School prestige is highly appreciated by higher education institutions. Notions about school prestige concern not only academic success, but also the type of individuals attending the institution (Felouzis, 2003). A higher score was given in the index to those families that sent their child to schools for academic reasons, namely, its prestige, the general academic level and the socio-economic profile of its public[24].

- The existence of an adequate **parents-teachers relation** is central for the conformation of realistic family's wishes about the children's education, which is in turn of key importance in the so-called *orientation process* at the end of lower secondary school. The information index is higher for those students whose parents met teachers at least once in 1998 – the only available register in Panel 95.

- It is obvious that **parental involvement in the class council** may lead to better information about the school system in general and the selective process at the end of lower secondary education in particular. Although, over time, huge efforts have been made to simplify this selective process, it remains obscure to many students and their families (Masson, 1997).

It is not being suggested here that school choice and parents-teachers relations directly affect attainment through mechanisms such as school effects. The point is simply that these imply a more sophisticated level of information about the educational system that allows parents to channel their offspring towards the more realistic tracks according to their academic outcomes in lower secondary school[25].

Finally, one more control was added to the information argument due to the specific handicaps that first generation immigrants face. These are related to the problematic transferability of human capital which have already been mentioned. This seems to have a particularly important effect on educational attainment (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004). This addition will obviously also increase the value of ∂ for first generation immigrant students. The variable s*tudent-arrival* registers the student's year of arrival in France. Logically, the hypothesis behind this variable is that the closer this date is to 1995 (when the student began his or her lower secondary education), the worse the student's school performance is likely to be. The results are given in Table 6.

TABLE 6: OLS – grades in French in the evaluation examinations (ii)

French Examination (0 – 78)	**M1**	**M2**
First-immigrant	-3.7456***	2.5557
	1.105	3.500
Second-immigrant	-1.0116*	-0.7341
	0.463	0.462
First-mixed	1.8357	2.0154
	1.600	2.273
Second-mixed	-0.1200	-0.0375
(Reference category: French)	0.320	0.318
log(*income*)	2.0041***	1.7795***
	0.245	0.244
Father's education	1.8545***	1.7541***
	0.070	0.070
Town-size	-0.0643	-0.0734
	0.038	0.038
Accommodation	0.4520**	0.3450*
	0.165	0.165
Art-activities	2.5192***	2.3437***
	0.216	0.215
Siblings	-0.8253***	-0.7953***
	0.107	0.105
Sex	3.9659***	3.8969***
	0.203	0.202
Information		1.7163***
		0.154
Student-arrival		0.0034
		0.430
Student-arrival x first-immigrant		-1.7844+
		1.104
Constant	36.1159***	34.3942***
	0.760	0.768
N	9578	9578
R^2	0.2019	0.2130
F	192.90***	162.17***

β & *SE*

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As can be seen in the second model (M2), the introduction of the information argument and the passage of time since the student's arrival eliminate significant differences between the students from immigrant parental couples and natives. The time since arrival effect is only significant when it is interacted with the first-immigrant coefficient (although, in this case, its level of significance is only $p < .10$). Thus, the mixed type parental couples cancels the handicap linked to

recent arrival in the host country. After controlling for all these variables, none of the immigration categories remains significant.

Conclusions

This paper, which explored the existing relationships between class, immigration and ethnicity, has proved the correctness of a non-ethnic approach to the study of the educational differentials of immigrants and natives. Few traces of ethnic disadvantage were detected. As the empirical evidence provided here indicates, after controlling for immigration related variables, ethnicity, if anything, has a positive effect. Most of what can be identified with an 'ethnic effect' is actually linked to the status of being an immigrant – a source of disadvantage that operates across ethnic borders. Within the group of immigrant students, those coming from mixed parental couples are clearly better off. The effect of being born in the host country or abroad is also a key factor, although less important than the type of parental couple.

Controlling for the perceived degree of academic success (i.e., school results), the immigrant families are slightly more prone to prefer the vocational track than the natives. But this is an immigration effect, not an ethnic one. Ethnicity does not have an impact in these processes. In any case, there were no statistically significant differences across ethnic or immigration categories in the track that a student is invited to follow as a result of the selective process that takes place at the end of lower secondary school. The initial differences in access to the academic or the vocational tracks in upper secondary school are simply a function of the academic performance in the lower secondary school. This is true for both natives and immigrants.

A statistically significant gap separates the school performance of students across ethnic minorities. This is mostly absorbed by the immigration status categories. Following that, class related mechanisms explain most of the unexplained variance. Two further elements account for the remaining negative effect of the immigrant students coming from non-mixed types of parental families. First, the impact that migration represents for young first-movers requires the passage of time in order to reach the natives' level of academic performance. The second element, which is specific to first movers, is that immigrant families have a deficient knowledge of the educational system. This mechanism is not immigration-specific. It operates equally for immigrants and for French-born families, but it affects immigrant families in a bigger proportion. This is why the students coming from immigrant + immigrant types of parental couples are more disadvantaged.

To conclude, the role of ethnicity in the explanation of the educational disadvantage of immigrants is at best modest. In no case could ethnicity be understood as a constraining factor. On the contrary, most of the times it was non-significant or positive. The mechanisms producing what is frequently known as *ethnic disadvantage* are not really an ethnic effect. This is due to the combination of immigration related mechanisms – including a lack of country specific knowledge – and the unequal stratification of immigrants across class segments. Thus, the recent proliferation of theories focusing on the essential role of ethnicity on educational attainment should be revised. Theoretical work in this field of research needs to look for more straightforward and parsimonious explanations.

Notes

1. Although some authors have argued that cultural capital is a construct that is culturally biased in its definition in favour of natives (Driesen & Geert, 2001), its inclusion in the study of the educational performance of immigrants and ethnic minorities seems very appropriate (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996).
2. As the answer rate decreased dramatically in the second part of the 'family questionnaire', Panel 95 includes appropriate weights (POND1 and POND2) to avoid this loss of cases (Caille, 2003).
3. That is, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Belgium, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Ireland, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Monaco.
4. The former territory of Indochina was a French colony. After the French defeat in Dien Bien Phu, this territory was split into three different independent states (i.e., Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia).
5. That is, Liberia, The Gambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zaire, Ecuadorian Guinea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Ivory Coast, Benin, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Lion, Sudan, Chad, Togo, The Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho, Mauricio Island, Swaziland, Bissau Guinea, Mozambique, Saint Tome and Prince, Angola, Cape Verde, Comoros, Seychelles Islands and Djibouti.
6. But some scholars have also argued that immigrants and ethnic minorities are more often orientated towards the academic track than natives (Vallet & Caille, 1996; Felouzis, 2003).
7. The correlation between this variable and the mean score obtained in the *brevet* examinations (which takes place at the end of lower secondary school) is over 0.65. This proves the quality of this variable. In any case, with or without the inclusion of the *mean-brevet*, the results shown in Table 3 do not change. The fact that the *mean-brevet* and the *level-family-estimation* is not bigger proves that there are information problems existing among certain type of families. The correlation for the immigrant families is, for example, 0.4126.
8. Table A.1 in Appendix A shows that there are no significant interaction effects with the ethnic groups and the income variable. This rejects the possibility that ethnic constraints exist only in the lower social strata, but not in the privileged ones. Interactions were also tried with the family's estimated level of student's success to see if certain ethnic groups are more risk averse than others. This possibility was also rejected.
9. This effect disappears after controlling for parental time of residence in France. This is not presented here because it does not contradict the argument made in this paper. These results are available upon request. The results are also robust after controlling for parental education.

10. These models are available upon request.
11. Note that the pseudo-R^2 rises by some 15 percentage points when the mean score in the *brevet* examinations and the number of repeated years are introduced in the model specification. After that, when the family's choice is included, it rises to 56% of explained variance.
12. Again, Table A.2 in Appendix A rejects the existence of significant interactions between the ethnic membership and the family's expressed option. This means that no ethnic group's environment is especially supportive of the less academic options.
13. These models are available upon request.
14. While mathematics is more informative about the student's cognitive abilities, language is more graphic for general cultural background (Dronkers & Robert, 2003).
15. The one in mathematics is the mean of the scores in algebra, numeration and decimal numeration, numeric problems and geometry. The one in French language includes the results of reading comprehension, text production and expression and code knowledge.
16. The results obtained in mathematics simply confirmed the conclusions drawn from the analysis that are presented in this paper. The author decided to use the grades obtained at the beginning of lower secondary school instead of the results of the *brevet* examinations because the frequencies are higher for these initial tests than for the *brevet*. Further analysis showed that the rate of progress throughout lower secondary school is not different between immigrants and natives (these models are available upon request).
17. The values given were: 1 – no education; 2 – primary; 3 – *brevet des collèges* (lower secondary school); 4 – vocational upper secondary (CAP/CAPA and BEP/BEPA); 5 – general and technological (BAC); 6 – university (1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles).
18. Given that educational homogamy is common in the dataset (correlation between father's and mother's education is 0.6), and in order to avoid multi-collinearity problems, only the father's education is introduced in the models.
19. The fluxes of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese immigrants present a very qualified profile with few of them coming from rural backgrounds (Tribalat, 1995).
20. Bear in mind that these results are stable after controlling for a number of ethnic specific variables such as the language spoken with children, ethnic capital (Borjas, 1992) and the different operationalisations for the first-movers modes of incorporation (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). None of these variables had a significant effect. No results were detected among the set of variables included in the models shown in this paper.
21. There are three exceptions to this statement. First, the interaction between the Portuguese coefficient and the level of father's education is significantly negative. This result contradicts the common wisdom in the French specialised literature on ethnicity that tends to present the Portuguese as a group that benefits from its positive ethnic background, most of the times in contradiction with the Algerians for whom the ethnic environment is thought to have negative effects (see Tribalat, 1995). The second exception comes from the African group and its interaction with the number of siblings, for whom the interactive parameter is positive, meaning that the Africans brought up in bigger families obtain better school results. This finding contradicts the widely negative effect of larger family sizes. Finally, in the model where sex is the interacted variable, the Portuguese girls seem to be better off than the boys. None of these significant effects seem to be in agreement with the predictions of the cultural literature on the constraining effect of ethnicity.
22. Some could argue that these variables capture the effect of parental involvement in education. This index was built taking six different variables of parental involvement: (i) frequency of talks about life in class; (ii) frequency of talks about academic and professional future; (iii) help with homework; (iv) parents-teachers relations; (v) involvement in the class council; and (vi) reasons for school choice. A principal component analysis indicated that these variables belong to two different dimensions. The first dimension – that is, involvement at the school level – linked

parents-teachers relations, involvement in the class council and school choice. The other three variables belong to a different dimension, which corresponds to parental involvement in education in the most intimate sphere. The results of these analyses are available upon request.

23. These attributes can be ascriptive (e.g., tradition, area, and range of study options) or signs of academic success (e.g., number of students that repeated grades and selection into upper secondary school).
24. Out of all the possible reasons for choosing a school included in Panel 95, these three dimensions appear to be reducible to a single dimension. The results of the principal component analysis that proves this are available upon request.
25. For example, with respect to school choice, Ballion (1986) points out that the bad or good reputation of certain schools is, with some exceptions, an imaginary representation based on rumours and partial impressions. With respect to the effect of meeting teachers, the link with information can be more evident. This is particularly important in lower secondary school because of the obscurity and complexity of the orientation process (Masson, 1997).

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APPENDIX A

Interaction Effects: Ethnic Parameters

TABLE A.1: LOGIT – family choice

Family Choice 1: academic 0: vocational	Interaction with Income	Level
First-immigrant	-0.7848***	-0.3666***
	0.201	0.202
Second-immigrant	-0.6243***	-0.6171***
	0.123	0.122
First-mixed	-0.4596	-0.4309
	0.346	0.341
Second-mixed	-0.1887*	-0.2028*
(Reference category: French)	0.091	0.090
Algerian	0.4466	0.5568
	0.326	0.449
Tunisian	-0.2677	0.4462
	0.587	0.852
Moroccan	0.4774	0.3486
	0.369	0.549
Spanish	0.4074	0.2408
	0.758	1.100
Portuguese	0.3881	0.1501
	0.539	0.781
Italian	0.8217	-0.7903
	0.716	1.176
Northern	0.2361	0.5996
	0.689	0.757
Indochinese	0.386	0.9887
	0.917	1.349
African	1.4587*	1.0266
	0.582	0.805
Turkish	0.9759	-0.4335
(Reference category: French)	1.049	1.130
Log(income)	0.3699***	0.3158***
	0.055	0.051
Level-family-estimation	0.1746***	0.1649***
	0.042	0.044
Mean-house	0.3081***	0.3082***
	0.013	0.013
Reports-college	-0.2631***	-0.2629***
	0.018	0.019
Interaction with *Algerian	-0.2209	-0.2542
	0.125	0.161
*Tunisian	0.0557	-0.2004
	0.230	0.296
*Moroccan	-0.1141	-0.061
	0.135	0.189
*Spanish	-0.2146	-0.1402
	0.291	0.412
*Portuguese	-0.0226	0.0688
	0.201	0.290
*Italian	-0.2318	0.3891
	0.268	0.451
*Indochinese	-0.052	-0.2142
	0.318	0.274
*Northern	-0.0787	-0.2093
	0.221	0.290
*African	-0.3449	0.0236
	0.205	0.386
*Turkish	-0.5348	-0.1959
	0.368	0.393
Constant	-3.789	-3.7995
	0.134	0.138
N	9465	9465
R^2	0.1902	0.1906
χ^2	1622.07***	1613.78***

β & SE

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

TABLE A.2: LOGIT – final choice

Final Choice 1: academic 0: vocational	**Interaction with Family's Choice**
First-immigrant	0.1754
	0.378
Second-immigrant	0.3579
	0.252
First-mixed	0.6142
	0.834
Second-mixed	0.1250
(Reference category: French)	0.178
Algerian	0.4907
	0.906
Tunisian	-0.3368
	0.722
Moroccan	0.5031
	0.574
Spanish	-0.0422
	1.084
Portuguese	-0.6840
	0.665
Italian	0.2761
	0.603
Northern	-0.3317
	0.479
Indochinese	-1.1885
	1.209
African	0.2214
	0.552
Turkish	0.2982
(Reference category: French)	0.664
Finish-choice	4.0556***
	0.120
Mean-Averat	0.8176***
	0.031
Repeats-collège	0.1311***
	0.039
Interaction with *Algerian	-0.6136
	0.499
*Tunisian	0.7035
	1.146
*Moroccan	-1.0535
	0.625
*Spanish	0.1132
	1.463
*Italian	-0.8286
	1.223
*Indochinese	0.6311
	1.437
*African	-1.3051
	0.754
*Turkish	-1.4765
	1.062
*Portuguese	0.0357
	0.997
Constant	-10.0482***
	0.554
N	9378
R^2	0.6469
χ^2	1950.17***

β & *SE*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

TABLE A.3: OLS – school performance: grades in French

French Examination (0 – 78)	Interaction with …			
	Income	Siblings	Education	Sex
First-immigrant	-4.0449***	-4.1708***	-4.1765***	-4.1926***
	1.097	1.107	1.084	1.105
Second-immigrant	-1.8025***	-1.8516**	-1.8470**	-1.7938**
	0.625	0.637	0.631	0.625
First-mixed	1.0331	1.3431	1.1597	1.1429
	1.709	1.703	1.699	1.699
Second-mixed	-0.7529	-0.7057	-0.7169	-0.7338
(Reference category: French)	0.480	0.484	0.482	0.480
Algerian	2.2459	1.5000	1.5248	1.6593
	1.689	1.232	1.311	0.886
Tunisian	-4.4536	2.3645	-4.0591	-0.2140
	3.355	2.508	2.977	1.867
Moroccan	1.0840	-0.9250	0.7449	0.6572
	1.852	1.623	1.353	0.984
Spanish	3.1083	-0.7842	1.9175	-2.6584
	2.999	3.566	2.308	1.578
Portuguese	1.8983	2.3803	6.3431***	1.8911
	2.436	1.798	1.551	-1.175
Italian	2.5842	1.5009	-5.3237	-2.8023
	2.820	2.631	3.237	2.224
Northern	3.4890	-1.3457	4.5046	1.1743
	3.167	2.499	3.870	1.526
Indochinese	4.0792	4.6800*	8.7504***	5.3676***
	3.393	2.370	2.414	1.639
African	-1.8831	-3.6936*	-1.9450	-1.2305
	3.113	1.575	2.287	1.816
Turkish	2.9267	-5.3286	0.7303	-2.9355
(Reference category: French)	4.090	4.296	3.292	2.468
Log(income)	2.1966***	2.0058***	2.0068***	-2.0284***
	0.258	0.245	0.244	0.244
Father's education	1.8593***	1.8670***	1.8879***	1.8628***
	0.070	0.071	0.076	0.070
Town-size	-0.0665	-0.0673	-0.0652	-0.0681
	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038
Accommodation	0.4563**	0.4650**	0.4432**	0.4495**
	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.164
Art-activities	2.6102***	2.6350***	2.6215***	2.6199***
	0.213	0.213	0.213	0.213
Siblings	-0.8691***	-0.9409***	-0.8521***	-0.8608***
	0.109	0.131	0.111	0.109
Sex	4.0480***	4.0439***	4.0582***	4.0231***
	0.201	0.200	0.201	0.215
Interaction with *Turkish	-2.3506	0.6458	-1.9402	0.1674
	1.506	0.880	1.367	3.565
*African	0.4546	0.8235***	0.3692	1.1998
	1.110	0.309	0.935	2.041
*Northern	-0.6723	-1.0184	1.2665	2.0849
	1.008	0.830	0.763	2.655
*Indochinese	0.5066	1.2311	-0.5847	0.8178
	1.137	0.805	0.755	1.815
*Italian	-1.4423	0.2095	-1.0326	-1.3481
	1.056	0.656	0.528	2.015
*Portuguese	-0.1051	-0.3081	-1.9049***	-0.1712
	0.835	0.615	0.479	1.465
*Spanish	-1.4702	0.1712	-0.6516	0.6567*
	1.165	1.348	0.588	2.052
*Tunisian	1.6465	-0.7964	1.0088	-0.0459
	1.118	0.725	0.649	2.361
*Moroccan	-0.2084	0.3927	-0.0464	-0.1725
	0.648	0.387	0.548	1.339
*Algerian	-0.4095	0.8068	-0.0883	-0.9255
	0.564	0.323	0.284	1.066
Constant	35.9865	36.1848	35.9070	36.0187
	0.759	0.364	0.762	0.758
N	9848	9848	9848	9848
R^2	0.2102	0.2105	0.2118	0.2099
F	73.83***	74.95***	74.87***	73.5913

S.E. SE

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

CRITICAL THINKING AND THE KOSOVAN EDUCATORS' VIEWS AND BELIEFS ABOUT EDUCATION, TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EDA VULA
MERITA SHALA

Abstract – *The purpose of the study has been to analyse the changes in the attitudes and beliefs of Kosovan educators about the aims of schooling, teaching, teachers' roles and their professional development as a result of their participation in the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) programme. The participants in the study were 56 educators (out of a total of 188 who attended the sixth training round of RWTC) from various educational centres in Kosovo. The data was collected by means of an identical questionnaire that was administered to the teachers at the beginning (to reveal their pre-training attitudes and beliefs) and at the end of their training (to reveal their post-training attitudes and beliefs). An analysis of the data shows that prior to training teachers mostly viewed teaching as imparting knowledge, the aim of schooling as educating and teaching the younger generations, the role of the teacher as an idea-generator and a dominant figure, and professional development as completing further education and keeping abreast with professional literature (all of which show attitudes expressed in very general terms). On the other hand, in the second group of responses, the participants' attitudes are now more specific and complete, revealing a view of teaching as a very complex activity. For instance, according to the teachers' post-training views, the aim of the school is to educate and teach the new generations by using contemporary methods, to shape individuals who can think for themselves, who can reason, produce and create in a very productive way. Again, professional development is seen as an on-going movement toward professional perfection by following the contemporary achievements in the field of education, attending various seminars, etc.*

Introduction

Behind every school, every teacher and every student, stands a series of beliefs, a philosophy that affects what the students will learn, what the role of the teacher is and what the aims of education are (Sadker & Sadker, 1988). Some believe that schools must prepare citizens to be able to cope in the present society; others think that the main tenet of a good education is perfectionism in the study of academic subjects.

Teachers' beliefs and attitudes are powerful and significant determinants of the way they view their role as educators. These beliefs are guides and determiners for classroom decisions and, quite simply, for attitudes toward schooling, teaching, learning and students (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). Because beliefs are a part of identity, and therefore arguably also socially constructed, and because of their role in teaching and learning, we think that it is very important to assess beliefs and changes in beliefs.

After the Kosovo War (1996-1999), the Kosovan education system entered a transition period. All educators know that in order to join developed countries, we need to build a new education system, where the aim of education is to 'transform the classroom into a lively environment, where rather than supplying information, education focuses on cultivating in students the skills of seeking and researching for information, discussing issues from various viewpoints and analysing them, identifying problems and working collaboratively for their solution' (Musai, 2003, p. 9; translated from original Albanian). According to Piaget (1995; cited in Musai, 1998):

> 'The main aim of education is to create people that are able to do new things, and not simply repeat what other generations have done – people who are creative, inventors, and discoverers. The second aim of education is to form minds that are critical, that can verify, rather than simply accept everything that is offered to them.' (p. 49)

Consequently, schools in Kosovo today aim to develop all aspects of the students' personalities in order to enable them to cope with any obstacles and difficulties they might encounter in their life.

Toward this development, the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) programme, which is supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), is one of the projects that aim to enhance the professional development of educators. The RWCT programme is a joint initiative of the Open Society Institute and the International Reading Organisation. The implementation of this programme in Kosovo began in October 2000 under the auspices of the Kosovo Education Centre, one of the first and the strongest NGOs that are active in the field of education.

The RWCT programme aims to promote the development of critical thinking in the classroom and to create students that are able to learn throughout their lives. Toward this end, it equips teachers with instructional methods that will encourage the following activities in classrooms: active inquiry, student-initiated learning, problem solving, critical thinking, cooperative learning, writing and reading processes, and alternative assessments. These interactive methods of teaching aim to prepare students for active citizenship.

RWCT training, which is not limited to specific subject areas, focuses on the learning process rather than the educational content. It is designed as an in-service programme that applies to educators at each grade level from primary school to post-secondary education.

The RWCT programme aims to transform schools into centres of intellectual encouragement and thinking, into places that promote new thinking, broad-based participation, and cultivate *critical thinking*. It is based on the idea that democratic practices in schools play an important role in the transition toward more open societies

In the last decade, in many countries in which the RWCT programme is present, it has been shown to exert a great impact not only on the teaching and learning process, but also on teachers' lives. One of the conclusions reached Pupovci & Taylor's (2003) study, which evaluated the RWCT programme in Kosovo, was that the participation of teachers in the programme has had a significant impact on classroom teaching in particular and the school environment in general. Again, it has been shown that RWCT is a case model of transformative professional development programmes. For it has a great impact in transforming practices and practitioners, enhancing and enriching the lives of teachers, their colleagues and their students (Musai & Wile, 2004).

An overview of the educational context in Kosovo

The rapid rates of change and the enormous development of the information technology are creating a new world for teachers. In Kosovo, this rate of change has given rise to a renewed interest in the whole education system.

In the post-war period (i.e., after 1999), the UN became an important part of life in Kosovo. Through the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, the Department of Education and Science (DES) – which is a joint governing institution manned by international and local staff – was put in charge of managing all education-related issues in Kosovo. Initially, the DES was involved in the supervision of work that aimed to ensure the facilities necessary for a normal teaching and learning process. But later it laid the foundation for reform and reconstruction of the education system in conformity with European standards.

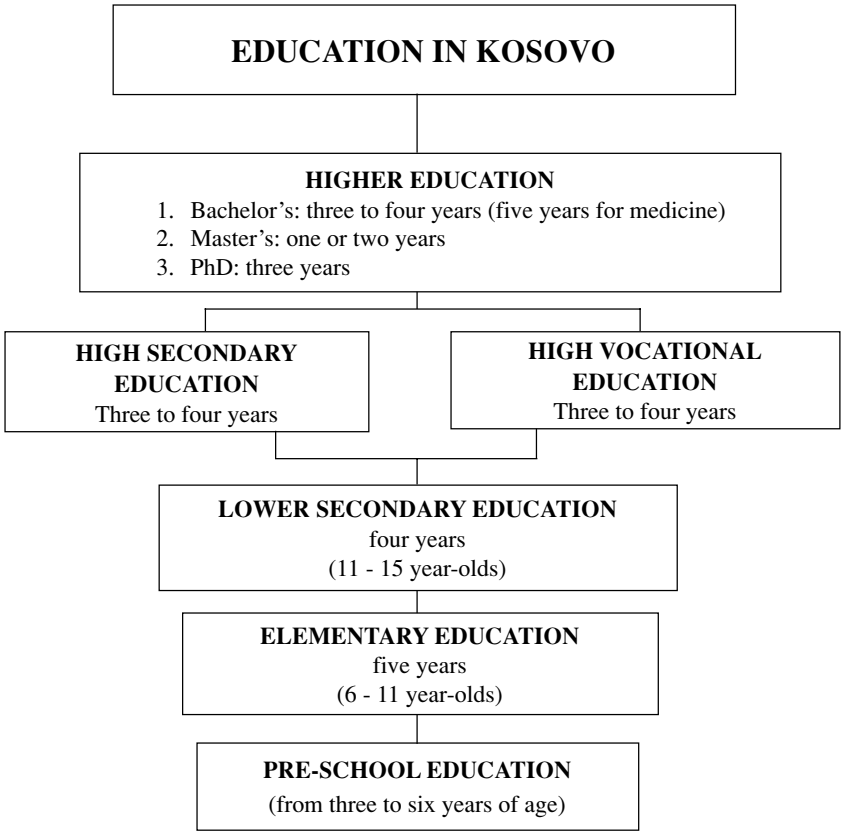
The period 2000-2001 was focused on the preparation of the necessary legal and professional infrastructure for the establishment of a new system of general, vocational and higher education. It was decided to have a new education scheme (see Figure 1), establish standards in education, develop the general education curricula for levels 1, 2 and 3, and adopt the Provisional Status of the University of Prishtina. These initiatives constituted a new structure of administrative and

professional organisation (the initial phase of the implementation of the Bologna agreement).

Parallel to these changes, some aspects of educational development – such as, teacher training, special education, curriculum development, evaluation and standards, vocational education and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of school buildings – were placed under the care of local and international agencies.

The process to establishment the educational system reached a zenith in March 2002 with the foundation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). The Ministry is in charge of the development of the new educational system which aims to integrate the new Kosovo society into all the regional and European developments and mechanisms.

FIGURE 1: The structure of the educational system in Kosovo



What characterises this period of Kosovo education in general is that the push for change has come from the within the teacher ranks. It is precisely this 'critical mass' of teachers which still continues to serve as a community of change agents in schools and other educational institutions in Kosovo.

The purpose of the study

The Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) programme has entered its sixth year of implementation in Kosovo, During this period, over 2000 educators, representing all levels of the education system, have participated in its seminars and other related events. Apart from the benefits imparted on the participants and their schools (see Pupovci & Taylor, 2003), some of the teaching techniques proposed by this programme are now widely applied by many other teachers who have not been direct participants of the seminars that were organised within the framework of the project.

However, we were here interested to find out what effect, if at all, this programme has had on the lives of the participating teachers themselves. It is known that on-going efforts to be innovative and to improve the quality of education are closely linked with the teachers' efforts to change their beliefs and views about school, teaching and their own professional development in general. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify and analyse the impact of the RWCT programme on teachers' beliefs and attitudes. In particular, the study was intended to seek answers to the following two questions:

- What were the pre-RWCT attitudes (beliefs) of the Kosovo teachers with regard to the aim of education, the teachers' role, teaching and professional development?
- Have these pre-RWCT attitudes (beliefs) changed as a direct consequence of the said programme?

Also due to the fact that this is the sixth year of the implementation of the RWCT programme in our country, our hypothesis is that this programme has a positive impact, albeit not necessarily evident, on teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward the aim of education, teachers' role, teaching and professional development.

The participants

The participants in the study are primary and secondary school teachers in Kosovo who were trained by the sixth RWCT programme. Out of a total of 188 participating teachers in this specific programme, coming from all the RWCT

centres in Kosovo, we selected a sample of 56 teachers for our study. All the 188 participants in the programme completed the questionnaire at the beginning of their training. In order to select a comprehensive and representative sample of study participants we took into account the first part of this questionnaire which included the following information: gender, age, experience, qualifications and class level taught. At this stage we did not conduct an analysis of the second part of the questionnaire. Similarly, although all the 188 programme participants again completed the second round of this questionnaire, we only eventually analysed the responses given by the previously selected sample of teachers.

We familiarised all the 188 participants of the sixth RWCT programme with the purpose of the study without however revealing that only part of them would actually be selected for it. Both at the beginning of the first RWCT training session and at the end of the last training session, they completed the questionnaire of their own free will and individually. Our purpose was to create an environment that is reliable and equal for all, thus obtaining the most realistic data possible.

In the selected sample, 25 participants are male and 31 are female. They come moreover from various levels of the education system: 23 teach in primary education, 18 in junior high education, and 15 in high schools. The selected teachers also come from the various RWCT centres in Kosovo: Peja (from the 32 programme participants in this centre, we selected 8 for the study), Prizren (30, 8), Podujeva (30, 10), Bec (32, 11), Vushtri (33, 7) and Lipjan (31, 12). While 23 of the study participants work in urban schools, the remaining 33 work in rural schools.

The teachers in the study varied in their academic qualifications: 32 graduated from Higher Pedagogical Schools, 19 completed their university studies in respective faculties, and 4 had finished the Normal School[1]. Their ages range from 24 years (the youngest participant in the programme) to 55 years (the oldest participant in the study). The average age of the male participants is 41.8 years, while the average age of the female participants is 39.5 years. With regard to teaching experience, the range is from 8 months (the least experienced) to 34 years old (the most experienced), with a mean of 15 years experience.

The research method

The study was carried out over a period of time during which the teachers were trained within the framework of the RWCT programme. The purpose of the RWCT training is to integrate two important components: the philosophy of critical thinking and the practical implementation of this philosophy in the teaching and learning process. The underlying notion is that this combination has

a positive effect on teachers' attitudes (beliefs) toward teaching, schools, teachers' roles and their professional development.

The study data was collected by means of an identical questionnaire that was completed by the teachers at two specific instances during the programme. The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

- The first part was designed to provide information about the individual profile of each participant. They were asked in fact to indicate gender, age, academic qualifications, level of education, where they teach, and years of teaching experience. The aim of collecting this information was to develop a body of quantitative data on the basis of which to select the sample.

- The second part consisted of four open-ended questions (see the 'results section') which concern teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching, the aim of education, teachers' roles and their professional development. The aim of this part was to provide qualitative data, the analysis of which would address the main purpose of this study.

As with all research, our study is conditioned by a number of limitations. From among these limitations, we would like to highlight the following four:

(i) Given the nature of our qualitative study, the results reported below cannot be generalised to the larger teacher population in Kosovo.

(ii) The fact that the participants have not had any kind of training before could have contributed to create in them a disposition for changes in their beliefs.

(iii) Both researchers are very closely related with the WRCT programme. This may have unduly influenced the participants. To limit researcher bias, we used colleagues to provide feedback from other WRCT centres in Kosovo.

(iv) The participants had been familiarised at the beginning of their training with the purpose of the study.

The data analysis

Having hypothesised that changes in teachers were to be expected as a result of their participation in the programme, we decided to consider the data collected from the 'pre-RWCT training questionnaire' as an indication of teachers' pre-

training attitudes and beliefs, and the data collected from the 'post-RWCT training questionnaire' as an indication of their attitudes and beliefs following the training programme. The differences, if any, between phase one and phase two of the data collection were thus taken to evidence changes in teachers as a result of their participation in the training programme.

Inductive analysis was used (see Patton, 1990). This consists of exploring the significance of sentences, parts of sentences or propositions that express an attitude (belief) in order to identify the meanings of teachers' responses. The analysis followed this procedure:

(i) All the responses were read carefully. Each significant statement that was in any way related to schooling, teaching, teachers and their professional development was singled out, collected and categorised (in a hierarchical system by category and sub-category according to content and relevance). This categorisation led to what we are calling 'primary attitudes' and 'secondary attitudes';

(ii) The responses were then grouped by question and the data collection phase in which they were obtained (e.g., first question – first phase, etc.);

(iii) For each group of responses, a definition of the primary and secondary attitudes (beliefs) was given, and a record of the frequency of the responses was kept;

(iv) The expected changes in primary and secondary attitudes between pre-training and post-training were identified by comparing the content and frequency of the responses given during the two data collection phases. Thus, for each of the four questions, there were two sets of data (e.g., first question: first data collection phase and second data collection phase).

The results

Question one: what does teaching mean to you?

The results obtained from the analysis of the pre-training data collected describe teaching as a process of offering new knowledge, of transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the students. Teaching is seen in fact as closely related to the broadening of students' knowledge, the development of their skill and awareness, and interpretation of knowledge. The overriding idea is that the

teaching process, which is perceived as not being overtaxing, is clear and its ultimate goal is the internalisation of the curriculum by the students. This was a typical comment:

> *For me teaching is giving my knowledge to my students so that they will broaden and improve their knowledge.*

One characteristic here is a series of secondary attitudes (beliefs) with a wide distribution of low frequency responses. These attitudes relate mainly to teaching in terms of lecturing, satisfaction and privilege, and present teaching as a great social and national responsibility, a challenge and a necessity.

The data collected from the post-training group of responses reveals the new attitudes (beliefs) held by the teachers. Interestingly enough, the post-training responses present the process of teaching as an 'educational value', a complex activity and an important social process. Another belief that constantly emerged in the second set of responses is that teaching is the process of enabling students by developing their knowledge, skills and abilities. Likewise, post-training responses present learning as a lifelong process and teaching as the means to help students create independent views and find their own way in life. The following comment captures this significant shift in teachers' attitudes with regard to the first question:

> *Teaching is a very complex activity of special importance; it is a process by means of which students are helped to find their own way in life.*

An attitude (belief) that emerged from the second data collection phase is that teaching means 'to give and receive knowledge'. This idea equates teaching to learning, and as such teachers appear unable to conceive one without the other. It is worth noting that the pre-training secondary attitudes (beliefs) see a considerable drop in frequency, and some of them even totally disappear, in the second set of data. The results of question one are summarised in Table 1.

Question two: what is the purpose of education?

The analysis of the data obtained from the pre-training responses reveals the overwhelming notion that the main purpose of schooling is 'to educate and teach students'. Closely linked to it is the idea that school serves to 'prepare students for life', which is in turn closely connected to 'helping students learn how to learn' and 'providing students with the necessary skills to work independently'. Again, responses like 'preparing the new generations for the future' are closely linked to

TABLE 1: Teachers' views on teaching

Hierarchy of Attitudes	Attitudes with regard to the Meaning of Teaching	Data Collection	
		Phase 1 *f*	**Phase 2** *f*
Primary Attitudes	• Offering new knowledge	22	6
	• Carrier of knowledge	12	0
	• Interpreter	16	2
	• Educational value	0	18
	• Complex activity	0	12
	• Process of enabling students in the areas of skills, abilities and knowledge; a process of lifelong learning	9	37
	• Teaching = learning	0	7
Secondary Attitudes	• Lecturing	32	0
	• Pleasure	23	8
	• Privilege	19	11
	• Acting	6	0

the ideas of 'providing vocational training to students', 'creation of positive skills' and 'obtaining new knowledge and skills and applying them in practice'. This is how one of the participants expressed such ideas:

> *The aim of education is to educate and prepare new generations, so that they receive the best knowledge possible and become capable, both for their own benefit and the benefit of the society.*

The less frequently mentioned purposes of schooling included 'offering new knowledge', 'development of intelligence', 'ensuring the future', 'awareness raising', 'shaping the student's personality', 'instilling love for the family', 'eradication of illiteracy' and 'reviving national consciousness'. These purposes were however consistent enough to be ranked as secondary attitudes (beliefs). The post-training responses reveal a more comprehensive attitude (belief) with respect

to the aim of education. In fact, a frequently mentioned purpose of schooling was now 'to educate and teach the young generation in the contemporary spirit', and this in close connection with 'individual awareness raising', 'creating active citizens', 'development of the human society' and 'creation of a democratic society'. This more comprehensive attitude is apparent from the following statement:

> *The aim of the school is to educate and train the generations in the contemporary spirit, to prepare individuals for various professions, to create individuals who are able to think for themselves, to reason, produce and create in the most productive way.*

A rather interesting addition in the second round of data collecting is the belief (attitude) which looks at school as an institution that 'develops creativeness in the presentation of ideas and critical thinking'. This denotes a school culture that cultivates interaction, listening skills and willingness to work. With regard to secondary attitudes, although there is a general drop in their frequency, some (i.e., 'eradication of illiteracy' and 'reviving the spirit of national consciousness') still remain rather evident. Table 2 lists the responses obtained on question two.

TABLE 2: Teachers' views on the purpose of education

Hierarchy of Attitudes	**Attitudes with regard to the Purpose of Education**	**Data Collection**	
		Phase 1 *f*	**Phase 2** *f*
Primary Attitudes	• Education and teaching of students	47	0
	• Preparing students for life	28	0
	• Preparing future generations	14	0
	• Education and teaching in the contemporary spirit	0	24
	• Development of creativity	0	12
	• Development of critical thinking	0	27
Secondary Attitudes	• Providing knowledge	7	0
	• Development of intelligence	5	0
	• Eradication of illiteracy	13	9
	• Reviving the spirit of national consciousness	11	6

Question 3: what is the role of the teacher?

As far as the third question is concerned, the data analysis has identified considerable variation in teachers' attitudes (beliefs) with regard to their own role. In the pre-training responses, the picture that emerges is that of the teacher being 'an idea-generator and dominant figure', 'a provider of new knowledge' and 'a guide, promoter and developer of student skills'. These ideas are highlighted in the two excerpts below:

> *In my work as a teacher, I always keep in mind the words of a well-known scholar: 'I do not teach anyone, I just try to create an environment where the pupils can learn' …*
>
> *The teacher should be an initiator of ideas and a good organiser of work at school; he/she should have a dominant role in the classroom and lessons; he/she must give advice and be always willing and ready to help the students.*

There is also a wide range of responses pertaining to secondary attitudes (beliefs). These look at teachers as 'interpreters-presenters', a view which on the one hand emphasises the accuracy of interpretation, concretisation and creativity, and at the same time presents teachers as 'torchbearers of civilisation' and more specifically as 'guardians and promoters of positive traditions and national culture'. This positions teachers – who are at times described as 'tolerant and humane communicators' – as a 'crucial element' in the parent-student-teacher triangle.

An interesting feature that emerges from the post-training data is the existence of two mutually complementing attitudes, both of which registered a high response frequency rate. The first views the teacher as 'a motivator of students', someone who guides students' learning and encourages them to express themselves freely and think critically. This is how one participant referred to this dimension:

> *The teacher's role is to motivate the students to be as active as possible in the process of understanding new knowledge. He or she also has to check their understanding and to stimulate critical thinking … this works against reproducing knowledge through rote learning. The teacher moreover helps students create a broad base of knowledge in conformity with their individual interests.*

The second new attitude (belief) attributes to the teacher the multi-faceted role of being a close collaborator to all students, a co-ordinator of class work, a manager of the lesson, a driving force in the teaching and learning process, as well as being a monitor and advisor. This positions the teacher in the role of someone

who orientates, organises, observes, supervises and checks the students' work, and all this while disseminating knowledge and evaluating the curricula. Here is how one of the participating teachers put it:

> *A teacher's role is to organise the lesson, to offer new information and new sources of information, to guide the students, to monitor their learning and give them advice, to demonstrate and give examples of the new information.*

Post-training data shows that secondary attitudes (beliefs) regarding the role of the teacher suffered a slight decrease in their frequency in relation to what they were prior to the RWCT programme. But as can be seen from Table 3, which summarises the findings on question three, there is still a considerable number of teachers who view their role as 'presenter' and 'carrier of knowledge'. Basically, a good communicator and a tolerant person who helps cultivate the feelings of tolerance and mutual respect.

TABLE 3: Teachers' views on the role of the teacher

Hierarchy of Attitudes	**Attitudes with regard of the Role of the Teacher**	**Data Collection**	
		Phase 1 *f*	**Phase 2** *f*
Primary Attitudes	• Idea-generator and dominant figure	26	0
	• Provider of new knowledge	33	0
	• Guides, encourages and develops students' skills	13	0
	• Motivator of students	0	39
	• Co-ordinator, manager, guide and adviser	0	31
Secondary Attitudes	• Interpreter, presenter and carrier of knowledge	37	19
	• Communicative, tolerant and humane	27	25

Question 4: what does professional development mean to you?

Prior to the training programme, the main attitude demonstrated by the teachers – which was backed by a very high frequency rate – links professional development to 'finishing higher education studies' and 'reading the literature'. In other words, professional development is understood as 'professional enhancement'. These two excerpts present this position:

> *To me, this means that the teachers should not remain at the level he or she is at, but must seek further personal professional development during the whole of his/her life by furthering their studies and by reading professional literature.*

> *A person should never rest on the laurels of his/her professional achievements; teachers, in particular, should always keep abreast of new developments in a systematic way.*

The secondary attitudes (beliefs), on the other hand, project professional development as the 'development of professional skills to help students' through 'participation in seminars and a variety of professional training courses'. The idea is to 'keep abreast of and interpret scientific and technological developments' in order also to 'widen one's knowledge'.

In the post-training data, the main attitudes (beliefs) on professional development view it as a 'fundamental criterion of an advanced society', an 'investigative and collaborative process' and as 'lifelong learning'. The following two comments sustain these notions:

> *Professional development is a constant move toward professional perfection; I would call it a dialectical movement.*

> *Professional development means to follow contemporary achievements, to be creative in one's everyday work and to have the courage to say that things can be done differently.*

A new attitude that emerges from the second data collection phase is the notion that professional development is the process of professional self-evaluation by teachers.

A characteristic feature of the responses to question four is the consistency among the secondary beliefs, both practically remaining at the same frequency level at the two data collection points. In particular, the notion of 'participation in seminars and various trainings' proves extremely popular at both points. Teachers' response on question four are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Teachers' views on professional development

Hierarchy of Attitudes	Attitudes with regard to Professional Development	Data Collection	
		Phase 1 *f*	**Phase 2** *f*
Primary Attitudes	• Finishing higher education and reading literature	26	0
	• A fundamental criterion of an advanced society	0	13
	• Moving toward perfection	0	6
	• Self-evaluation of professional work	0	8
	• Investigative process	0	3
Secondary Attitudes	• Participation in seminars and training	27	26
	• Following and interpreting scientific and technological developments	12	13

Discussion

As discussed in the introduction to this paper, the RWCT programme has been the focus of many studies (e.g., Pupovci & Taylor, 2003; Musai & Wile, 2004). These studies report that the programme, apart from having an impact on teachers' beliefs and attitudes, contributes toward improved classroom practices and school environment. The results of our study, which corroborate previous evidence revealing the potential of the programme to change teachers' attitudes, continue along these lines. As collaborators of this programme we were expecting change in teachers – this was in fact our hypothesis – but, admittedly, the actual change in our participants did not meet our expectations.

Looking at the responses to all four questions, one notices the way in which teachers' attitudes become more complete, more multi-faceted, following their participation in the RWCT programme. In addition, there is the emergence of

some new beliefs (attitudes) which appear only at the end of the training period. These new beliefs are particularly more obvious and stable when it comes to the third question, that is, the one that explored the role of the teacher. The responses evolved in fact from viewing the teacher as an idea-generator and provider of knowledge to being a manager, organiser, encourager and guide.

In general, secondary attitudes (beliefs) almost invariably suffered a drop in frequency. While the pre-training responses contain many secondary attitudes with a wide distribution and a low frequency rate, the post-training data evidences a smaller number of secondary attitudes which however still have a low frequency.

In conclusion, it can be said that the RWCT programme has left its indelible 'marks' on the way our teachers think, particularly with respect to their beliefs about schooling, teaching, teachers' roles and their professional advancement. It has to be said that since this was already the sixth year of the implementation of the RWCT programme in our country, the programme and its contents could not have been totally unfamiliar to the participants. We say this in the knowledge that a large number of previously trained teachers, not only acknowledge its success, but also actively seek to implement the lessons learnt from the programme inside their classes.

Note

1. This was a teacher training institution which prepared teachers for elementary schools. As from 1977, this training was taken over by the Higher Pedagogical School.

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EDUCATION IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS: PALESTINIAN CHILDREN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION IN HEBRON[1]

RONALD G. SULTANA

Abstract – *This paper presents the plight of Palestinian primary school children in the city of Hebron in the West Bank, and documents the attempts of the Palestinian community to provide an education against all odds. Drawing on fieldwork, observations and interviews carried out by the author in November 2001, the case study provides a background and context, highlighting the difficult situation that Palestinian families find themselves in due to the curfew restrictions imposed by the Israeli Military during the second Intifada. The paper then goes on to describe the way the Palestinian community mobilised itself, with UNICEF support, in order to ensure that children do get the basic education they are entitled to, largely through the development of the Distance Remedial Education Project (DREP). Details of the DREP are given, particularly in relation to the development of self-learning education worksheets, extension remedial programmes, and the use of local TV stations to broadcast lessons. The case study of self-help, decentralised programmes with a high level of school community involvement using locally-available resources and materials shows great promise in the challenge of providing educational services in the context of political conflict and violence, as well as in more regular situations. Not only did students attain the minimal competencies expected at their grade level, but also by far the greater majority remained engaged with the school cycle. Interviews with education officers, heads of schools, teachers, parents and the students themselves also suggest that aspects of the programme provided psychological and social support to students who would have otherwise been even more vulnerable to the distressing effects of the political violence that they witness in their daily lives.*

Introduction

The present account of the educational initiatives in a context of political conflict and violence – in this case in Hebron, West Bank – is part of a UNICEF series of case studies of successful basic education innovations. The aim behind this series is to give greater visibility to such initiatives, both because they deserve to be highlighted in the educational community regionally and internationally, and also because that same community can learn from the efforts of individuals and groups that creatively respond to new situations and challenges by developing

novel educational practices. In describing and analysing such innovations, UNICEF is also responding to the call made at the ARABEFA[2] 2000 Assessment Conference which took place in January 2000 in Cairo, where the need for qualitative information on basic education successes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region had been both recognised and stressed.

The description of the Hebron Distance Remedial Education Project (DREP) is important for another reason. The past two decades have seen a proliferation of armed conflict in several parts of the world. There has been an increasing concern about the impact that such conflict has on the educational process, a concern that has been most comprehensively signalled by Graça Machel's omnibus study *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, and presented to the United Nations in 1996. Armed conflict is, of course, not a recent phenomenon. However, in the past, governments and humanitarian agencies have tended to prioritise such critical needs as food, water, shelter and medical care, with education being seen more as a long-term development concern (Lowicki, 1999). Donors too have tended to be wary of prioritising education in the initial emergency phase, fearing long-term commitments (Hammock, 1998). In some cases, governments may not even allow such interventions, either because they consider educational needs less pressing than other priorities, or because of lack of consensus over curricula. Additionally, the importance of education may not even be recognised, particularly in the areas of health, psychological and social well-being and protection. Increasingly there have been calls for educational responses to situations marked by political violence, and for a better understanding of the ways in which educational provision at the outset of an emergency can provide structure, stability and a sense of normality to the lives of children (Boyden & Ryder, 1996; Machel, 1996; Ghaffar-Kucher, Pagen & Zakharia, 1999).

In the sections that follow, the focus will be on precisely these issues and concerns. We will first look carefully and in some detail at the situation of Hebron in the West Bank, caught up as this is in the conflict of the second Palestinian *Intifada*. We will then give an account of the educational responses of the Palestinian Hebronite community in a situation marked by political violence, with a focus being largely placed on the basic rather than secondary education level. Finally, we will highlight some of the most important achievements of the set of initiatives described, and will tease out the lessons that can be learnt from the Hebron case study, and that might guide policy-makers in responding to the educational needs of children internationally, whether these are caught up in war situations or other emergencies. The point will also be made that there is much to be learnt from the DREP that is applicable to regular situations as well.

Given the qualitative nature of the present study, it is important in this context to at least provide an overall idea of the extent and nature of the fieldwork. The

data was collected in the course of a three-week visit to the West Bank. A first aspect of this data collection exercise involved desk research; this included the perusal of official documents, analysis of educational material, and viewing of a sample of 15 half-hour recorded TV programmes – all related to the remedial education project. A second aspect of the research involved observations of the situation in Hebron during two field visits on two different days (29 and 31 October 2001). A third and related aspect included semi-structured interviews, which were held with key people from UNICEF (Jerusalem office) and the Ministry of Education (Ramallah), and with five education officials (one of whom was female), five head teachers (four females), 18 teachers (14 females), 60 students (40 females) and 14 parents (eight mothers, five fathers) in Hebron. Interviews in Hebron lasted from 20 to 50 minutes, and were generally held in the context of focus groups, though much information was also gathered from individuals informally, in offices or in streets while walking to the schools that were visited. Further information was offered spontaneously by teachers and students during classroom and school visits. Four of the five schools visited were situated in the old Hebron area, and were primary level establishments. The fifth was a large secondary school for girls situated outside old Hebron (although this school was not directly involved with the project that is the subject of the present case study, it provided a useful contrast as well as fresh insights and sensitising concepts).

Visits to Hebron were made under tight security measures because of the volatility of the situation. Even though violence had abated during the week in which the visits were made, during the second visit a house in Hebron was shelled by an Israeli helicopter, killing a Hamas activist, and leading to the evacuation of students in the schools in the surrounding area.

Hebron in the context of the second *Intifada*

> *Every morning, at dawn, you hear the voice of Israeli soldiers on the loudspeakers, in jeeps or in tanks, shouting out … in Arabic … 'Stay inside your homes … Do not go out … You will be shot' …* (Teacher, basic school, old Hebron)

The Al-Aqsa Intifada

The conflict between the state of Israel and the Palestinians is now several decades old, and has gone through periods of negotiated settlements and tense peace accords to outright armed conflict under various guises, be these frontal attacks, guerrilla-like incursions, or *Intifadas* (i.e., popular uprisings against the occupation by the Israeli army of the Palestinian territories). The second *Intifada*

– also known as the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* – started in September 2000, and has had an impact on all sectors of life, intensifying the psychological and social distress that comes with exposure to violence and repression.

From September 2000 up to November 2001, at least 998 people had been killed. Of these, 797 were Palestinians, 190 were Israelis, and 11 were foreign citizens (see Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories [B'TSELEM], 2001; Palestine Red Crescent Society [PRCS], 2001). A total of 194 children under 18 years of age had been killed, with 166 being Palestinian, 27 Israeli, and 1 foreigner (Defence for Children International – Palestine Section [DCI/PS], 2001). Thirty-five percent of these children and youths died from injuries sustained to the head, while 31% were shot in the chest (DCI/PS, 2001). As many as 16,570 Palestinians had been injured, including more than 7,000 children (PRCS, 2001), while the corresponding number for the Israelis is 1,810, of which 517 are soldiers, 1,240 civilians, and 53 children (B'TSELEM, 2001). An estimated 2,500 Palestinians will experience long-term disabilities because of their injuries, including some 530 children (Solidaridad Internacional, 2001; World Bank, 2001a).

The escalation of violence and repression has led to the deterioration of the quality and conditions of life of many Palestinian households, with important negative consequences to the delivery of health services, including immunisation and polio testing. At the time of the writing-up of this study, 43% of households had reported problems in accessing health services, while 59% have experienced difficulties in paying for the cost of treatment (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics [PCBS], 2001). There had been a 15% increase in home deliveries of babies, with postnatal care dropping by 52% (UNRWA[3], n.d.).

Curfews, closures, and intensification of restrictions on free movement through the multiplication of checkpoints have also had a major impact on the Palestinian economy. Forty-eight percent of households have lost more than half their usual income, with 46% of households in the WBGS expected to fall below the poverty line by the end of 2001, compared to 21% prior to the conflict (World Bank, 2001b). Unemployment rose from 10% before the crisis, to 24% in the second quarter of 2001 (UNSCO[4], 2001). Child poverty increased by 55% between September and December 2000 (World Bank, 2001b).

The second Intifada and its impact on education

Palestinians have made major investments in educational infrastructure and in the delivery of quality education to their children, and despite a great number of adversities, have managed to chalk up a number of impressive achievements, both by MENA and by international standards (see Sultana, 2000 for an overview; also

UNESCO, 1995; Diwan & Shaban, 1998). Many of these gains have been jeopardised, particularly as the evidence suggests rather strongly that schools and education have fallen into the line of fire of Israeli troops, with as many as 275 schools being situated close to flash points in the current conflict (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2001). As a result, by the time this study was carried out,

- Ninety-three schools had been shelled, with 6 schools being obliged to close down for a period of one to two months during the first eight months of the *Intifada* (MOE, 2001);
- An estimated 31,117 student school days had been lost in the West Bank in the last school year, and 7,400 in Gaza (MOE, 2001);
- Thirty-six percent of 5-17 year-old students indicated that their school day was reduced due to the conflict (PCBS, 2001);
- Achievement scores had fallen in main subjects. In UNRWA schools in the West Bank, for instance, passing grades declined from 71% to 38% in Arabic and from 54% to 26% in Mathematics from 2000 to 2001 (UNICEF, 2001).

The *Intifada*, Hebron and education

Hebron – a city under siege

While all districts in the West Bank and Gaza were affected by the *Intifada* crisis, some areas were more strongly marked by violence and repression than others. In the West Bank, for instance, Hebron, Nablus, Jericho and Ramallah were the most affected districts. In this case study, the focus is on Hebron. Here, schools have had to reschedule 45 days of schools to make up for lost time due to curfew conditions. Eighteen percent of students in Hebron could not attend classes regularly compared with 6% nationally. Twenty percent of teachers in Hebron could not get to their school on a regular basis, compared with 9% nationally (MOE, 2001).

Hebron – or Khalil al-Rahman, as it is known among Arab communities – is one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns in the world. The town's name, in both the Hebrew and Arab version, ironically conjures up images of fraternity and love, referring as it does to Abraham as 'God's friend'. The old part of the city hosts one of the holiest sites dear to both Jews and Muslims, with the Tomb of the Patriarchs – a cave believed to contain the remains of Abraham and his family – being topped by the al-Haram al-Ebrahimi mosque. The mosque itself has been occupied by Israeli forces, with Muslims having access to only a small area for their prayers. In that sense, there is arguably no stronger symbol of both the

closeness and distance between the two religious and political communities than this site, where reverence to the prophet Abraham is both a source of devotion and of conflict. The tension is strongest in the old quarters around the mosque, a hostility that has been fed by the demographic imbalance between the two communities: thus, 120,000 Palestinians attempt to co-exist with 400 Jewish settlers.

Hebron is now divided into two parts: H1 is controlled by Palestinians, while H2 is controlled by Israeli settlers supported by the Israeli army. The two zones are marked by concrete blocks placed in the middle of streets, and it is part of the surreal nature of these borders that it is often possible to have one foot in HI and another foot in H2 as one goes around the so-called 'contact points'. Israeli soldiers occupy the surrounding high ground, with machine guns placed atop houses and other buildings, and trained on roads and open spaces. Signs of the conflict are everywhere, with the market place and square, as well as several buildings such as shops and schools, bearing the telltale pockmarks of rifle and machine-gun fire. Israeli soldiers patrol H2 on foot, in jeeps, and occasionally in tanks.

At the height of the crisis, closure, curfew and strict security measures were imposed in Hebron. City entrances were closed, with the town increasingly living a siege-like reality, and with mobility outside one's home being severely restricted for adults and children alike. Economic activity came to a standstill, with shops and stores often remaining closed. Unemployment and poverty have mushroomed, and the economic and social consequences of restricted mobility can easily be imagined.

Education in old Hebron

The Education Directorate of Hebron has overall responsibility for 165 government schools catering for 73,883 pupils, who receive instruction from a staff complement of 2,896 teachers. In 2001, there were 39 private schools, 75 kindergartens and 23 cultural centres. While some of these establishments were visited during the field research period, the attention was focused rather more on the schools in old Hebron, and particularly on those primary level institutions that are at, or close to, the 'contact points' in the H2 zone. Old Hebron has 32 schools in all, with 11,650 pupils and 450 teachers. Five of the schools are situated at the contact points, and these establishments cater for 2,357 students, with 87 teachers on their staff list. Three of these schools, normally serving 1,835 elementary level pupils, have been taken over by the Israeli army and turned into military camps and warehouses for storing weapons and other military equipment. These schools were still occupied by the Israeli soldiers at the time of fieldwork, with students

being redirected to other schools where a shift system had to be adopted to cater for the new influx of pupils.

The 29 schools still functioning in old Hebron suffered the consequences of curfew restrictions, and of being targeted by Israeli forces. Several interviewees referred to the fact that teachers and students were shot at on the way to and from school. Up to 20 February 2001, 300 students had been injured, while nine had been killed. Gas and sound bombs are regularly thrown into schoolyards, with several schools being shelled, both at night and during school hours. Israeli soldiers stop pupils and teachers at check points, searching and occasionally confiscating their bags. During the most intense period of the *Intifada*, between September and December 2000, attendance in non-secure schools in the contact areas plummeted. At the start of the new scholastic year in September 2001, attendance fluctuated between 80% and 90%, depending on the intensity of shelling or gunfire.

Interviews with pupils in both primary and secondary schools, as well as with some of their teachers and parents, provide us with an insight into the way lives are lived in conditions of direct and indirect exposure to conflict and violence. Movement was severely restricted. Children spoke of their fears and insecurities, about going around feeling that '*you could be shot any time, anywhere, for no particular reason at all*.' At home, they were constantly told to be careful not to linger behind windows, because they could be shot. Children said they felt angry seeing Israeli soldiers '*walk around happily*' and the settlers '*going about freely*' when they could hardly leave the house to play with friends for fear of being beaten up. They were terrified when they heard soldiers on the roof of their house, setting up a machine gun post there, and '*throwing their rubbish around*.' One 9 year-old boy said, '*They take our freedom for themselves … They block roads and streets …* '

Going to and returning from school was difficult at the best of times. Mothers spoke of the way they watched carefully from behind doors to wait till soldiers moved away, '*and then we tell our son: 'Quickly! Now! Rush to school!*'' An 8 year-old girl exclaimed, '*Israeli soldiers stop us … all we have are our books ... They don't need to do that!*' Another spoke about the way '*Settlers harass us on the way to school … They throw gas bombs in our house … They shoot at us. They even burn our clothes when mum puts them out on the line to dry!*' One girl who lived in a refugee camp recounted how settlers tried to run over her several times on her way to school. Others described how settlers and soldiers '*curse us and use bad words when we come down to the school – all we want is to get an education – even going to our mosque is difficult. The soldiers sometimes run after the girls...*' A 15 year-old girl told me, '*You see the tanks in front of you, in front of your house … the Israeli soldiers in the street … and you keep going on … that's*

what we have to face … how many children our age would have to face something like that? … and then they call us terrorists!' One 8 year-old girl claimed to have confronted a soldier telling him, '*Don't you want your children to go to school? Why won't you allow me?!*' She had become an instant celebrity among her friends and in her neighbourhood, with the story reaching an education supervisor who recounted the story with evident admiration and delight. Another 8 year-old girl got so frightened when followed by soldiers that she preferred to jump down a terrace in order to get away from them, breaking a leg and an arm in the process, and having to be hospitalised.

But even when students did make it to school – a place normally associated with safety and security – students did not feel at peace. It was clear that schools were being targeted by Israeli troops – a long-standing feature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see Goodwin-Gill & Cohn, 1994; Azzam, 1996). All the institutions visited in the course of the present research had bullet marks in windows, walls, and furniture. Water tanks on school rooftops were an easy and tempting target. Gas and sound bombs were thrown into schoolyards, and occasionally Israeli soldiers did not allow students to leave the premises. One primary school reported that soldiers poked their rifles through classroom windows that looked onto streets and alleyways, scaring pupils and teacher alike. In a secondary school outside of the H2 zone, students recounted how there was a sudden panic when shots were fired into classrooms during lessons. Children panicked, '*but the teachers told us to stay down on the floor, and those of us who came from H2 and who were used to hearing shooting helped the others calm down …* '

Teachers too were being harassed – a not unusual phenomenon in situations of armed conflict because teachers are often regarded as important members of the community, and also tend to be more politicised than other citizens (Graham-Brown, 1991; Boyden & Ryder, 1996; Richardson, 1999). Children were regularly exposed to scenes of violence, some reporting that they had witnessed the beating up of their own teachers, or the shooting and killing of a person in the street.

But schools too tend to relay images of violence to the children. Most schools visited had pictures of children and youths that had been shot dead by Israeli: these posters of 'martyrs', as they are commonly referred to, were prominently displayed on office and classroom doors and on walls, icons signalling resistance to occupation, and graphically proclaiming the value of laying down one's life for an ideal. Visual aids hanging in classrooms and corridors, and portraying confrontations with Israeli soldiers and tanks, also reminded children of the violence prevailing outside. Adults found it difficult to restrain themselves from expressing hostility toward those who were daily constraining their lives and injuring loved ones. Student visits to Palestinian victims in hospital were

organised by schools, and while this is again an understandable reaction, it does highlight the difficulty – if not impossibility – of inculcating peaceful values in children when adult role models are built on conflict.

The impact of conflict and violence on children

A context strongly marked by conflict is not conducive to healthy and balanced lives. Despite the fact that there is some evidence that children adapt to situations of 'normal abnormalcy' (Martín-Baró, 1990; Flores, 1999), this does not mean that continued exposure to violence does not have a major detrimental impact on the children's psychological and social development as well as on their education. Nationally, there are reports showing that in the areas most affected by the conflict (i.e., Salfeet in the north West Bank, north and south Gaza, Hebron and Bethlehem), 75% of adults think children are experiencing greater emotional problems and behavioural change. That finding is supported by two separate opinion polls that found that some 80% of parents think that their children's behaviour had changed (Birzeit University Development Studies Programme Survey, 2001a, 2001b; Ministry of Social Affairs [MOSA], 2001). The MOSA study also indicates that repeated exposure to the sounds of shelling and shooting is the major cause of psychological problems among children. In Hebron, parents told counsellors that their children manifested a series of problems in reaction to the situation of political violence. Among these were repeated nightmares, bed-wetting, insomnia and irregular or changed sleeping patterns, increased fear of darkness, parental clinging, fear of sleeping alone, inordinate anxiety related to leaving the house, to meeting strangers, to loud noises and to sudden movements. Some children develop phobias, especially of the sources of violence such as tanks, soldiers, helicopters, and settlers. Many children – particularly the younger ones – act out their fears through imitating soldiers, and often project their fears while at play, and when drawing.

Other problems that have been reported include stress, anxiety and irritability, accompanied by the appearance of psychosomatic symptoms including headaches, stomach cramps and skin diseases. Children find it increasingly difficult to concentrate and remain focused on a task. Some children also withdraw from friends and family, engage in risk-taking behaviour, rebel and reject authority, become aggressive or depressed and pay less attention to personal care. Others show high levels of anxiety, fearing the loss of their parents. Many children have less social and recreational activity, and as a result experience boredom, are more prone to brooding about life, tend to watch more TV and as a result see more of the violence. Increasingly children feel trapped, discouraged, tense, hyperactive, sad about life, angry, and distrustful of authority. While the majority

of young people do their best to avoid direct clashes with Israeli troops, others are propelled to risk acts of rebellion because of a complex mix of anger, bitterness, frustration, patriotism, fatalism and excitement. The results can be violent, unpredictable, and tragic.

In a situation so deeply steeped in conflict, learning suffers. Children lost interest in schooling, preferring to stay at home watching television, or doing their own thing. Mothers interviewed noted a marked deterioration in their children's achievements at school. Teachers and heads also noted that the achievement of children had been much affected, and this showed up because they knew that their colleagues in H1 schools were managing to cover much more of the syllabus than they themselves were managing to do in H2 schools.

Teachers too reported that the situation of conflict had had a major impact on their personal and professional lives. Some reported being beaten up. One of the female teachers interviewed was severely hit to the extent that she still found it painful to walk one week later. Another teacher, over 50 years of age, had physically injured herself when trying to run away from a soldier on her way to school. Many teachers reported that they were always alert and expecting to be hit by a bullet. Teachers noted that soldiers were no longer differentiating between men and women, with one saying that, '*They're willing to shoot at us as much as at the men … They just want to occupy, settle, evict …* ' Like the children, teachers too reported feeling distracted and incapable of focusing, often forgetting what they wanted to teach as they used up a lot of their personal energies and resources just to avoid soldiers on the streets, by taking a round-about way of getting to school. As one teacher said, '*Instead of teaching I find myself often looking through the window, wondering what's happening, who's getting hurt ... It's difficult for teachers to concentrate these days … you try to concentrate on the curriculum, but other things which are more important come up*.'

They noted how their roles changed, from being teachers to being guardians of the pupils in their class. They said, '*We go out before sending the kids home, to see if it is safe*.' They felt worried when seeing the children off, wondering if they would get into trouble. Some hid children in their own homes, waiting until the roads were clear of soldiers. One headmistress, accompanying a group of children home, came across a tank in a street. As the tank kept moving toward them, '*The children were terrified, and we stayed flat against the wall of a house … When the tank arrived next to us, it honked its horn … and we all jumped out of our skin with fear … But there was something wrong with the horn, and it sounded like a beep, so I made fun of that in order to help relieve the children from their fright … And we all laughed and the next day the children told their friends at school, 'The tank beeped!'* '

The Palestinian response to the educational challenge

> *The Israelis want to stop us from sending our kids to school … That's why they keep harassing us and our children. They want to drive us out of here, so that they can move in. They want to create an uneducated generation … but it's going to be difficult for them to do that ... Education will help us achieve our goals … I want my children to be better than I am … to have a better life … to be free.* (Father, interviewed in a boys' primary school in H2)

> *We are determined to get an education … the pen is our gun … we will not be stopped by the Israelis … they want us to miss education, in order to have us ignorant, for us not to understand …* (15 year-old girl, from a secondary school in H1)

The importance of education to Hebron

Initially the *Intifada* and the Israeli reaction to it caught the Directorate of Education in Hebron off its guard, with students missing several days of schooling because of the violence on the streets and the targeting of schools. '*But we soon learnt …* ,' said one education supervisor. Teachers and students were instructed to go to the nearest secure school, and a TV campaign was launched with the assistance of UNICEF to encourage students to return to school. Students from needy families whose economic situation became even more precarious due to the crisis were provided with school bags, and were exempted from paying fees. The whole Palestinian Hebronite community was mobilised to ensure that resources would flow toward the educational effort, with US$ 150,000 being collected in a few weeks, and with homes and mosques being made available to function as schools. As one headmistress of a primary school situated at a contact point said, '*The school building does not determine schooling … You can learn anywhere … That's our motto*.'

There is little doubt that, like many other Palestinians, the Hebronite community values education. Whatever their socio-economic background, Palestinian mothers invariably aspire that one of their children becomes a doctor or a lawyer. But education has more than an occupationally instrumental value for the Palestinians in Hebron. For the Directorate and for parents, education is a key strategy for keeping children out of violent clashes, since having young people at school helps reduce the risk of confrontation with Israeli troops and settlers. They also have the opportunity to socialise and to be involved in doing something other than brooding all day long. As one education supervisor noted, '*There is a sense of seeing the school as a source of support. Kids have an opportunity to talk, to tell their friends what they are going through and what they feel, to play ...* '

But education has also come to be the act of resistance of a people who will not be put down. Nothing catches more powerfully the determined pursuit for education in Hebron than the *Fatayyat Al-Asatih* – or the 'roof-top girls', as they have come to be called by teachers. These gritty primary-age girls, scrambling from one roof-top to another in order to get to their school, thus beating the Israeli soldiers at their own game, powerfully symbolise the resoluteness with which Palestinians are pursuing their right to education under very trying conditions.

The Palestinian response

The loss of school days due to curfew conditions, the difficulty of focusing on education in a situation of conflict and violence, the psychological and social distress related to the daily experience of violence or expectation of violence – one and all and more led, as can only be expected, to difficulties in the delivery of education. These same difficulties inspired educators to imagine alternative strategies to ensure that students in old Hebron made up for the missed schooling, and to remain engaged in learning the set curriculum. The Directorate asked heads and teachers in the non-secure schools to suggest ways of responding to the situation, and a set of inter-related initiatives started emerging and taking shape. As one education supervisor noted, '*Reality itself led to these initiatives … things you never thought of doing before … the situation pushed you to think of innovative ways of responding …* ' A project management committee was set up at the Directorate in October 2000, soon after the outbreak of violence, with the implementation phase kicking into gear in January 2001. The committee was made up of 15 members and included education supervisors, subject specialists, head teachers, teachers and parents.

The three key elements of what came to be known as the Distance Remedial Education Project (DREP) all had a separate but linked committee. The first took responsibility for the remedial self-learning worksheets, the second took charge of the remedial after-school programme, while the third directed the TV programme initiative. Each committee was made up of five to six members, and in the first two cases led a team of 50 teachers. On its part, the TV programme committee led a team of 15 teachers. Teachers had a key role at all the phases of planning and implementation of the initiatives, because, as one supervisor said, '*they are the ones who are in touch with the pupils after all*.' Parents too had an important role to play, and their views and reactions were channelled through the very active Parents-Teachers Associations (PTAs), and their regular informal contact with schools. Evaluations of the different aspects of the project were carried out by Hebron education officials and presented to the Ministry of Education (MOE). Financial support was provided by UNICEF, which gave a grant of over

US$ 50,000 to the project, of which nearly US$ 30,000 were provided in cash, and the rest covered supply assistance and training. UNICEF also provided technical support, in the design of the project, as well as in the development of the self-learning worksheets, besides, of course, giving national and regional visibility to DREP, a factor that actively contributes to the dynamic evolution of any innovation. A key MOE official indeed felt that the project could not have happened without the support that UNICEF was able to provide. Table 1 gives an overview of the statistics involved in the project.

TABLE 1: Statistics relating to the different aspects of the Distance Remedial Education Project (data provided by the District Education Office in Hebron)

Number of	Activity	Primary Grades	Secondary Grades	Total†
Schools involved in:	worksheets	30	2	32
	after-school sessions	15	2	17
	summer camps	4	0	4
	TV programmes	30	2	32
Teachers involved in:	worksheets	470	30	500
	after-school sessions	65	15	80
	summer camps	65	0	65
	TV programmes	12	10	22
Teachers trained to prepare/lead:	worksheets	500	0	500
	after-school sessions	65	15	80
	summer camps	65	0	65
	TV programmes	12	10	22
Students who took part in:	worksheets	10,000	2,000	12,000
	after-school sessions	1,548	539	2,087
	summer camps	800	0	800
	TV programmes	10,000*	2,000*	12,000*

† There are overlaps in the number of persons or institutions involved in the different aspects of DREP.

* Targeted, but not necessarily reached.

It is important to give details of each aspect of the DREP, and to also understand the 'distance education' and 'remedial' dimensions of each initiative. It must be noted that prior to the *Intifada*, the idea of distance learning had not seemed to be relevant, because of the smallness of the Palestinian territory – though it must be noted that distance learning and distance teacher training were first introduced by UNRWA among Palestinian refugees following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war (Inquai, 1990). 'Distance', however, is a relative term, and in the context of H2, as has been pointed out, even a few hundred metres can represent a major obstacle to mobility, an obstacle that can only be overcome through the use of tools made available by distance education strategies – including pre-planned and pre-packaged teaching and learning materials which give prominence to work assignments and learning by oneself at home. The term 'remedial' has at least two meanings in the context of the DREP – it is remedial both because its aim was to make up for the deficit in learning caused by the crisis, and also because it set out to help the least achieving to keep up with the curriculum relevant to their age group. As will be seen, the project's scope widened as it went from the planning to the implementation phase, and as ideas moved from the drawing board to the complex crucible of classroom and community life.

The self-learning worksheets

The idea of preparing self-learning worksheets had already been raised by some Palestinian educators in the context of the first *Intifada*. That that idea was revived in Hebron in the second *Intifada* is partly due to UNICEF's proposals for a contingency plan that had been tabled to the MOE, and which had suggested the use of such worksheets as a flexible response to a number of educational scenarios that could arise in the context of further political upheaval.

The basic idea behind a self-learning worksheet is that the regular curriculum is presented in the form of exercises that the pupil can fill in at home on his or her own, or under the guidance of parents or elder siblings. Worksheets had both an evaluative and an extension element to them: they helped evaluate whether a pupil had learnt a particular curricular unit, and also extended his or her knowledge in a specific area of study. In the context of the DREP, worksheets were initially trialed out with Grade 1 children and then extended up to Grade 7, and while they were largely aimed at primary level pupils, worksheets for higher grades were also prepared.

Preparation of the self-learning worksheets

In the early stages of the project, 230 worksheets covering all curricular areas and different grade levels were prepared as samples of instructional material by 35 teachers who had followed a one-week training course for the purpose. Table 2 provides a breakdown of these worksheets by subject and grade level.

TABLE 2: The DREP worksheets

Subject	Grade Level	Number of Worksheets
Arabic, Mathematics, Science, Religion	1 - 4	80
Arabic Language	5 - 12	30
Mathematics	5 - 12	25
Science	5 - 12	25
English Language	5 - 12	30
Social Studies	5 - 12	20
Religion	5 - 12	20
Total number of worksheets produced		230

All the worksheet samples were perused in the course of the present research, and both on the basis of this analysis, as well as from comments made by teachers and supervisors during interview sessions, one can deduce the set of educational principles underpinning their design. The worksheets were generally visually and pedagogically attractive, so that children could enjoy filling them in, and could more easily take their mind off the conflict-related concerns and anxieties and focus on learning. The emphasis was placed on providing a wide variety of activities in each worksheet, and to ensure an association between learning and fun. Good worksheets were characterised by several interviewees as those having clear instructions as to what is to be done by pupils, a focus on one topic, a range of activities that involved play and activity, and which had drawings or pictures.

Each worksheet announced the topic as well as the grade level it was meant for. Many of the activities were of the 'fill-in-the-blanks' type, but some of the more innovative drew on experiential learning strategies. Worksheets required the use of materials that are often found in most households. Each worksheet had to connect and build on the regular curriculum, and indeed often referred pupils to specific pages in the school textbooks in order to avoid the danger of creating a parallel non-formal educational initiative that did not reinforce regular and formal schooling. The worksheets also included detailed guidelines and clear instructions on what to work on every week and how. Parents and elder siblings or members of the extended family were invited to supervise the children while these filled in the worksheets at home.

Evaluation of early material showed that teachers tended to introduce themes from the conflict in the worksheets, both because that was never far from their own personal preoccupations, and because some felt that it was pedagogically sound to build on the reality of the prevailing situation. They were however discouraged from this practice, since one of the targets of the exercise was the healing of the psychological and social distress caused by exposure to violence, and it was felt to be inappropriate by some to constantly draw the children's attention back to the conflict and to use school-related activities to represent images of violence.

Utilising a cascade model, the 35 teachers trained in preparing sample worksheets trained 465 other teachers between March and June of 2001. Teachers were encouraged to be creative and to develop their own style in designing worksheets, and to work in teams wherever possible in order to share ideas, to learn from each other, and to encourage a more holistic approach to the curriculum, keeping the model samples as a rough guide. Much of the work was done voluntarily by teachers, with UNICEF resources being used to cover the costs of reproduction of material for students.

Worksheets were either filled in at home, or else used during after-school remedial 'camps' or 'programmes' – another aspect of the DREP which will be described below. The delivery and collection of worksheets to and from homes proved to be quite a challenge for teachers at times. Depending on the severity of the conflict, worksheets were generally picked from schools whenever curfew was lifted – to allow people to go out shopping, for instance. Occasionally, however, worksheets were delivered by teachers directly to the pupils' homes. Since the situation was often totally unpredictable, the teacher-pupil contact could not be regulated, so every window of opportunity was made use of to flexibly respond to needs and to deliver such services as the correction of worksheets and remedial work.

Reactions to the self-learning worksheets

The self-learning worksheets seem to have been very well received both by students and parents. Teachers were obviously proud of their achievements, and were very keen to show off the worksheets they had designed to visitors. Indeed, education supervisors claimed that some of the material prepared by teachers in schools – even when this was designed by hand, without the aid of a word processor – was superior to the model samples that had been prepared at the outset of the programme by specially trained staff using computers. Heads invariably praised teachers for the effort they had put in preparing the worksheets, claiming that the enthusiasm and creativity of the staff had increased after the initial demoralisation that overwhelmed many after the start

of the crisis. As one headmistress of a basic school in H2 said, '*Because we have to work in such difficult circumstances, achievement is sweeter … we organise our school and the learning sheets according to the needs of the different families – and the focus is on what each child manages to achieve … not on criticising: we constantly emphasise achievement, the positive*.' The only complaint from teaching staff was that schools were often in short supply of the kinds of materials that were needed to produce the worksheets and activities linked to them – including library resources, art supplies, educational games, transparencies, and so on.

Parents too showed a good deal of enthusiasm for the self-learning worksheets, feeling that the Directorate and the school really cared for the well-being of their children, and had come up with a simple but effective strategy to overcome some of the difficulties that arose during the *Intifada*. During a focus group interview with seven mothers in a boys' primary school, for instance, satisfaction was expressed at the fact that the worksheets distracted their sons' attention from the conflict. '*We try to isolate them from this reality, to get them away from the window where they keep watching what the Israeli soldiers are doing, and placing themselves in danger*.' These mothers felt that the worksheets gave continuity to schooling, and encouraged children to remain focused on education. They also helped them understand what their children were expected to learn by organising the knowledge in understandable units. '*I used to find the curriculum difficult to understand,*' said one parent, '*but the worksheets have made it easier for me*.' '*They summarise the curriculum,*' said another, '*and are a good organising tool*.'

Many parents were relieved that the worksheets gave them something 'tangible' to do with their children, with fathers noting that they too got caught up in working with their boys and girls. '*It gave us something to do together when we were cooped up in the house all day long … other than quarrelling …* ' said one dad. ' *… and producing even more children!*' rejoined another, with a twinkle in his eye – referring to one unintended consequence of curfew, confirmed by an education supervisor who pointed apprehensively at the maternity wing of the hospital in old Hebron saying that it had been '*producing one classroom a day*' ever since mobility restrictions had been enforced.

Some parents noted that it would have been a good idea for the school to have given them some basic training in understanding the worksheets and the role that they were expected to play. While many had caught on, they knew of some parents who themselves had literacy problems, and who had experienced difficulties, not quite knowing what to do and how to help their children. They did however acknowledge the fact that there had been a lot of informal contact with teachers, and that guidance and help was given in that way.

The remedial learning workshops

The remedial classes – which were sometimes referred to as 'camps' or 'workshops' by teachers and parents – complemented the learning achieved through the self-learning worksheets. The 'distance learning' element came in because teaching was often done away from the formal context of the students' regular school. The remedial classes were initially conceived as educationally supportive interventions focused over a short period of time, and aimed at those students who had fallen backwards in the coverage and integration of the curriculum due to their own learning difficulties, which had become exacerbated during the *Intifada*. Schools in old Hebron were divided into nine clusters, in which at least one remedial education centre was established to help lower attainers keep up with curricular requirements. Five of these centres were schools, two others were housed in homes made available by the community, while another two were mosques. A total of 17 schools (15 primary, two secondary) were involved, with 80 teachers (65 primary, 15 secondary) trained to lead remedial sessions that involved a total of 2,087 students (1,548 primary, 539 secondary). The focus with the primary students – with whom this case study is largely concerned – was on mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills, or making up for some achievement delay due to lack of school attendance.

An extension of the remedial education in centres was also planned as a 'summer camp' – and indeed four primary schools managed to organise such camps for two weeks between June and July of 2001, involving 800 pupils. Other schools had planned to follow suit, but with the intensification of the conflict over the summer, had to give up on their plans, and instead organised the 'remedial camp' after regular school hours. In most cases, that meant starting regular classes at 07:00 in the morning instead of 07:45, with the remedial shift starting at 12:00 and lasting two hours.

The rationale behind the summer and after-school interventions was quite similar, in that the main goal was to engage students in further learning in a social context marked by activities, games, music, and theatre that were both educationally sound and enjoyable at the same time. Prizes were also given as further incentives to students. Both modalities in the delivery of the remedial programme involved teachers as well as student helpers from higher grade levels (referred to as '*mustajadat*'). Self-learning worksheets were used to structure the formal, curricular aspect of the programme, but these were supplemented by informal educational activities such as trips and visits outside H2 and Hebron whenever possible, as well as plenty of physical and recreational activities. UNICEF provided children with a cap and T-shirt to wear, which helped to give an identity to the project, and also distributed refreshments every day. '*Whenever*

you feed them, they're happy,' said one teacher with a big smile. '*So many of the fathers are not working, and it's really getting tight for most of us.*' UNICEF also subsidised a stipend of US$ 5 an hour for teachers who taught in the after-school programme, an extra income that was greatly appreciated and scaffolded sagging morale.

Reactions to the remedial education camps and workshops

Both summer camp and after-school workshops lasted two weeks, but feedback from parents and teachers encouraged the Directorate to consider extending the after-school programme to a one day a week initiative lasting all year through. At the time of the fieldwork, the Directorate was also thinking of including other elements in the programme, such as a communal meal to which parents would also be invited, and a variety of cultural events.

Once again, a great deal of enthusiasm for the remedial education programme was expressed by heads, teachers, parents and students. Indeed, while initially the intention was to only have students in need of remedial help on the programmes, this soon had to be modified in most centres due to the demand on the part of other students to join in. Initial parental concern about the lengthening of the school day and the consequent increase in the time of exposure to danger soon changed to a high regard for the programme. Parents felt that the Directorate, heads and teachers really cared for their children, and were competent and professional enough to respond flexibly and creatively to a challenging situation. Parents invariably noted that both the psycho-social and the educational goals were being met by the remedial initiative. They were pleased to see their children re-discovering a motivation to go to school and to engage in learning, spiced as this was with fun and social activities. '*It dissipated the element of fear,*' said one mother, '*and it occupied the kids and gave them something fun to do.*' '*It was a break from routine and from the shooting – a way out … it provided incentives: there were trips, food, games and activities – it would be really good to have this one day a week throughout the year,*' said another. A father noted that when it was the day for the remedial workshop, '*the boy is really keen to go to school.*' Another dad said, '*It took them out of the prison they were in – even though it extended the school day by two hours.*' The levels of enthusiasm were probably highest for this facet of the overall Distance Remedial Education Project, with parents, teachers and students expressing disappointment when the two-week programme came to an end, and all wanting it to be extended over a longer period of time.

Both parents and teachers preferred to have the remedial classes offered in the children's regular schools by the children's regular teachers, rather than in other remedial centres by teachers unknown to pupils or parents. On their part, teachers

felt that some special training for the remedial project would have helped them in their work, and that the one-day orientation programme organised by the Directorate had focused largely on the logistical rather than on the educational aspects of the initiative.

Remedial lessons on local TV stations

This third aspect of the Distance Remedial Education Project was, for the Hebron community and possibly for the West Bank and Gaza overall, the most innovative and challenging, both technically and professionally speaking. Three Hebron TV stations – *Al-Amal*, *Al-Majd*, and *Al-Nawras* – agreed to broadcast lessons from the curriculum related to all subject areas for several grade levels. Twenty-two male and female teachers with a reputation for excellence were invited to deliver half-hour lessons in a studio environment. Each lesson sequence was filmed and transmitted twice, once at 16:00 hours, and then again the next day at 09:00 hours.

The TV production schedule was spread out over two stages: the first stage lasted from November 2000 to January 2001, and involved all three stations. A total of 43 lesson sequences in Arabic, Mathematics, Science and English were broadcast to secondary level students. April 2001 saw the commencement of the second stage of broadcasting, with *Al-Amal* TV station transmitting 39 lesson sequences in Arabic, Science, Mathematics and English to primary level classes, and Physics to secondary level classes.

Lessons focused mainly on those topics requiring a greater effort on the part of the learner to acquire the new knowledge. Teachers did this work on a voluntary basis, proud of the fact that their abilities had been recognised and were being put to good use in a community in crisis.

The media environment for the broadcasting generally followed one of two formats. One format involved a teacher giving a lesson, with the style being mainly expository in nature, and with use being made of white board and chart. This was largely used in the first phase of broadcasting, with lessons aimed at secondary level students. Other than zooming in and out on the teacher in order to either highlight the face, or the writing on the whiteboard or chart, few if any filming techniques or resources were used to enhance the visual appeal of the lesson. There were no photo or video-clip inserts to illustrate the session, and no use of overhead projectors or computer-generated images. This was TV broadcasting at its most basic, utilising a 'talking head' approach that does not exploit the potential of the TV medium or the more recent advances in education and information technology. Having said that, in most cases teachers' diction was

clear and poised, with an emphasis being placed on a carefully paced delivery, and with several examples used to ensure comprehension. This was competent if traditional teaching where the emphasis was on subject matter, with teachers drawing on their experience of pedagogical content knowledge to facilitate learning on the part of the viewers. When one keeps in mind that none of these teachers had received any formal training in TV broadcasting, and that the studio resources were quite negligible, then their achievement, however modest, can be more easily appreciated.

The more attractive format involved a teacher giving a lesson to a small group of ten primary level children sitting in a classroom environment. The latter format was more interactive in nature, with the teacher – generally a female – using a wider repertoire of teaching strategies and resources. The more successful sequences had the teacher use flash cards, colourful posters and charts, singing, and many other resources, with pupils being asked to come out to the white board, to put on masks while they role played or sung, and with peer tutoring being encouraged. Students appearing on the programme had clearly been carefully selected, and while some of the lessons were recorded in schools that were not under curfew, the overall atmosphere created never seemed to approximate to a 'real' classroom environment – admittedly difficult under any circumstance.

Reactions to the TV programmes

Notwithstanding the great deal of effort that must have gone into preparing these broadcasts, feedback about them from the field was less enthusiastic than for the other elements of the DREP. Despite prodding on my part, few heads, teachers, parents or students referred to the TV programmes. One parent contrasted the learning worksheets with the TV lessons, noting that while the first were interactive, the second were rather static. Another parent said that there were problems of who wanted to watch what in a context of large families – particularly in a situation where, as one MOE official later noted, the main focus when watching TV was on 'breaking news', with channels being changed all the time to discover what reporters had to say about the situation in the West Bank and Gaza. Some households had problems with good reception. The main problem however seemed to be that children did not have the patience to watch the lesson sequence from beginning to end. '*There was little to excite one's interest … you often see nothing but the teacher or her back … my boy became quickly bored, even though he was at first intrigued by the fact that there were children his age on TV, and that he could recognise some of them and even some of the lessons that had been covered at school,*' said one mother. It is of course possible that the TV programmes were more successful with secondary level students who, being more

self-disciplined and motivated, and possibly less restless, could cope with a less than stimulating broadcast. One aspect which might have limited the impact of the TV programmes was the fact that the links with the other components of DREP (i.e., the remedial classes and worksheets) remained weak and under-developed.

Despite these limitations, the TV broadcasts certainly have potential, particularly in a situation marked by conflict. In the first instance, there is no limit to the impact of the remedial lesson sequences transmitted: interview material with education supervisors suggests that students other than those targeted were watching the programmes, both in the H1 area in Hebron, and elsewhere. Indeed, one supervisor reported that some teachers in Gaza had watched the TV programmes and recorded them, because they had a good reception of some of Hebron's channels over there.

Achievements and lessons learnt

> *Teachers, parents and students have risen to the challenge – we note higher levels of motivation because of the challenge …* (Education supervisor, Hebron Education Directorate)

In the last part of this paper the focus will first be on the achievements of the DREP, whether these results were intended and purposefully planned, or whether they are unintended, arising out of the dynamic processes generated by the project as it evolved through different implementation phases. In addition, an attempt will also be made to tease out the implications that this project might have for those who are called upon to provide educational services in the context of political conflict and violence in other parts of the Palestinian territories or internationally. The point will also be made that education policy-makers generally have much to learn from the DREP experience, even if they are operating in a context of regular schooling.

Impact on students

The fundamental *raison d'être* of the DREP was to facilitate student achievement, despite the debilitating context of political conflict and violence. It is to the impact on learning that we therefore direct our attention first.

Given the difficulties of the situation, there is no hard and fast statistical evidence that shows with a high degree of certainty that student involvement in one or more aspects of the DREP made progress in assimilating the curriculum. The assessment unit at the MOE could not function due to the chaos caused by the crisis, and the relevant statistical information could not be collected in a regular

or reliable manner. But over and above these limitations, one should perhaps point out that any causal claims in education are difficult to make with any degree of 'scientific' accuracy because, even in regular situations, it is all but impossible to reproduce laboratory-like conditions to control for all the variables that might be said to be responsible for varying degrees of achievement. Nevertheless, if one goes by reports that are available, there does seem to be some evidence that, if considered cumulatively, suggests rather strongly that students did benefit greatly from the availability of the different initiatives that made up the DREP. Let us consider these one by one.

Different elements of the DREP were reported to have re-engaged students in learning, regenerating interest and motivation which had been weakened or lost due to the situation of political conflict, and the stress that went along with it. This re-vitalisation of the learning process could be seen both formally and informally. Formal evidence refers to achievements at the final examination of each grade level, where in one remedial education programme, for instance, out of the 57 children enrolled, only one failed his final examination, and that despite the fact that students had only followed half that year's curriculum in a regular classroom. Even though this case study is mainly concerned with primary education levels, it should be noted that in secondary schools, results obtained in the *Tawjihi* (i.e., matriculation) examination at the end of Grade 12 had, according to the Directorate, never been better. Formal evidence also refers to rates of attendance and drop-out rates, which remained normal, taking a downward turn only when levels of conflict intensified and made movement either impossible or unwise.

Informal evidence refers to the qualitative, impressionistic type of reporting made by teachers and occasionally parents and with reference to the positive impact or otherwise of the remedial education efforts. While not 'reliable' in the precise and scientific meaning of that term, the cumulative evidence of positive reporting by different actors in various interviews does add up to a clear vote of confidence and approval of DREP – especially since there was no hesitation in pointing out and criticising the weaker elements of the initiative, as has already been seen. Supervisors, heads, teachers and parents, while noting that H2 students were at a disadvantage, and thoroughly cognisant of the fact that less of the curriculum had been covered by those in their care than that covered by their H1 counterparts, nevertheless expressed a great deal of satisfaction at what had been achieved. Students had remained engaged with the curriculum, and a pragmatic set of solutions had been found to structure learning around the main themes and units that were appropriate for their grade level.

That sense of satisfaction was also strongly expressed in terms of the psychological and social benefits for students involved in DREP. Parents were particularly relieved to see their children occupied, their attention drawn away

from the violence, and with plenty of activities in which to participate that not only channelled restless energy, but also helped avoid any perilous encounters or confrontations with Israeli soldiers or settlers. Children had not become 'TV-addicts' due to their increased confinement at home, but were rather involved in the completion of meaningful tasks that must have contributed to the building up of self-confidence, particularly in the case of those students who had fallen back in their learning.

Impact on teachers

Supervisors and heads of schools that were interviewed were unanimous in their appraisal of DREP as a source of professional development for teachers. When this view was expressed, they were not only referring to the formal training that some of the teachers had received in preparation for the various elements of DREP. Rather, they were highlighting the fact that teachers rose to the challenge of being innovative in very challenging circumstances, evincing a great deal of creativity in designing learning worksheets and other educational material that could benefit students in the remedial programmes. There seemed to be a greater understanding on the part of the educational community that children could do a lot of learning on their own, supported by well-prepared and appropriately structured educational material, and by helpful siblings, elder students, and parents. This is a major development in an educational system characterised by a curricular culture of top-down, 'teaching by preaching' approach, where little if any credit is given to the role of the pupil as an active learner (Sultana, 2000; UNICEF & Palestinian Authority, 1995). Equally important are the skills developed and the confidence attained in utilising experiential, activity- and game-oriented teaching/learning methods, as well as in creating one's own resources and visual aids – a particularly critical set of competences given that many schools are under-resourced in ready-made and commercially produced materials. Some of the heads also reported that teachers understood better how homework could be more creatively set and utilised for learning purposes.

Education leaders were careful to note that the remedial project initiatives built on skills and attitudes that had already been present – teachers had used a broad repertoire of teaching methods prior to their involvement in DREP – however, these were developed further through training, practice, and emulation. One headmistress pointed out, for instance, that many of her teachers were varying their pedagogy to reflect some of the ideas and practices promoted by the self-learning worksheets that the Directorate had made available as samples. An education supervisor echoed this saying that teachers had also learnt a lot just by watching their colleagues teaching on TV.

Educational research on innovations tends to strongly suggest that initiatives are most successful when teachers change their perception of their professional roles. Such perceptual shifts and changes are more likely to help teachers restructure their 'routines of practice', nudging them out of comfort zones that they had become habituated to (Sultana, 2001). In this case, teachers were clearly keen to try out new strategies in a situation where necessity becomes the mother of invention. Teachers reported that they had been pushed to do research in order to come up with interesting and stimulating worksheets, which they proudly showed off to visitors to the school. They reported that they were more likely to discuss their work with colleagues, to share ideas for improved professional practice, and to make connections between curricular areas in the preparation of their self-learning materials. After-school remedial programmes, as has already been noted, led teachers to reconceptualise their role, becoming more open to the idea of mixing fun and pleasure with the business of teaching and learning, and being more ready to develop closer relationships with children, who responded warmly to their teachers, whom they were seeing in a different light. Indeed, it was very clear that students and their parents were touched by the risks teachers were taking on their behalf, and by their exemplary caring and dedication that often went beyond the call of duty.

Another important perceptual shift that seems to have taken place among the educational community in Hebron, and which has major implications for the definition of roles, is the increased trust in the ability of teachers and heads to respond to situations in an educationally sound way. The notion of 'subsidiarity' – by which is meant the conviction that those who are closest to the challenge are more likely to be able to come up with strategies to address the situation – overlaps the notions of 'decentralisation' and 'empowerment'. This marks a particularly central transformation in attitudes and practices in a system that, like many others in the MENA region, has been locked in a centralist mode of government that has tended to make it both rigid and unresponsive to real needs.

Impact on parents

Mention has already been made of the important fact that the DREP set of initiatives reinforced – indeed increased – the trust that parents had in the Education Directorate. There was an evident sense of appreciation and gratitude toward educators for taking so many risks and going to such lengths in order to ensure that their children remained engaged with learning. Parents became even more convinced that the Directorate had the education of their children at heart, and the tense situation that prevailed served to bridge the gap between the school and the home. Teachers and heads reported that the PTAs had never been as active

as under the second *Intifada*. This was not just due to improved relations, but also because parents now had a much more specific and direct role in the education of their children, given that they were expected to supervise and support their offspring in the filling in of the self-learning worksheets. As one mother declared during a focus group interview in a boys' primary school in H2, '*All this made us get closer to the school … students now rely a lot on their family for their education*.' It seems that parents often went to school to ask teachers as to how to deal with some of the issues that arose in the worksheets, and that several of the PTA meetings in schools focused on both the educational process and on learning strategies to help children to cope with stress and anxiety. Both the situation and the increased educational interaction seem to have had a positive impact on parent-child relations.

While no opportunity arose to delve deeper into the matter, it appears that a number of illiterate or semi-literate parents became engaged in learning to read and write as they supervised their children, with the TV sessions proving to be particularly effective in this regard. Others, it seems – impressed by the community effort in investing in education against all odds – were less prompt to channel their children into paid work, even though falling family income made this option particularly tempting.

Lessons learnt

… Lessons for educators working in situations of armed conflict

The Distance Remedial Education Project, then, seems to have left a positive impact all round. It not only ensured a degree of continuity in the provision of education, but also contributed toward the normalisation of children's lives, despite a situation marked by political conflict and violence. This is a major achievement, and one that has implications both for other parts of West Bank and Gaza that have seen an escalation of political violence, as well as for other situations internationally that are experiencing a situation of armed conflict. This achievement can best be appreciated when one takes into account the conclusion of a relatively recent historical study on education in conflict zones. The author, noting the dearth of studies on the subject, concludes that such an 'absence can have an extremely negative impact on children and youth. It is time that the devastating impact of schooling disruption receives the recognition it deserves' (Richardson, 1999, p. 733).

Certainly, at the most fundamental level, the decision by the Palestinian community in Hebron to tenaciously provide education under what can only be

described as siege conditions is admirable and worthy of emulation in any similar context. The emphasis on continuity in schooling is valuable not only because it signals a profound belief in the empowering potential of knowledge, but also because it is one of the best-known antidotes to the psychological and social distress caused by the daily experience of political violence. In many cases worldwide it has been reported that communities, and particularly international aid agencies, tend to adopt the discourse of trauma when dealing with the situation of children caught in armed conflict. This conveys the idea of victimhood and a victim-identity, which is counterproductive to healing (Beirens, 2000; Boyden, 1999). Indeed, many well-meaning agencies use a trauma terminology that leads to the pathologisation of the population, even though such terminology, whether used by the community or by agencies, can be very effective in drawing attention or financial support (Beirens, 2000).

While the Hebron community did highlight the psychological and social impact of the violence on children, and indeed provided counselling support and organised workshops for parents in order to train them to help their offspring cope with stress, it did not stop there. The set of strategies that were put into place to maintain the delivery of education ensured that children remained engaged with the curriculum, while at the same time providing them with an opportunity to process their experience through the use of imagination, story-making, drama, play, and the arts.

… Lessons for educators more generally

The DREP initiatives also have implications for educational situations that are not marked by political conflict and violence. After all, it does not need – indeed, it *should not* need – an emergency situation to generate the creativity, flexibility, sense of shared purpose and commitment that are the hallmarks of this particular project. Regular educational contexts have much to learn from the DREP experience, in the way curriculum and materials development can happen at the level of the school and the classroom, in the way teachers can produce excellent educational resources when motivated and trained to do so, even if they have limited access to technology and to funds. Indeed, it is a well established fact that the most up-to-date, expensive and sophisticated educational resources and materials – including computers, for instance – will not necessarily have the desired impact on the way teachers teach, either because these were provided without any concern for what educators wanted or were prepared and trained to use, or because they fail to connect with the realities of the context in which they are to be applied. It is notoriously difficult to shift teachers from the assumption that a single type of learning programme suffices for all, that knowledge should

be handed down, and that mastery comes through acquisition, internalisation, rehearsal and digestion – a shift that, in many cases, has not been achieved despite the introduction of new information and communication technologies in the classroom (Salomon & Almog, 1998; Salomon, 2000). And yet, the DREP initiatives seem to have managed to do just that, with the situation jolting teachers out of comfortable pedagogical routines, pushing them to extend their repertoire of teaching strategies – a leap in professional practice which could happen because of a clear vision and sense of mission, and thanks to the support provided by further training, parents, effective leadership and a modicum of funding.

The DREP case study, therefore, provides a significant model of good practice, one that should encourage teachers everywhere to believe in their ability to develop strategic responses to educationally challenging situations. Distance education strategies, for instance – such as self-learning worksheets – can be a simple, cost-effective, yet immensely valuable way of providing educational opportunities to children who would otherwise be hard to reach, or to students who drop out before the official school-leaving age. While not an alternative to regular school programmes, they can be a useful interim measure to ensure that children who are barred from attending schools – such as girls, for instance – do at least have access to the minimal curricular competences that they have a right to. After-school programmes that put a premium on the use of attractive and effective educational resources, and on the use of a broad range of pedagogical strategies that include games, peer tutoring, experiential learning, and so on, can help provide remedial education opportunities and second chance schooling, building up self-confidence and fundamental curricular competences in children who might otherwise give up on formal learning. TV and radio programmes – especially if they are linked to other distance education strategies such as self-learning materials – can cross boundaries of space or prejudice in a most effective manner to deliver an education that would otherwise be denied.

The Hebron initiatives underscore the value of decentralisation or 'subsidiarity'. Local educational communities can be surprisingly innovative when they feel they have the power to develop their own responses to challenges that they have to face. Systems that operate as command centres encounter major difficulties in motivating educators to proactively and creatively engage problems. This is largely due to the fact that they tend to encourage institutional and professional cultures that are dependent on chains of commands that pass through complex and bureaucratic hierarchies. Participatory approaches, on the other hand, believe that those most familiar with the situation are more likely to develop ecologically sound responses to challenges. They therefore function as support systems, providing training, funding, resource persons, useful contacts and so on, which scaffold homegrown initiatives. As the Hebron initiatives show, such

participatory and empowering approaches lead teachers to own a project, and to invest it with their own professional and even personal identities. It is these high levels of motivation and professional pride that ensure the continued success of innovative practice.

The DREP initiatives also highlight the importance of parental involvement, especially when this is not a public-relations exercise in 'power-sharing' and 'community empowerment' that is more symbolic than real. The Hebron initiatives are therefore another important example confirming growing international consensus around the fact that genuine parental involvement can have a most positive impact on the levels of learning achievement of young children. Parents in Hebron showed that they could rise to the occasion when they were given the opportunity to do so, and that they were ready and keen to learn new skills and to expand their supervisory roles to ensure that their children did register progress. Traditional and conservative educators tend to perceive parents as intruders, ever ready to criticise the efforts of schools. This is not the way parents came across in Hebron – rather, as genuine partners, they supported teachers in the most difficult of circumstances, were ready to share the burden of the responsibility for educating their children, and expressed gratitude and esteem for excellent teachers who were clearly showing concern, care and commitment toward their sons and daughters. The bridging between school and home went beyond formal representation of parental concerns through PTAs: while the latter institutions are important, and certainly need to be a regular feature of any school community, it is the sense of purposeful partnership that grew between teachers and parents in an attempt to face a common challenge that is most edifying.

Replication

High levels of involvement and commitment on the part of teachers, parents, and education officials generated a sense of communal pride, as well as high standing in the national community: '*Many experts have come to see what we have done and achieved,*' noted the Director of Education at one stage, with a great deal of satisfaction. The reputation of DREP has grown to such an extent that the Palestinian Authority's MOE has declared its intention to extend the project to other directorates, with Hebron providing its own staff to train others in communities in both the West Bank and Gaza, who were living in the same situation of closure. Even though, of course, and as one high ranking MOE official noted wryly, the hope was that improvements in the political situation would make such replication unnecessary.

These developments – together with the idea that one can 'learn lessons' from a successful innovation – raise the complex issue of replicability. Many

innovations are successful because they are ecologically linked to the situation in which they are embedded. They respond to challenges in a manner that is appropriate, taking into account the material and human resources available, and in a way that is in tune with the cultural codes and expectations of the community. There is often a keen sense of purpose, driven by an excitement that comes with the satisfaction of developing imaginative and creative solutions to problems that others may have found intractable. Thus, for instance, one can understand why teachers will tend to be more motivated if they are using self-learning worksheets which they themselves designed and produced, than if these are provided as part of a ready-made package that has been pre-prepared for them by other educators.

The sense of excitement and the dynamic synergy that is a feature of innovative contexts are immensely difficult to transport to other environments, where a different community's motivation is expected to ignite because the innovation they are being encouraged to adopt has worked well elsewhere. Certainly, the distance education strategies adopted by the Palestinian Hebronites may serve as an inspiration to other communities. Educators will here find useful ideas as they attempt to come up with their own flexible and innovative responses to the challenge of barred schooling – whether this is due to political violence, gender discrimination, natural disasters, or whatever. Each community, however, has to develop its own strategies, ones that are appropriate to the ecology of the situation, and which makes best use of the human and material resources that are available. In the case of Hebron, for instance, the options chosen emerged from the socio-economic as well as cultural reality of the community itself. As such, some of the strategies pursued there can only be replicated in contexts that are similar. It is only in middle-income countries, for instance, that there is likely to be an already existing broadcasting infrastructure that can be used to transmit lessons, or where families have easy access to television sets. Similarly, the self-learning worksheets could really only work well in Hebron because each school had its own photocopying facilities, and access to at least a minimal amount of resources such as paper, colours, and so on. Furthermore, not all communities will have a majority of literate parents who are capable of supervising their children's education at home.

The fact nevertheless remains, however, that the Palestinians in Hebron provide the international community with an inspiring account of how initiatives led by educators and parents can counter challenging situations marked by political conflict and violence in order to ensure that their future generations do get what the world has agreed – both through its Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and the commitments at the Education for All conference – that is theirs by right.

Notes

1. This is a revised version of a case study first published by UNICEF as a MENA Occasional Paper. Thanks are due to UNICEF for permitting me to share the results of that research with a wider community of readers. Responsibility for views expressed in the paper remains entirely with the author. The paper does not refer to the deterioration of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) during the last several months.
2. ARABEFA has been formed as UNESCO's Arab regional Education for All (EFA) entity for the follow-up of EFA activities.
3. The United Nations General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 established UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to carry out direct relief and work programmes for Palestine refugees.
4. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator (UNSCO) was established in June 1994 following the signing of the Oslo Accord. The objective was to enhance the presence and involvement of the United Nations system during the transition process.

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COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAMME PRACTICES IN TURKEY

SERAP NAZLI

Abstract – *School guidance services in Turkey began in the 1950s. These services are currently being re-structured away from the traditional guidance model. This paper aims to introduce the first pilot project of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme that was carried out by the Ministry of National Education between 2000 and 2002 as part of this re-structuring process. The paper briefly discusses the development of guidance services in Turkey, what the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme entails, and what was done at the planning, design, implementation and evaluation stages of its pilot project. Finally, the design model of the finalised programme is presented.*

Introduction

Turkey is a developing country with a population of 65 million people, of which 14 million are students (grades K-11). Currently, school guidance and counselling in Turkey is going through a transitional period that guides the system toward a comprehensive guidance and counselling programme. School guidance services in Turkey began in the 1950s using the traditional guidance model. But in the 1990s, a re-structuring period of guidance and counselling began in schools, leading to the initiation of the implementation process of comprehensive guidance and counselling. In 2000, during which this transfer process continued with impetus, a number of pilot projects of comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes in primary schools were successfully initiated. This paper deals with the organisation of the first such pilot project which was carried between 2000 and 2002. Attention is given to the structure, implementation and evaluation process of this programme, and to the design model of the finalised programme.

Historical development

Thanks to Turkish-American relations, the school guidance and counselling area was actively integrated into the Turkish education system during the early 1950s (Kepçeoglu, 1988; Kuzgun, 1988; Ozguven, 1990). Turkey entered a period of planned development in the 1960s. This development demonstrated the importance of school guidance services, thus leading to a greater appreciation for

the need of such services (Devlet Planlama Teskilatı, 1963, 1968). Fortunately, before long, the councils and regulations of national education took notice of the programme, realising the value it had within the Turkish education system (Milli Egitim Bakanlıgı, 1962, 1968).

The Ministry of National Education declared that the school guidance programme, combined with the tasks of the school counsellor, would be structured under five services (i.e., orientation, counselling, student appraisal, placement and follow-up services) (Milli Egitim Bakanlıgı, 1970a, 1970b, 1970c, 1974, 1975). At the beginning of the 1970-1971 scholastic year, preliminary counselling and guidance activities began in 23 high schools. Then, in the 1980s, a third dimension of education called 'Pupil Personnel Services' was launched (Milli Egitim Bakanlıgı, 1981).

Much research on the efficacy of school guidance and counselling implementation was made during the 1980s. These studies showed that the guidance and counselling programme was not meeting the needs of schools and students, and that the principals and teachers were not implementing the programme because both they and their students found it to be inadequate (see Baymur, 1980; Kepçeoglu, 1981a, 1981b; Kuzgun, 1981; Bakırcıoglu, 1983; Gültekin, 1984; Kepçeoglu, 1984; Görkem, 1985; Canpolat, 1987; Büyükkaragöz, 1988; Piskin, 1989). These findings emphasised that since the implementation of the school guidance and counselling programme in the Turkish education system was inadequate, it had to be re-structured (Milli Egitim Bakanlıgı, 1990, 1993, 1996; Ozguven, 1990; Tan, 1990; Dogan, 1998; Ultanir, 1998). In the light of these findings, the Ministry of Education began searching for new ways to approach the problem.

Serap Nazlı, an academic advisor in the Ministry of Education, conducted the first comprehensive guidance and counselling programme pilot project at a curriculum laboratory school (grades K-8) in Balıkesir, Turkey, in 2000-2001. The success of Nazlı's pilot project led to three more curriculum laboratory schools being added to her study in the same scholastic year. During 2002-2003, the pilot project was also initiated in other Balıkesir curriculum laboratory schools. The adopted model was the National Program Model of the American School Counselor Association[1]. Adaptation work is still in progress.

The comprehensive guidance and counselling programme model

The traditional way to organise and manage guidance and counselling in schools is through position orientation (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005). Position orientation had its beginning when guidance and counselling was first introduced in schools as vocational guidance (Gysbers, Lapan & Jones, 2000). Essentially

designed for secondary schools, the service-delivery approach endeavours to patch together a variety of guidance services, such as, orientation and articulation, counselling, student appraisal, referral, placement and follow-up services (Sink & MacDonald, 1998).

Traditional organisational patterns for school guidance have emphasised the position and duties of the counsellor, and/or the therapeutic process of counselling (Ellis, 1990). As the internal and external demands of their position increased significantly over time, the school counsellors became primarily crisis-oriented, reactive, focused on remediation over prevention, and overburdened with non-guidance related clerical and administrative tasks. The organisational pattern of guidance in many schools still centres around positions with long list of duties; guidance remains an undefined programme (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005). Consequently, guidance has been widely regarded as an ancillary support service rather than as an integral part of education.

The call for restructuring counselling practices emerged from the counselling field as early as the late 1960s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005). A number of factors led to this change: (i) a renewed interest in vocational career guidance and developmental guidance; (ii) rapid social change and the growing need for counselling interventions in the elementary years; (iii) concern about the efficacy of the prevailing positional approach to guidance in schools; and (iv) the movement toward increased counsellor accountability and evaluation (Gysbers, 1990; Wittmer, 1993; Baker, 1996; Sink & MacDonald, 1998; Gysbers, Lapan & Jones, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2005).

The concept of guidance and counselling as a programme, which began in the 1960s, really took off in the 1970s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005). The profession of school guidance and counselling has moved away from the individual, position-oriented, one-to-one, small group counselling approach toward a more preventive, wellness-oriented, pro-active approach. The contemporary developmental school counsellor is curriculum- and programme-oriented, makes him or herself available to everyone, and is knowledgeable and competent to teach life skills to every student in the school regardless of race, religion, gender or creed (Wittmer, 1993).

The purpose of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme model is to help develop comprehensive and systematic guidance programmes intended for students of all ages, from kindergarten through grade 12. Additionally, it is also designed to provide guidance with specific educational content and to be accountable for attaining certain student competencies. When fully implemented, the programme allows counsellors to devote all their time to the programme, thus eliminating many of the non-guidance related tasks that they now carry out (Ellis, 1990).

The principal attributes of a comprehensive guidance and counselling programme are sharply different from those of a traditional service-delivery approach. Comprehensive programmes, for example, de-emphasise administrative and clerical tasks, and crisis-centred modes of intervention. Instead, they promote guidance activities and structured group experiences that are designed to support students in the process of skill-development (e.g., personal, social, educational and career skills) and to become responsible and productive citizens (Sink & MacDonald, 1998).

Borders & Drury (1992) have summarised the most significant features of effective comprehensive guidance and counselling programme models:

(i) They are independent education programmes that are comprehensive, purposeful, sequential and partly guided by outcomes.

(ii) The programmes are integral to the primary educational mission of a school. In an integrated programme, guidance is infused into all areas of the traditional curriculum.

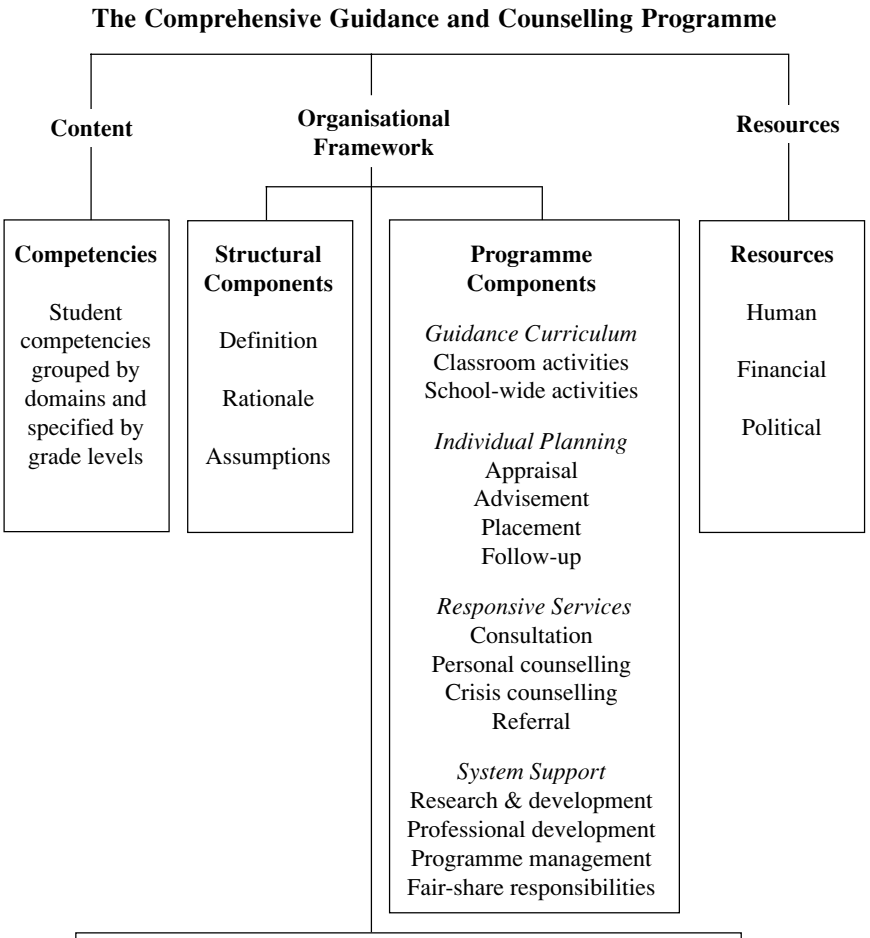
(iii) Effective programmes are clearly based on human development theories (e.g., the theories of Piaget, Erikson, Loevinger, Kohlberg and Selman). These theories guide the framework, content, goals and programme intervention.

(iv) Effective programmes serve all students equally. Each student has equal access to counsellors, guidance curriculum, counselling resources and all other direct and indirect services.

According to Gysbers & Henderson (2005), a comprehensive guidance and counselling programme contains content (i.e., guidance competencies to be learned by students), as well as an organisational framework (i.e., definition, rationale, assumptions, guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services and system support) and resources (i.e., staff, funding and community support) (see Figure 1).

The comprehensive guidance and counselling programme considers the nature of human development, including the general stages and tasks that most individuals experience as they mature from childhood to adulthood (Myrick, 1997). The programme's model is based on the concept of life career development. The programme emphasises three domains of human growth in career development: (i) self-knowledge and interpersonal skills; (ii) life roles, setting and events; and (iii) life career planning (Ellis, 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 2005; see also http://www.schoolcounselor.org).

FIGURE 1: The comprehensive guidance and counselling programme



Time Percentages

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Guidance Curriculum	35-45	25-35	15-25
Individual Planning	5-10	15-25	25-35
Responsive Services	30-40	30-40	25-35
System Support	10-15	10-15	10-15

Source: Gysbers & Henderson (2005)

The life career planning domain is designed to help students understand that decision-making and planning are important tasks in everyday life. Students learn of the many occupations and industries in the world of work. Students also develop skills in gathering information from relevant sources and using that information to make rational decisions (Ellis, 1990).

Research indicates that when a comprehensive guidance and counselling programme is fully implemented in schools, the academic skills of students increase; they acquire various skills, such as, understanding of self, communication, problem solving etc., leading to a more positive atmosphere within the school (Gysbers et al., 1992; Lapan & Gysbers, 1997; Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997; Nelson & Gardner, 1998; Lapan, Gysbers & Petroski, 2001; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Sink & Stroh, 2003).

The pilot project

This section outlines the details of the programme's pilot project that was implemented with K-8 graders at four curriculum laboratory schools from 2000 to 2002. It first provides information about the planning, design, implementation and evaluation stages, and then presents the design model of the finalised programme.

The planning and design stages

The initial phase of planning consisted in examining sources that shed light on the philosophy of education, and the aims of education and guidance. This was followed by a review of the principles, programme elements and programme interventions of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme.

A needs assessment was carried out in order then to be able to customise learning activities according to the priorities of the school and community. After completing this needs assessment, a number of exiting goals were identified for students participating in the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme. According to these goals, students will:

- understand and accept themselves;
- understand and get along with others;
- understand the importance of effective interpersonal relationships;
- understand and accept self-responsibilities;

- improve basic skills and study skills;
- plan and develop a career; and
- make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

The programme's mission statement and subdivisions were determined in line with the needs assessment. The mission statement of the programme is to assure that all students will acquire and demonstrate competencies in three areas, namely, academic, personal-social and career development. The comprehensive guidance and counselling programme is based on a developmental approach that is systematic and sequential in nature, clearly defined and accountable. The underlying notion is that guidance is an integral part of the overall curriculum, not an ancillary service. Again, rather than selecting some students for counselling, emphasis is placed on helping all students.

The programme's components were decided upon after determining the content and structural components of other comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes. The programme consequently ended up with the following four components:

1. *Guidance Curriculum* consists of activities that ensure that all students master the skills and knowledge of the educational objectives in the same way. Classroom presentations and large-group presentations are used to help students achieve the guidance competencies.

2. *Individual Planning* consists of activities that help students plan, monitor and manage their own academic, personal and career development goals with the aim of progressing toward them. Advisement, assessment and placement are typical activities included in this component.

3. *Responsive Services* consist of activities that can be done with some students to help them overcome social and emotional problems. These services include counselling, crisis counselling, consultation with staff and parents, small-group counselling and referrals.

4. *System Support* consists of management activities that establish, maintain and enhance the programme itself. It includes in fact management activities that are necessary to support the other three components of the programme as well as other school educational programmes. Apart from consulting with other school programmes, system support also provides community outreach and public relations.

In the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme, time was allocated as follows among its four components: (i) Guidance Curriculum – 40%; (ii) Individual Planning – 15%; (iii) Responsive Services – 25%; and (iv) System Support – 20%. The next step was finding the right balance among the programme activities (i.e., the qualitative design) and determining the number of students per school counsellor (i.e., the quantitative design). It was eventually decided to allocate 700 students per counsellor.

Determining the roles and responsibilities within the programme, along with human resources, was the next thing. Counsellors, teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members all have roles to play as human resources within the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme. In view of this, school counsellors, administrators and teachers received intensive training in how to implement and manage the programme.

Classroom guidance teachers (in Turkey, teachers responsible for each classroom are called classroom guidance teachers) were given a five-day training course. The areas included in their training were:

- What is a comprehensive developmental guidance programme?
- The differences between the practices of developmental guidance and traditional guidance.
- The roles and tasks of the classroom guidance teacher, and suitable activities for the guidance classroom.
- Preparation of the classroom guidance programme.

The comprehensive guidance and counselling programme was introduced to school principals and their assistants. These administrators were informed about how they, as leaders, would act throughout the implementation of the programme; they were also informed about the things people would expect from them in their co-ordination role. The school counsellors, on the other hand, were subjected to more intensive training. They were given a two-week training workshop on issues, such as, what a comprehensive developmental guidance programme entails, the differences between the practices of developmental guidance and traditional guidance, stages and elements of the developmental school guidance programme, the roles and responsibilities of school counsellors, preparing a job description and work schedules.

Once the planning and design stages were finalised, the ensuing programme was compiled as a document entitled *The Comprehensive Guidance Framework* and was then distributed to the people concerned at schools.

The implementation and evaluation stages

The implementation and evaluation processes of the resulting programme were carried out simultaneously. An implementation plan served to reduce, if not eliminate, any difficulties arising during the implementation process. While school counsellors effectively controlled the running of the programme, they co-ordinated it with school administrators. On the other hand, the evaluation stage was an integral part of the ongoing cycle of programme planning and development.

The school counsellors – with the support of teachers, administrators, students and parents – implemented the programme using a variety of interventions, such as, classroom guidance, counselling, consultation and co-ordination. Taking into account the different parts of the programme and the type of possible interventions, a thirty-hour weekly working schedule was developed for school counsellors (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: A sample weekly working schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
09.00-09.15	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
09.20-10.00	IP	IP	SS	SS	SS
10.10-10.50	RS	GC	GC	GC	RS
11.00-11.40	RS	RS	RS	GC	RS
11.50-12.30	GC	GC	GC	GC	SWA
12.30-13.10	GC	GC	GC	GC	SWA
13.20-14.00	IP	RS	RS	RS	SS
14.10-14.50	SS	SS	IP	IP	SS
14.50-15.00	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT

GC – Guidance Curriculum (12 hours); IP – Individual Planning (5 hours); RS – Responsive Services (9 hours); SS – System Support (7 hours); FT – Flexible Time; SWA – School-Wide Activities (2 hours)

The evaluation of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme is an ongoing process that provides counsellors with feedback that is then used to improve and enhance the programme. This evaluation has three dimensions, namely, evaluating the content of the programme, its personnel and its results.

The first step of the evaluation process has been to determine if the school has a written programme and to check if this written programme is being fully implemented. It was found that the schools had a written programme and that most of their practices were in line with the content of the programme. It was however observed that while one hour per week of the school programme should be dedicated to a 'guidance lesson', a counsellor-student ratio of 1:500 would be more appropriate than the established initial ratio of 1:700.

The second step in the evaluation process concerned the personnel. This meant evaluating the performance of the school counsellors who implement the programme and the classroom guidance teachers.

The performance-based evaluation used the criteria set in the job description of school counsellors (see Table 2). School counsellors' practices were observed, and their opinions were obtained through interviews. It was found that the school counsellors were initially finding it difficult to adapt to the implementation of the programme. Their main difficulties concerned the classroom guidance activities, which practically were new interventions for them. The evaluation revealed in fact that they needed in-service training on the matter.

It emerged from the evaluation process that school principals were not only working hard to implement the programme, but were also successful in their co-ordination roles. On the other hand, the teachers in general seemed to adapt well to the programme. But while the adaptation and contribution of teachers in grades K-5 were quite adequate, although the teachers in grades 6-8 were really making a good effort, they still appeared in need of in-service training.

In general, the contribution of the school personnel involved in the programme was at a desired level. Apart from displaying no resistance that might have disrupted the programme, they also contributed with their opinions toward the adaptation of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme to the context of the Turkish educational system.

The third and most comprehensive dimension of the evaluation process dealt with the results achieved by the programme. A results evaluation plan was prepared in order to provide a stable and reliable evaluation process (see Table 3). As is consonant with results-evaluations, the evaluation was based upon predetermined criteria and a reactive data collection style which included interviews, questionnaires and natural observations.

TABLE 2: Job description of school counsellors

2001-2002 Scholastic Year
Guidance: • teaching activities inside classroom; • assisting students' plans regarding the personal-social, educational and career aspects (both individually and in small groups). **Counselling:** • individual counselling; • small group counselling; • crisis counselling. **Co-ordination:** • co-operating with institutions, such as, the State Employment Agency, the Guidance Research Centre, middle education institutions, universities, etc.; • transferring students in need to appropriate centres; • co-ordinating together the practices of the school guidance team, the school parents' team and the voluntary friends' team; • co-ordinating the practices of the classroom teachers. **Evaluation:** • interpreting the techniques of the implemented and excluded tests; • evaluating the programme in the short run, middle run and long run. **Programme Management:** • fulfilling relevant tasks in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation stages of the programme; • directing the activities of volunteers who contribute in the programme. **Professionalism:** • defending the ethical, legal and vocational standards of the school guidance and the psychological counselling profession; • defending the philosophy and objectives of the Turkish national education.

It was noted that the evaluation of the students was quite positive; students had indeed acquired new knowledge and various skills. For example, the evaluation results have shown positive effects on students' understanding and acceptance of self, interpersonal effectiveness, basic learning and study skills, adaptation skills, planning and career development, decision-making and problem solving skills, and responsible behaviour.

Upon the completion of the pilot project, all the studies undertaken as part of the pilot implementation process (i.e., from the planning to the evaluation stages) were compiled in a book titled *Ilkögretimde Gelisimsel Rehberlik* (meaning 'Developmental Guidance in Elementary Education') that was authored by Serap Nazlı (2002) and published by the Ministry of National Education.

TABLE 3: The results evaluation plan

Programme Components	**Evaluation Design**	**Techniques of Data Collection**	**Data Collection Tools**
Guidance Curriculum Classroom activities School-wide activities	Evaluation based upon predetermined criterion	Observation, interview and questionnaire	Rate scales, open-ended questionnaire form and graded questionnaire form
Individual Planning	Evaluation based upon responsive observations	Questionnaire	Graded questionnaire form
Responsive Services Counselling Consultation Crisis counselling Referral	Evaluation based upon responsive observations		Graded questionnaire form

The design model of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme

For comprehensive guidance and counselling programme practices to be effective, a programme design model is absolutely essential. The comprehensive guidance design model developed in compatibility with the Turkish educational system during the two-year pilot project presented in this paper proved moderately successful. The programme design model needs to be developed according to the specific needs of each country's educational system.

The design model of the programme in question charts the process of carrying out guidance and counselling activities in the form of inter-related stages and steps. In particular, the programme design model developed by the author in accordance with the Turkish educational system comprises four stages and fifteen steps. These stages are planning, design, implementation and evaluation. When one of the stages is completed, the next one follows. The output of one stage is the input of the next one, and every stage has its own evaluation process. Furthermore, if deemed necessary, one can always turn back to the previous stage to make corrections. The resulting design is produced in Figure 2.

Planning Stage: The programme design is prepared in line within the country's educational system, the specific school context and students' needs.

Step 1: Examine the educational philosophy, guidance policy, and the objectives and principles of guidance set by the Ministry of Education.

Step 2: Determine the guidance needs and demands of the school area.

Step 3: Determine the needs and demands of the school and its students.

Step 4: Organise and prepare a plan for the transition into a comprehensive guidance and counselling programme at school.

Design Stage: An outline of the programme is prepared according to the data collected in the planning stage.

Step 5: Define the basic structure of the programme.

Step 6: List the activities of the programme components (i.e., guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services and system support) in terms of priority (qualitative design).

Step 7: Calculate the programme balance and the number of students per school counsellor (quantitative design).

Step 8: Check the programme, put the final draft in writing and then distribute to those concerned.

Implementation Stage: The programme, having already passed through the planning and design stages, is now implemented.

Step 9: Prepare an implementation plan for the efficient execution of this stage.
Step 10: Observe how the implementation is being carried out.
Step 11: Take corrective measures if there are any shortcomings in the implementation.

Evaluating Stage: This serves to assess the workings of the first three stages. To some extent, evaluation tests the accuracy of the decisions taken during the planning, design and implementation stages of the programme.

Step 12: Identify the techniques and tools of data collection.
Step 13: Prepare an evaluation plan to ensure an efficient evaluation process.
Step 14: Collect and analyse the data.
Step 15: According to the data collected, identify any shortcomings in the programme, make corrections and develop next year's programme.

Discussion and recommendations

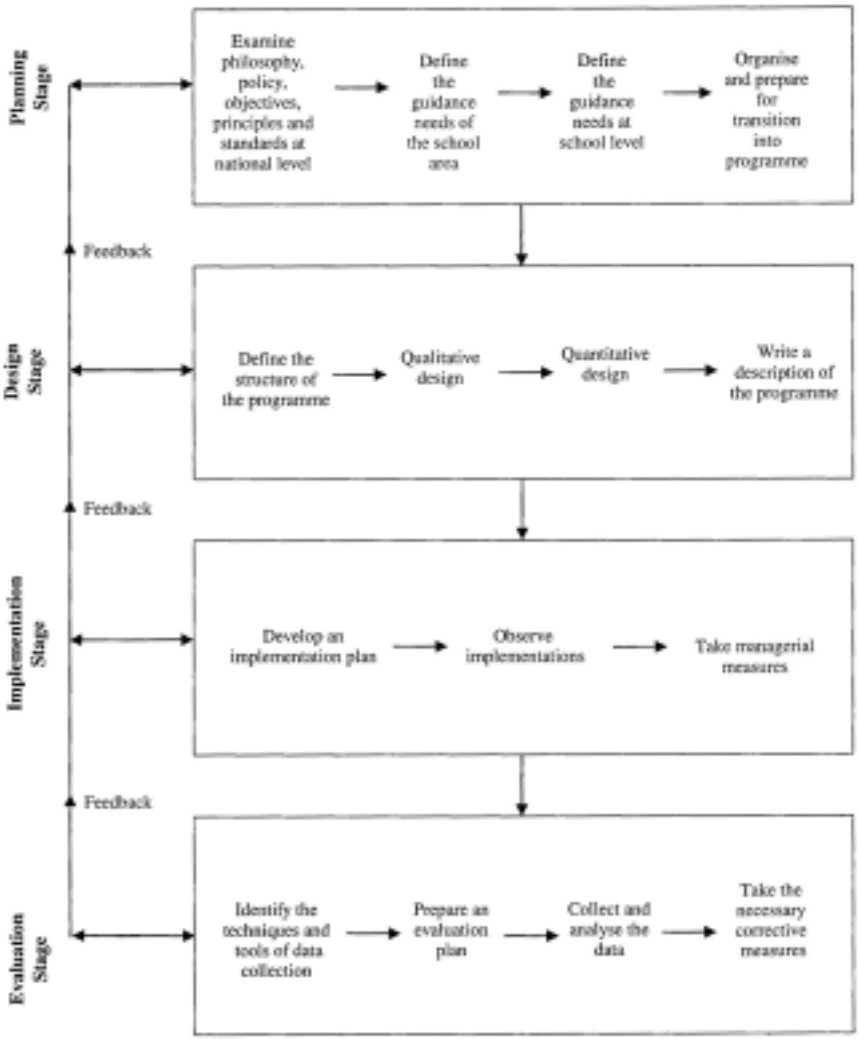
School guidance services were introduced in Turkey in the 1950s using the traditional guidance model. In the 1990s, school guidance and counselling services underwent a re-structuring period that eventually led to the initial implementation of the comprehensive guidance and counselling model discussed in this paper. The comprehensive guidance and counselling programme was in fact launched successfully in 2000 in a number of primary school pilot projects. The wider transfer from the traditional guidance model to the comprehensive one continues with impetus to this present day.

The list below outlines the strengths of the pilot implementation of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme, the factors that facilitate its practices and the relative weaknesses of this process:

1. In Turkey, school guidance services have been criticised and found to be inadequate. This probably explains why school personnel did not show any resistance toward the implementation of the pilot programme. In particular, school principals showed remarkable support that greatly facilitated the pilot projects.

2. In Turkey, each K-11 grade class has had its own classroom guidance teacher since the 1970s. There was therefore no need to assign new teachers for the pilot project.

FIGURE 2: The design model of the comprehensive guidance and councelling programme



3. The infrastructure – namely, the philosophy, policy, objectives and principles, and standards of the comprehensive developmental guidance programme – has been prepared by the Ministry of National Education. The fact that this infrastructure had not yet been developed during the pilot project caused some difficulty. Countries wishing to adopt a comprehensive guidance and counselling programme are therefore advised to furnish the system with their own policies, objectives, principles and standards of guidance before moving into the piloting phase.

4. One of the most significant interventions of the developmental guidance programme is the classroom guidance lesson. However, the lack of a specific guidance lesson in the school's academic programme created some difficulty during the pilot project. To make up for this, administrators either tried to replace elective classes with guidance lessons, or else re-scheduled an additional hour at the end of the school day to create space for the classroom guidance lesson. It is however important that each class is provided with an hour-long guidance lesson per week as part of the prescribed academic programme.

5. The school counsellor-student ratio affects the quality of the pilot projects. The ratio of 1:700 used during the pilot projects was found to be unsustainable. It is now being recommended that a counsellor-student ratio of 1:500 is more appropriate.

Given the successful implementation of the pilot project of the comprehensive guidance and counselling programme carried out between 2000 and 2002, it is now considered that it would not be hard to transfer to this model in Turkey. However, it is still essential to implement the programme for many years, and to keep evaluating its results. The contribution of this comprehensive programme to the educational system and its wider effects on society should be furthered examined through more pilot projects in additional schools.

The comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes began in the USA during the 1970s after the traditional guidance model was no longer deemed to meet the needs of the American society (Wittmer, 1993; Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997; Myrick, 1997; Sink & MacDonald, 1998; Gysbers & Henderson, 2005; Gysbers, Lapan & Jones, 2000). The current process in Turkey resembles that process in the USA. But while the inclination toward comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes in the USA took place in the 1970s, this began happening in Turkey 1990s. In recent years, just like in Turkey, there has been a growing recognition in many countries all over the world for the need to start offering a

comprehensive guidance and counselling programme (see Euvrard, 1996; Karayanni, 1996; Nummenmaa & Sinisalo, 1997; Maluwa-Banda, 1998).

There is increasing understanding that position-oriented guidance programmes could not meet the needs of individuals and society. On the other hand, these needs are better addressed through developmental guidance practices that can start as part of the primary school curriculum. The notion of comprehensive guidance and counselling is unique in that it is the only programme within the K-12 school system that is able to cater for the total development of each student (covering the academic, personal-social and career). This programme in fact provides each student with the support and experiences necessary to become a productive and responsible citizen. With the advent of the new millennium, this programme approach is gradually replacing the traditional position-oriented guidance programmes. It is indeed becoming the major way of organising and managing guidance and counselling in Turkish schools.

Note

1. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counsellors' efforts to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. Details of its National Program Model can be viewed at http://www.schoolcounselor.org

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AN OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS AND LABOUR MARKETS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION[1]

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Abstract – *Investment in 'human capital' can contribute to the economy through: (i) the quality of educational systems and the resulting human capital; and (ii) the allocation of human resources into the labour market. Following the same logic, this paper reviews educational systems and labour markets of the Mediterranean region. The first part gives an overview of the level of human capital stock and identifies some common challenges related to the quality of educational systems and reform initiatives. The second part focuses on the structure of labour markets (labour force participation, productivity, unemployment rates, etc.) and highlights the impact of the public sector and informal employment. In addition to the challenges facing the quality of education, labour markets in the region may not be functioning well in the allocation of human resources to their best uses, which is crucial to the success of any policy aimed at fostering economic growth through increased investment in education.*

Introduction

Most countries in the Mediterranean region can be defined as economies in transition. While some of them are developing market economies and have a certain degree of world economic integration, others are still at a very early stage of liberalising their economy. However, the pace of political and economic reform has often been slower than in other regions. This is most likely because the need for change was not marked by a sudden event such as, for instant, an unforeseen change of political regime, but rather from the 'pressure' of world developments. Most of the countries in the region are still actively engaged in economic adjustment with the aim to create an efficient public sector and a dynamic private sector. Increasing the size and role of the private sector without creating a negative impact on society is a challenge being faced by most of these countries. Enhancing competitiveness of the productive sector and increasing the employability of the active population are basic conditions for any successful implementation.

'Human capital' is considered a major component in the generation of economic growth. Two major factors influence the impact of human capital on

growth: (i) the quality of the education and training systems and the resulting quality of human capital; and (ii) the allocation of human resources into the labour market.

Education and training are a means of generating employment opportunities, enhancing productivity and increasing the incomes of various groups of people. Education is therefore an important component of the economic and social development process. In the light of radically transformed work environment and recent economic, employment and labour market trends in the context of globalisation, the success of educational systems depends on their focus on the skills that are relevant to economies and societies. Adequate development of human resources is also a fundamental requirement in the battle to resolve the inequities of globalisation. However, it is insufficient in itself to ensure sustainable economic and social development, or to resolve all the issues pertaining to the employment challenge. Efforts to this end must be consistent with, and an integral part of, comprehensive economic and social policies. Investments in quality education must be made within the context of a stable political and macro-economic environment, equitable social services and flexible labour markets.

Therefore, good education does not guarantee economic development. An educated workforce in a dysfunctional economic environment will produce high unemployment, not high growth and wages. The structure of the labour market is critical both for the quantity and quality of human capital. As shown by Pissarides (2000), a major function of the labour market is to allocate human resources to their best uses and to determine quality, quantity and productivity of human capital through reward mechanisms. The structure of the market will determine, for example, how much human capital is put into growth-enhancing activities and how much into other activities. Depending upon how well the labour market functions, the level of efficiency in the use and allocation of human resources varies and this has significant effects on employment, unemployment and economic growth.

Following the same logic, this paper adopts an integrated approach and reviews the educational systems and the labour markets in the region. The first part focuses on the educational systems and their outputs, discussing issues such as the level of human capital stock and challenges related to the quality of education. The second part looks at the functioning of labour markets where the outputs of the educational systems finally end and highlights the challenges concerning an efficient allocation of human resources. Under each part, the main issues of the systems are presented in sub-sections.

It should be emphasised that the countries in the Mediterranean region are far from being homogeneous and present a high variety of socio-economic situations. It is therefore difficult to make generalisations. There are however a number of

features that appear common, although with different degrees of intensity, and that have a considerable impact in the shaping of their educational systems and labour markets. This paper tries to identify the commonalities of the education and employment systems in the region and focuses on their most relevant features from a cross-regional perspective.

Educational systems and human capital formation in the region

A discussion of educational systems must include the coverage (access), quality, and cost of education and what incentives there are for individuals to engage in education and training. Before this assessment, it is however important to highlight and discuss a common feature of Mediterranean societies and its consequences on educational systems and labour markets. This is the high population growth and young age structure.

Demographic pressure

Whether youth is a 'gift' or a 'burden' for the region is a matter of long discussions, but demographic pressure is a key feature of educational systems and labour markets in most of the Mediterranean countries. Although there are signs of demographic change, population growth still remains high. In 2001 the number of children per woman in most of the Mediterranean countries was between 1.8 and 3.6 (with the exception of Palestinians at 5.9) and these figures are much lower than in the 1980 (from 5 to 7 children per woman), which indicates that a demographic change is taking place (Eurostat, 2002). Average annual population growth rate is between 1.1% (Tunisia) and 3.6% (WBGS) in the period of 2000-2005 (UNESCO, 2005). As a result, the region includes the largest number of young people in the world: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2002) gives more than half of the population under the age of 25, with almost 38% under the age of 14.

The numbers above carry strong implications for the provision of educational services and the employment situation in the region. The current decade has witnessed the arrival at education and working ages of the largest ever generations in the history of the region. Ever increasing numbers of students and education costs, as well as higher expectations for quality education, create enormous pressure on the national systems. According to the enrolment rates of students at different levels of education, the demographic pressure is shifting from primary education toward secondary and higher education, and the era of demographically driven investment in basic education is almost over in many of the countries.

However, school-age cohorts (roughly ages 5-14) will only begin to shrink after 2015 in best-situated countries (Tunisia and Lebanon), while this will take another three decades in Jordan and WBGS. The need for post-basic education opportunities will continue to grow in all countries, as few have reached the participation levels in secondary, vocational or tertiary education to which they aspire. According to demographic projections in 2000-2040, the school-age cohorts aged 15-19 and 20-24 will continue to increase in the highest numbers during that period.

The first individuals of the high birth rate generation have already begun to move into their early career. As a result, labour force growth remains high at more than 3% annually due mainly to the large numbers of young people entering the labour market and to the increase in female activity rates. According to estimates, the work force will continue to grow by more than 3% for at least another generation in the region. Therefore, youth unemployment is, and will be, a matter of high concern. Competition for education, employment and income is fierce. This is likely to create a permanent pressure for regional and international migration unless the economies of the region will not perform better than today. It may also create a higher demand for international education among those who have high aspirations and financial resources for good quality education.

This period in the histories of countries is also called 'demographic window opportunity', since the growth of the economically active population (aged 15-64) will exceed that of the economically dependent population by a much greater amount than in any other region by the end of next decade. New generations will bear low demographic burden due to a dramatic drop in current fertility and low burden of older persons due to high birth rates in the previous generation. The potential is big if this unique opportunity could be used efficiently in the economic take-off of the countries. The results will depend on the performances of educational systems and labour markets, supported by a continuous economic growth.

Level of human capital stock and improvements in educational attainment

According to UNDP (2002), there is a solid economic base for improving human development in the Arab world. Per capita income is still higher than that of most other developing regions. However, while Arabs outperform sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in terms of human development, they rank below Latin America, the Caribbean, East Asia, Eastern Europe and the Balkans on the Human Development Index. In spite of this average, there is a huge difference between Arab states when it comes to human development (Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar are at the top and others like Yemen, Mauritania, and Sudan

are at the bottom). The MEDA[2] countries included in this paper are mostly spread in the middle of the regional average. Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon are often mentioned among the better performers, while Morocco, Egypt, are Syria are behind them on most indicators.

Except for Lebanon where nearly 60% of the total enrolments in grades 1-12 are in non-governmental schools (European Training Foundation [ETF], 2006), state provided free education has been a central tenant of the social contract in MEDA countries since independence. Post-independence governments significantly expanded their education systems, driven by rapidly expanding youth populations and the need to build nationhood. Primary education is compulsory in all the countries. For some countries, like Tunisia and Algeria, 'basic education' covers both primary and lower secondary levels (i.e., 9 or 10 years). As a political priority, the region has been doing a significant investment in education during the last four decades, with an average of 5-6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the latest data, expenditure on education is 5.2% of GDP in Egypt, 6.4% in Jordan, 6.6% in Morocco, 6% in Tunisia, and 8.9% in Lebanon (ETF, 2006).

As a consequence, the formal education indicators of these countries have been improving very rapidly. Indeed, with few exceptions, they provide basic education to most children and opportunities for upper secondary, vocational training and tertiary education to many. By 1995 more than 90% of males and 75% of females were enrolled in primary schooling, and nearly 60% of males and 50% of females were enrolled in secondary education. Opportunities for access to secondary and higher education are rationed through national or regional examinations at the end of the primary and secondary cycles. After another decade, most countries have achieved almost universal primary enrolment and significant increases in their secondary enrolment rate. In Egypt, the net enrolment rate in 1999 was 96.94% in primary education, 74.3% in preparatory education and 65% in secondary education. In Algeria, the enrolment rates for primary school are about 94% for males and 92% for females. Tunisia has one of the best enrolment rates in the region – in 2001, 99.2% attended primary education. Morocco, in spite of raising the primary enrolment rate from 84.6% in 2000 to 91.6% in 2004, still has the worst rate in the region (ETF, 2006).

Another consequence of government investment in education has been a significant increase in the literacy rates and the average educational attainment of the labour force. Literacy improved dramatically in almost all countries from 1960 to 1995, more than doubling in every country that started with a low base. Improvement in literacy was larger than in any other region. Among the population aged 15 years and above, the literacy rate in 2000 was 66% in Egypt, 90% in Jordan, 87% in Lebanon and 75% in Syria. This was achieved by

improving access to education and recording increases in the average number of school years per person. The overall weighted average of school years for the Arab region amounted to 1.1 years in 1960, which increased progressively to reach 4.83 years by 2000. In 2000, the average school years for the population aged 15 years and above were 6.91 years in Jordan, 5.77 years in Syria and 5.51 years in Egypt (United Nations, 2003).

However, in spite of the impressive educational expansion in the region, equal access to different levels of education by males and females, by rich and poor, and by urban and rural residents is still an important issue, albeit to varying degrees, among the countries. As literacy increases more rapidly in urban areas (Lebanon, Jordan, and Tunisia), countries with very significant rural populations (Morocco, Egypt, and Yemen) have lower adult literacy rates – around and above 50%. Moreover, a gender gap is apparent from an early age. Literacy in the region is at least 20% lower among women. Females in predominantly rural countries, such as Morocco, are at a distinct disadvantage. Only one in ten rural women can read and write in Morocco. Thus, girls are less likely to be literate, to receive a secondary education, and to reach university or higher vocational training in the region. By 2000, 9 girls were enrolled for every 10 boys in primary schools across the region. At the secondary level, the enrolment gap was even smaller: 74% of girls and 77% of boys were enrolled.

According to World Bank (2002), the number of children not attending school, in particular females and the rural poor, may increase in the next decade. A large proportion of dropouts include children from rural and poor families who are likely to join informal labour markets during times of economic hardship. Poverty dramatically affects access. In Egypt, for example, the enrolment rate for children in the top quintile of households in terms of wealth remains above 80%, while enrolment in the poorest one-fifth of households is around 50%. In 1994, Moroccan net primary enrolments were 58% in rural areas and 85% in urban areas, and Tunisian secondary enrolments in rural areas were as low as 19% while in Tunis they were 78%.

To sum up, even after decades of massive investment, the coverage of the educational systems and the average attainment levels of education in the region seem to be lagging behind in comparison with the good examples of the developing world (e.g., Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Latin America). This has potential important consequences for growth prospects. Due to the very low starting levels of education during the 1950s and 1960s, the region still needs to allocate significant financial and human resources in this sector despite the improvements. A continuing strong public sector commitment is required for the completion of universal access to compulsory education, reductions in dropout rates, higher completion rates, and internationally competitive learning achievements.

Public expenditure on education has however been declining since 1985 (maybe not always in nominal terms, but in expenditure per student). According to some observers, the quality of education is neglected at the expense of expanding education for all, and the most serious problem facing Arab education is its deteriorating quality at all stages of education (UNDP, 2003). Focus on access often overshadows the issue of quality. But quantitative developments need to be accompanied and supported by quality improvements in terms of performance. It is highly likely that concerns for good quality education have only recently started to be voiced loudly because quantitative targets are closer than ever to be reached in the region.

Challenges to the quality of educational systems

The crucial question for developing countries (including the MEDA ones) is how education can meet the challenges of the 21st century, which are different from traditional literacy and schooling rates. Educational systems must generate awareness in students concerning the nature of the modern economy including its values, attitudes and practices; ensure that this informative process is inclusive and does not further exploit marginalised classes; ensure that sound work ethics are instilled into the new generation; and help improve the quality of life of all people (United Nations, 2003). Students – one of the key pools of human resources for developing countries – must acquire certain skills that are required for the new economy (i.e., 'core' skills, digital literacy, languages, technical/ vocational skills, and knowledge production). Among the non-technical core skills necessary for performing a job and operating in society, learning-to-learn skills, literacy and numeric skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, creativity, personal effectiveness (self-esteem, goal setting and motivation), group effectiveness (interpersonal, teamwork, negotiation), organisational and leadership, and labour market navigation skills are often mentioned.

Evaluating the quality of education in the Arab world is difficult owing to insufficient information and data. In one of the few examples of standardised comparative measurements, ten countries of the region (Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, WBGS, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Tunisia) took part in the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) together with 35 other countries from around the world[3]. The results showed that the proportion of students failing to achieve even the low benchmark in mathematics and science is 81% in Saudi Arabia, 71% in Syria, 58% in Morocco, 49% in Bahrain, 48% in Egypt, 46% in WBGS, 45% in Tunisia and Iran, 40% in Jordan, and 32% in Lebanon. Countries like Singapore, Japan and South Korea have less than 2% of their students falling below the low benchmark. Similar

national assessments also confirm that basic literacy and mathematics skills have deteriorated since the late 1980s in Egypt, and a declining performance in French and science has been reported in Morocco (European Training Foundation & World Bank, 2005).

There are also signs of high failure and repetition rates, leading to longer periods being spent at the different stages of education. In Algeria, the repetition rates reached 10% in the 1st year of the primary school, 15% in the 6th year, and more than 30% in the 9th year. And the total number of school dropouts in the 9th year was around 360,000 in 1997. Only half of the children pass the examination to enter the secondary school, and the repetition rates in the secondary school reaches 40% in the 3rd year. The situation in Tunisia is comparable. The repetition rate is about 16% in the basic education and 16% in the secondary school, and the drop out rate is about 10% in the lower secondary (which is part of the basic school) and 9% in the secondary school (ETF, 2006).

The lack of link between the educational systems and labour markets is another well-pronounced problem in the region. The two reported reasons behind this are: (i) overly general academic-oriented curriculum, particularly in secondary and higher education; and (ii) the notion that Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a second grade option. The vocational stream of education does not seem to attract enough interest from the students. A strong bias exists toward choosing the general education stream in order to continue university education.

As a result, while the number of graduates with diploma from the different stages of education is increasing, they lack in most cases the core competences and relevant skills needed in the labour market. Thus, while vocational systems in the region are expanding, the problems remain. These include the fact that there has been no analysis of skill needs and the limited interaction with the private sector in the majority of countries (leading to a fragmented system burdened with a surplus of duplicated training programmes and marred by lack of coordination). Over-centralised management of educational institutions and lack of diversification of financial resources (especially in Technical and Vocational Education and Training [TVET]) lead to a further inflexibility in the whole system[4]. Such programmes tend to attract those students who have dropped out of academic oriented schools. Graduates of these programmes are consequently often ill equipped for the job market and remained unemployed for long periods. Furthermore, the prevailing environment does not reward the acquisition of knowledge, technical skills, or creativity. In most cases, the diploma is considered more important than the learning outcome itself.

With few exceptions, curricula and teaching methods in the region give high importance to memorising and rote learning, and the teaching content remains information-based, not knowledge application oriented. Mostly due to the lack of

active learning techniques, students do not develop a sense of initiative and a problem-solving attitude. The resulting memorisation without thought of the meaning is in strong contrast with the new trends and techniques in the global world that seek to cultivate in students creativity, critical thinking and the ability for self-initiated reasoning. Most indicators suggest that education systems in the region do not seem to reward these 21st century skills (United Nations, 2003)[5]. Obviously, this system of learning has a negative impact on the competitiveness of graduates in the national, regional and international labour markets.

Recent pressures to expand higher education have also led to a significant decrease in quality and, in many cases, diverted universities from pursuing research (which is their major role in the transmission and generation of knowledge). High enrolment rates at primary and secondary levels, combined with a high population growth, have led to a strong demand for higher education. For example, in Jordan the number of students enrolled in universities increased from 31,049 in 1990/91 to 120,000 in 2001/02 (Kirchberger, 2001). But while increases in enrolments can be viewed as a positive phenomenon, it can be argued that quality of education has, in some cases, been compromised. The wider coverage has been at the cost of quality, particularly in some private universities.

Students face several problems within educational systems – such as, overcrowded classes, inadequate libraries, poorly equipped laboratories, low quality and not-enthusiastic teachers, and non-existent student services. The wages of teaching staff, which are low, increase by seniority (i.e., by years of service) rather than by teaching abilities, or publications and research. There is lack of coordination between universities, colleges and other technical training establishments. UNDP (2002) report also draws attention to an emerging duality in Arab education systems: an exclusive private educational system enjoyed by the minority, and a lower quality government educational system for the majority. Furthermore, higher education is viewed only as a means of achieving social status, but not as a means of increasing the productivity of individuals. The benefits of education (especially higher education) are eroded by political factors. Favouritism and nepotism in the selection of individuals for education and employment (both within the public and private sectors) significantly undermine the value of education and reduce the productivity of the systems.

With regards to scientific research and the generation of knowledge in the region, United Nations (2003) data pertaining to the mid-1990s reveal that gross expenditure on Research and Development (R&D) in the Arab world is marginal, amounting to approximately 0.4% of GDP, the lowest figure in the world in terms of spending on R&D. The number of patents held by Arab nationals is negligible, and the scientific output of the Arab world (as measured by publications per million inhabitants) is low, amounting to 0.7% of world publications. Another

problem is the growing mismatch between the excessive supply of tertiary graduates in the conventional fields of liberal arts and the requirements of a fluid global economy: 72.7% of the 1998/99 university graduates in the region majored in the fields of education, arts and business, compared to 6% in science subjects, 7.4% in medicine and 9.8% in engineering (United Nations, 2003). This mismatch has been exacerbated by increasingly rapid innovations in the field of technology. In 2001, only 1% of the world Internet users were from the region and the corresponding penetration rate at that time of the personal computer was around 2% (Aubert & Reiffers, 2004). High cost is the main obstacle to Internet access and telephone connections.

Countries that continue to neglect the relevance of quality education are at risk of becoming increasingly marginalised in the global economy. Furthermore, they are likely to suffer from delayed social progress, and find it increasingly difficult to keep up with other developing and developed countries. The possible outcome of this scenario is that countries face rising unemployment and underemployment levels, increased poverty and social tension, and fail to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). It should be emphasised that the overall assessment given here does not mean that no good quality schools or 'centres of excellence' exist in the region. Although their impact is rather very limited, there are good quality education and training institutions as well. The main issue here is how to mainstream these 'isolated good examples' into the system.

Reform initiatives of the educational sector

As a response to the challenges explained above, most of the governments in the region have acknowledged the need of reforms and have engaged themselves in the revision of different educational stages. They agree on areas such as: (i) upgrading the performance, relevance and quality of the systems; (ii) the need to better take into account the labour market demands through more 'employment-driven' education and training strategies and policies; (iii) better involvement of stakeholders and social dialogue; (iv) enhancement of governance; (v) institutional capacity building for definition of policies and decision-making; and (vi) increase and diversification of sources of funding. Some countries are just starting the reform process, while others are continuing or speeding-up the ongoing reforms mainly with donors' support.

Among these reforms, decentralisation of education systems has received particular attention in most countries. Tunisia has developed an ambitious programme – known as MANFORME – for decentralising the provision of public training services in pilot centres[6]. In Egypt, the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative is one example of decentralised provision of training, and the recent EU-financed TVET

Reform Project seeks to develop public-private partnerships at the local level. The involvement of social partners into the educational systems is another dimension of the reform. But experience shows that the quality of the participation of the private sector is uneven, with some private sector representatives unprepared to assume their responsibilities.

Curriculum development is another priority in the region and there is a trend to move to competency-based approaches even if the teaching methods are not always compatible with the reforms (e.g., lack of cognitive skills and flexibility). Qualification frameworks – meant to provide certification of workers' competencies, to increase workers' job mobility, and to provide assessments and accreditations – are being developed in a few countries. In Egypt, the qualifications framework seeks to establish not only skill standards, but also the procedures for testing and certifying trainees in certain pilot sectors. National standards in Jordan are maintained through the use of common national curricula among training institutions and the application of common exit examinations.

It should be emphasised that these reforms have been mostly promoted and partly pushed by donors such as the EU, World Bank or other development aid agencies[7]. During the last decade, the region has attracted a considerable amount of donor support for education and training reforms. The nature of this support is not only large in terms of amounts, but also ambitious in terms of its objectives that are geared toward systemic reform (in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Syria). However, the results so far are mixed. A number of reasons have been attributed to this. One observation is that donor-funded programmes are not always successful in creating full ownership by countries that will lead to the continuation and dissemination of the projects results to the whole system. Moreover, financial resources for the reform of the whole system are not sufficient in these countries, and donor-funded projects do not have financial sustainability when the donors leave. Public organisations (such as ministries and schools) in charge of reform initiatives have weak institutional capacity to implement these reforms. Many 'individualised' initiatives are implemented without dialogue, coordination and synergy[8].

Socio-cultural and institutional reasons may be other obstacles to the modernisation of the systems. In contrast to a rapid adjustment to technical and technological developments without questioning, changes in attitudes and mind-sets are extremely slow. Managing and monitoring a change process in the social and socio-cultural area is complex. Only where there is internal consistency between political support, financial and human resources and social values can the change process develop successfully. Any change process or reform in the educational area induces resistance and opposition in those who may feel threatened by the intended changes. By definition, a reform touches upon

territories and power structures, and it leads to 'gains' and 'losses' in one way or another. The question is how far a reform can go without provoking a backlash that may endanger its entire existence. The picture presented here does not mean that nothing has changed in the region or that the introduced educational reforms have failed. This is far from being the case. However, the efforts made and the resources devoted to education and training cannot hide the fact that the intended educational reforms remain significantly uneasy to implement.

Finally, it is too early to assess the full impact of the changes introduced in the educational systems, as such reforms are long-term investment. Most of the reforms are still continuing and one must wait before reaching early conclusions. However, overlapping initiatives and piecemeal changes are not the best way to reform the system. If it is to be a successful reform, a comprehensive approach needs to be developed that advances quality in relation to the development of skills, expands employment choices and achieves economic growth.

Allocation of human resources in the labour market

An important source of economic growth is that unproductive jobs are continuously replaced by more productive ones. This is the core of the labour market reforms in countries where the public sector has had a dominating role and where the formal labour market has been static, often aiming at creating life-long jobs for workers. These labour market reforms are closely connected to reforms in the functioning of product markets. Reforms aimed at strengthening competition through the removal of barriers to entrepreneurship and explicit barriers to trade and foreign investment can have strong employment effects.

In most developing regions, private returns from education tend to be higher for primary education than for secondary and university education. By contrast, returns from education appear to increase with the level of schooling in MEDA countries (Krueger & Lindahl, 2001). One explanation is that public employment plays a more important role in MEDA countries than in any other developing region. Thus, higher returns from education for high school and university graduates may reflect government pay scales rather than improved productivity (World Bank, 2004). A recent ETF (2006) study confirms the low return from primary and secondary education, but reports higher returns to women and to those working in the public sector. For example, while in Jordan the wage by educational attainment indicates significant returns with increasing levels, especially for men, wages in Lebanon indicate some returns for higher education. Significant returns are observed for all levels of education in Tunisia, but are higher in the public sector, especially for women.

In contrast to the high private returns explained above, recent evidence collected in the region suggests that social returns from education are low and that the relationship between investment in education and economic growth in general is weak (Pritchett, 1999; Makdisi, Fattah & Limam, 2003). Fast expanding school and university enrolments have resulted in an expansion of the stock of human capital and higher educational attainment levels. But growth performance has been disappointing and labour productivity growth has been small and in many cases negative. In other words, the economy-wide payoff of investment in education has been limited, largely because the economies of MEDA countries were not able to make effective use of rising cohorts of educated labour. Economists argue that human capital can only have a limited impact on economic growth if it is employed in socially unproductive activities (including the administrative public sector), even though it may be remunerated at the micro-level[9].

Within the context of sluggish labour markets, education has expanded horizontally in terms of enrolment without substantive improvements in the quality and enhancement of skills. At the same time, demand for labour has decreased as government recruitment policies reached their peak and employment schemes were discontinued. The only exception to this is recruitment of education and health professionals for increasing public services in these fields. The ability of the non-public formal sector to absorb the increasing supply of labour has been limited. Employment in the productive sector is the only vehicle through which education is translated into growth and equitable distribution of this growth. When the link between education and employment is broken, significant resources are wasted and the returns from education diminish. Due to insufficient skilled job creation in the private sector, the contribution of education to GDP growth has been severely limited in the recent past. The inefficient use of educated labour is, therefore, an equally important issue for the region. This suggests that the functioning of the labour market and the employment creation mechanisms are crucial to the success of any policy aimed at fostering economic growth through increasing investment in education. Within this conceptual framework, the second part of this paper discusses key structural issues of the labour markets in the region.

Labour force participation and productivity

Due to the demographic pressure discussed before, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2004) estimated that the labour force in the Arab region would increase by more than 3% per year between 2000 and 2015. According to World Bank figures, the labour force of the region totalled about 104 million workers in 2000, and this figure is expected to reach 146 million by 2010 and 185

million by 2020. Given this expansion, the economies of the region will need to create some 80 million new jobs in the next two decades (World Bank, 2004).

An examination of labour force participation trends shows low activity and employment rates in the region. Average employment and activity rates are generally changing from 45% to 50%. According to ETF (2006), Morocco had 52.2% activity rate and 48.2% employment rate in 2003. In Lebanon these were 50% and 44% respectively, and in Tunisia these were 49.5% and 42.1% respectively. At the lower end of the comparison, Egypt had 45.6% activity rate and 40.6% employment rate, and Jordan had 39.4% and 34.4% respectively. The main explanation of these low rates is the extremely low female labour force participation in the region. When compared with the EU averages of 66% general employment rate and 56% female employment rate, the regional average is quite low. Looking at the qualification levels of the working population, Tunisia's pyramid of worker qualifications is 60% low-skilled, 30% medium-skilled and 10% high-skilled. This places Tunisia as one of the best performers in the region. The average distribution in Europe is 20%, 60% and 20% respectively.

The limited access of women to wage employment is an important feature in the region. In fact, the contribution of women to economic or productive life still tends to be marginal, remaining a largely untapped resource. In some countries, although as much as 63% of university students are females, women only account on average for 25% of the labour force. The activity rate of women is 11% in Jordan, 20.6% in Egypt, 25% in Lebanon, 25.7% in Tunisia, and 27.2% in Morocco. The impressive progress achieved in the region with regards to the improvement of female education has not been translated into women's economic participation. This low female participation is hindering the capture of a large part of the return on this investment.

The lack of employment opportunities for women can be related to the general scarcity of employment opportunities in the region. Demand factors (high unemployment) and gender discrimination in labour markets have an impact on the outcome. But socio-cultural problems may yet be another reason. Gender roles and dynamics within households are shaped by a traditional gender paradigm which is based on the centrality of the family rather than the individual, the recognition of the patriarchal family structure and the man as sole breadwinner, and an unequal balance of power in the private sphere. In fact, large numbers of well-educated women remain at home when they get married. Moreover, females attending higher education tend to opt for the humanities and the arts (in accordance with their traditional role in society) rather than subjects that would maximise their opportunities in labour markets. The training for females in non-marketable areas (e.g., embroidery or other crafts, which are typically considered as female domains) also reduces significantly the impact of vocational programmes.

While the average years of schooling per person have increased dramatically in all countries, the growth of output per capita, as measured by real wages, has often been slow and in many cases negative. In the early 1990s, the industrial labour productivity was estimated to be at approximately the same level as in 1970. The total factor productivity dropped steadily by 0.2% during the 1960-1990 period. As of 2002, it was virtually stagnant. In 1998/99, the Gross National Product (GNP) per worker in all Arab countries was less than half of that of South Korea or Argentina (United Nations, 2003).

Furthermore, increases in productivity in other parts of the world have been mirrored by a significant relative decline in the competitiveness of the region. It is worth noting that this decline occurred after massive investments in gross fixed capital formation and the massive expansion of educational systems in the region. This situation has led to declining labour total factor productivity and resulted in unemployment and underemployment of youth, in particular school and university graduates. Interestingly enough, while the increases in the average years of schooling per person during the past 40 years have been higher than in any other region in the world (with the exception of East Asia), productivity has been among the lowest in the world. This fact proves that structural imbalances are an obstacle to the formation of human capital.

High unemployment

Finding consistent and comparable data on unemployment trends in the region is difficult. Statistical data originate from different sources and often vary from one to another. The obvious facts are that while economic growth has not been sufficiently high to create new employment opportunities and accommodate the rising number of new entrants to the labour market, unemployment rates remain high in most of the countries. According to ILO (2004) estimates, the average unemployment rate in the region has remained around 15% in these years. An exception to this trend is Morocco and Tunisia that have recently recorded some growth in employment rates. ETF (2006) data on the 2003 unemployment rate was 14.9% in Tunisia (14.4% men, 16.2% women), 11.5% in Lebanon (9.3% men, 18.2% women), 12.6% in Morocco (12.3% men, 13.5% women), 12.6% in Jordan (12% men, 16.5% women) and 11% in Egypt (7.5% men, 23.3% women).

Unemployment is especially high among the new entrants to the labour force with intermediate and higher education. The women unemployment rate is also higher than that of men. For example, it is double that of men in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, and one-third higher in Jordan. This structure of unemployment suggests that a significant part of unemployment results from high job expectations by workers with some formal education and a low valuation of these

credentials by the private sector (because education systems have concentrated on making public sector jobs accessible rather than on building skills). Higher unemployment rates for graduates from secondary and higher education are particularly significant in Egypt and Morocco, but are less significant in Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia. Although government hiring has been curtailed in recent years, the structure of the labour market remains segmented. Despite falling civil service wages, educated new entrants continue to queue for government jobs because of non-wage benefits such as job security and social protection.

Youth unemployment therefore remains a matter of major concern. With an average rate of 25.6%, youth unemployment in the region was the highest in the world in 2003 (ILO, 2004). Unemployment among the 15-24 age group was as high as 39% in Algeria and 37% in Morocco. Female unemployment rates (31.7%) are considerably higher than the male rates (22.7%). However, estimates for the 2001-2005 period illustrated that while 66% of available employment is for unskilled labour, only 17% of job opportunities require higher education. The profile of an unemployed person in Egypt is typical of non-oil producing countries in the region: 84% are first time job seekers, 54% are graduates of intermediate education, 52% are from rural areas and women are three times more likely than men to be unemployed (United Nations, 2003).

Weight of public sector in employment

The public sector has traditionally been an important source of employment in most Mediterranean countries. It concerns not only administration, but also state-owned enterprises. The involvement of the state in economic production varies from one country to another, but the share remains generally high despite privatisation and public sector reforms. The share of public sector employment, including state-owned enterprises, ranges from 10% in Morocco, 20% in Tunisia, almost 40% in Egypt and in Jordan, and close to 60% in Algeria (World Bank, 2004). In addition, while the share of 'civilian government employment' worldwide is on average 11% of total employment, in the Mediterranean region it can go up to 17.5%. This was also a consequence of the increase in the provision of social services (education and health) that had positive impacts on living standards in the region. Poverty rates are indeed low in the region.

Employment in the public sector (both in state-owned enterprises and in public administration) has followed, like in many other parts of the world, rigid labour market legislation. It consequently became difficult to have a flexible response to economic changes and labour market pressures. Due to this inflexibility of response and the need to limit labour market redundancies, public sector employment has turned in some cases into 'deficit financed' jobs

in order to absorb the excess supply of labour. In other words, there have been cases where employment in the public sector was used to absorb the excess supply of labour.

Another characteristic of public employment is the high level of graduates from intermediate and higher education institutions. Guaranteed employment without concern for productivity in the public sector has led to the prevalent rent-seeking behaviour among the graduates and created strong disincentives for working in the productive sectors. Historically, many countries in the MEDA region have set up mechanisms guaranteeing employment in the public sector to high school graduates in the form of rent seeking positions, losing in the process a big share of the stock of human capital (Chemingui & Ayadi, 2003). Essentially, this type of behaviour that bypasses laws and regulations or uses them for personal profit can only be accomplished by individuals with a certain level of education. It is hence not surprising that rent-seeking is intensive among skilled workers[10].

The result is poor use or waste of educated labour by distorting the incentives in labour markets. In 2003, to give an example, 75% of the total active population in Syria with a higher education degree (i.e., post-secondary and university) were employed in the public sector that is characterised by low labour productivity. Only 20% of higher education degree holders were employed in the private formal sector. In many countries, especially those with high underemployment in the public sector, it is also common for workers to combine public sector employment with informal employment or with other positions in the formal sector.

Unless the public sector is rationalised and the employment situation in the private sector is improved, educational reforms are unlikely to succeed in the region. The present labour market system promotes and rewards the acquisition of academic diplomas rather than skills that enhance the productivity of the worker. The government may continue to be a source of employment for a minority of new job seekers, but it is highly unlikely for the public sector to remain a leading sector of job creation in the future.

Many countries have already started privatisation and/or downsizing processes of public sector services and enterprises. Significant changes are under way in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt. However, the public sector is still over-sized, both in public enterprises and in public administration, in many countries. Its downsizing remains a pending subject due to the current context of high unemployment rates and poor economic growth perspectives. Reducing employment in the public sector can create important social tensions and may have important cascading effects in internal markets, especially when there are no social safety net systems in societies (i.e., beyond the families in most cases).

Large informal sector[11] *versus over-regulated formal sector*

Although difficult to quantify, the size of the informal sector in Mediterranean countries is estimated to be very high. According to World Bank (2004), the informal employment as a percentage of non-agricultural employment accounts, on average, to almost half. For example, it accounts for 30% of non-agriculture employment in Algeria, 35% in Tunisia, 42% in Syria, 55% in Egypt, and 63% in Morocco. Furthermore, the informal sector employment in some countries has accounted for the most important source of jobs for new entrants to the labour force. In Egypt, the majority of the jobs created in the private sector during the period 1988-1998 were in the informal sector (McCormick & Wahba, 2004). In Syria, there was a drop in the percentage of people employed in the formal private sector from 40% in 1995 to 34.8% in 2001, and an increase in the percentage of employees in the informal sector from 33.8% to 39%.

The increased informalisation in Egypt during the 1990s – which was concentrated in manufacturing, construction, trade and transport – primarily involved workers with either no or below intermediate education. In fact, there is a negative correlation between good educational attainment and the probability of being informally employed. In Tunisia, where informalisation is concentrated in manufacturing, the proportion of informal workers with high school education is low, but not negligible (12%). In Morocco, workers in the informal sector – which is concentrated in trade and repairs – are poorly educated (more than 46% of them have never been in school) (ETF, 2006).

One characteristic of the informal sector in the region, which is more pronounced than in other regions, is the unclear demarcation between the informal and the formal sector. A very large proportion of the enterprises are small or very small, with a large majority being family-owned and managed. Therefore, the size in terms of employment may not be a definitive criterion by which to identify 'informal activities'. Legal status is the criterion that is more often used to distinguish formality from informality. Even so, the borderline to informality is not clear-cut. One can in fact distinguish between a 'high end' (i.e., with potential for growth and employment) and a 'low-end' (i.e., geared toward subsistence economy). The latter, the subsistence sector, is characterised by low productivity, obsolete technologies, and low incomes/skills. At the other end, there are efficient micro and small enterprises that are capable of expanding their markets. Studies show that access to modern management, new technologies and new skills can play a key role in the development of these businesses (European Training Foundation & World Bank, 2005).

The precarious nature of jobs in the informal sector – characterised as they are by lack of social safety, low wages and long working hours – is in strong contrast

with the high degree of job security and social safety linked to jobs in the public and the formal private sectors. In particular, jobs in the public sector may not be demanding enough and wages are not based on the productivity and efficiency of employees. It is therefore common for employees in many countries to combine public sector employment either with informal employment or with other positions in the formal sector. While the use of different types of employment contracts is extremely limited in formal sectors, an employment contract is out of the question in the informal sector. Likewise, minimum wages, working time and health and safety regulations do not exist in the informal sector. Contrary to the informal sector, the formal public and private sectors have a reputation of having 'over-regulated'. In fact, hiring and firing regulations for 'insiders' of the system are still considered rigid despite recent reforms of labour laws – for instance, in Egypt (in 2003) and in Tunisia (in 1994 and 1996) – aimed at improving flexibility (ETF, 2006). Taxes on labour in the registered economy are also high.

To summarise, labour markets are segmented between formal jobs (in the public and private sectors) and jobs in the informal economy. Mobility between the two types of jobs is very low. As a result, there is a sharp contrast between the 'insiders' of the registered economy and the 'outsiders' in large informal economy. Those workers who manage to get into the official system generally enjoy significant privileges, while those who have to work in the informal sector receive no protection. This scenario necessitates a reform of the institutional and regulatory framework so that both labour markets and the mobility between the different types of employment can function better.

Labour market policies

The state of employment policy development in the region varies considerably from one country to another. But while a comprehensive national employment strategy comparable to that of the EU is generally lacking, some countries (mostly from North Africa) have recently started a debate on employment and have put in place some active labour market policies. Others are still at earlier stages focusing on the implementation of some active employment measures without a comprehensive policy background. Passive labour market policies are often limited to retirement schemes, especially for workers in the public sector. But while these policies exclude significant numbers of informal workers, unemployment subsidies are rare. In the region, only Algeria has recently introduced an unemployment insurance scheme.

Employment services (or labour offices), although present in almost all countries, have very limited capacities in terms of staff resources and facilities to

provide relevant advice to job seekers. Furthermore, the relatively well-functioning public employment services – like the ones after the recent reforms in Tunisia (i.e., ANETI) and Morocco (i.e., ANAPEC) – are primarily concerned with graduate unemployment. There are no similar agencies that mediate at the interface for unqualified workers. Recruitment policies in the public and the formal private sectors are generally based on the qualifications held (i.e., the diploma) and the applicant's network of social contacts, rather than on competitive examinations that assess his or her competencies. Counselling and orientation services are also rare.

In a vast majority of countries, active labour market policies include a combination of the following: (i) employment services for job seekers; (ii) a variety of credit schemes for employment generation; and (iii) training/re-training schemes. The credit schemes either address the lower segment of the self-employed and micro enterprises (many of them administered by non-governmental organisations) or focus on the sector of the small and medium sized enterprises. Many of them also include training and counselling services. In particular, Tunisia has developed extensive Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMP) that are mainly donor-funded. But while these measures are successful in many cases, their main handicap is the large dependence on donor funding which casts doubts on their sustainability. Furthermore, while the more vulnerable and the less skilled workers get less attention in these relatively better performing environments, the coverage of such programmes is generally very limited. Even in the best case of Tunisia, the government spending on employment programmes was about 1.5% of GDP in 2002; covering only 5.3% of the potential labour force (World Bank, 2003).

Although training often absorbs a higher proportion of the resources in comparison to other ALMP, it may not be producing maximum outputs. There are possibly several reasons for this. For instance, the training offered has been restricted to formal training that is mainly supply-driven. This, however, may not be the most efficient way for skills development, especially in the context of high numbers of micro-enterprises. The access and suitability of the training in terms of activities and technology have also been a recurrent concern. The lack of resources allocated to formal training is another reason for the low quality of the outputs. Generally speaking, there is still some way to go in the integration of employment and training policies. For sure, training programmes need to be better tailored to company needs. Again, an increased role of the private sector in the definition of active labour market policies would make a qualitative difference. The situation is however already changing slowly. The private sector's increased involvement in training design and delivery via apprenticeship and on-the-job schemes evidences this.

Last but not least, the countries in the region have still to put in place proper information systems to monitor the evolution of labour markets and the effectiveness of employment policies. A first step in this direction would be the development of sound labour market information systems. Many countries in the region have already started, often with donor support, to move in this direction. In many cases, it is more a question of bringing together and complementing currently dispersed data and sources, rather than starting from scratch.

Notes

1. The Mediterranean countries included in this paper are Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS).
2. The MEDA programme is the principal financial instrument of the EU for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The programme offers technical and financial support measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the Mediterranean partner countries.
3. The tests were administered to 8th grade level students of both sexes, with indicators of the quality of achievement in elementary education. The TIMSS defined four international benchmarks for the scores of mathematics and science: low (400 points), intermediate (475 points), high (550 points) and advanced (625 points). The results of the 2003 TIMSS may be viewed at http://timss.bc.edu
4. All decisions regarding curricula and financial and personnel management are taken solely by ministries with very little involvement of the social partners.
5. Some researchers in the UNDP (2003) report state that the curricula taught in Arab countries seem to encourage submission, obedience, subordination and compliance, rather than free critical thinking. While the content of science is not usually a controversial matter (excluding religious beliefs and social taboos), humanities and social sciences that have direct relevance to people's ideas and convictions are supervised and 'protected' by the authorities, which generally result in both self-praise and blame of others with the aim of instilling loyalty. This is further strengthened by authoritarian and over-protective parenthood, which is a common style of child rearing within Arab families.
6. MANFORME (Mise à Niveau de la Formation Professionnelle et de l' Emploi) is the name of a large-scale donor-funded programme to rehabilitate vocational training and employment in Tunisia. It was implemented during the period 1996-2002 in collaboration with vocational education and training centres and the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment. The main objective was to reinforce the quality, effectiveness and capacity of the public and private vocational training systems and consequently to improve the competitiveness of Tunisian companies.
7. Mainly national agencies such as USAID, JICA, CIDA, AFD, SIDA, FSP, BEI, GTZ, DFID, KFW, etc.
8. Egypt is a significant example of a country where a high number of donor-funded reform initiatives were implemented without sufficient coordination.
9. When talented people become entrepreneurs, they improve the technology in the line of the business they pursue, and as a result productivity and income growth. In contrast, when they become rent seekers, most of their private returns come from redistribution of wealth from other owners and not from wealth creation. Such misallocation may occur when distortions in the institutional framework make rent seeking activities more profitable than productive ones, thus providing incentives for skilled workers to turn to the former (Boudarbat, 2004).

10. Chemingui & Ayadi (2003) state that 'the resulting corruption constitutes a special case of rent seeking behaviour, that can be defined in a narrowly line as an illegal use of a position in the public administration to personal profit. The border between corruption and rent seeking behaviours is essentially juridical. In economies where the rules of playing ground are not well defined, this distinction between rent seeking and corruption is very limited and it results in negative impact on attracting FDI and waste of resources in non-competitive activities' (p. 16).
11. Jobs in the informal sector can be defined as unprotected by a legal employment contract or social security arrangements.

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PROJECT REPORT

DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

DEBORAH CHETCUTI

Abstract – *The Faculty of Education at the University of Malta has just introduced a set of Assessment Guidelines (see Chetcuti, 2006). These guidelines offer lecturers in the Faculty of Education a view of the traditional, creative and innovative assessment practices which are in use in the Faculty of Education. The main aim is to try and ensure that lecturers within the Faculty of Education provide assessment which is fair, valid, reliable, efficient and effective for all student teachers. This report is a review of the project including the major principles of assessment for learning which form the basis of the document, the contents of the guidelines and the lessons learnt in the process of developing the guidelines. While the development of the guidelines is specific to the Maltese context, the lessons learnt in the process can easily apply to other situations and can be of use to anyone interested in bringing about change in assessment practices in higher education.*

Assessment for learning

Traditionally in universities including the Faculty of Education, University of Malta, assessment is carried out for the purpose of certification 'to provide a student with a qualification which signifies that he or she has reached a certain level of competence of knowledge' (Gipps & Stobart, 1993, p. 16). The methods of assessment used are varied and may include tests and examinations, assignments in the form of project work, group work or the preparation of resource materials for teaching. The student's performance in the assessment of the study units is expressed as a percentage mark or grade which is recorded in the student's academic record and contributes to the final award classification (see University of Malta, 2004). The assessment is mainly summative and little or no information is given to students about how they can improve, they are simply given information about success or failure.

Current debates in the field of educational assessment suggest that there is a strong move away from '*assessment of learning* (assessment for the purposes of grading and reporting with its own established procedures) towards *assessment for*

learning (assessment whose purpose is to enable students, through effective feedback, to fully understand their own learning and the goals they are aiming for)' (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002, p. 244). This move from traditional modes of assessment based mainly on tests and examinations is a reflection of current ideas about learning and teaching. The idea that intelligence is something fixed which can be measured is no longer thought to be valid. Nowadays individuals are considered to have multiple intelligences and diverse cognitive and stylistic profiles which range from the logical-mathematical to the bodily-kinaesthetic and intrapersonal knowledge among others (Gardner, 1999). Ideas about the ways in which students learn have also changed and the constructivist approach to teaching and learning suggests that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge but rather that they actively construct their own knowledge (Vygotsky, 1962). As stated by Dann (2002), 'constructivist theory highlights the importance of the pupils' role in making sense of learning. Implicit from this perspective is the view that pupils must also be able to make judgements about their learning through assessment and self-assessment' (p. 123). Within such a framework of learning the student becomes central to the assessment process and it needs to be recognised that assessment takes place within a social context (Murphy, 1996). Assessment is seen as an integral part of the teaching and learning process rather than something which happens at the end of a course or study unit (Gipps, 1994).

Assessment for learning, or what is also known as formative assessment, has been shown to improve learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Black & Wiliam (1998) suggest that the key characteristics of formative assessment include:

- Giving quality feedback to students regarding on what they can do to improve their work.
- Allowing students to engage in self-assessment so that they can understand the main purposes of their learning.
- Allowing students the opportunity to express their own views about assessment and what they think that they are learning.

Most of the research which has been carried out on *assessment for learning* has been carried out within the context of primary and secondary schools. In tertiary education it is taken for granted that it is the formal examination and grades obtained which matter and which make a difference for students. The 'high stakes' of the summative assessment of student performance for accountability purposes leaves little space for *assessment for learning*. In my view, the principles of assessment for learning being put into practice in primary and secondary schools can easily be transferred to tertiary education. As argued by Mckeachie (1986), in higher education 'evaluation is a great deal more than giving a grade. In teaching,

the major part of evaluation should be in the form of comments on papers, responses to student statements, conversations and other means of helping students understand where they are and how to do better' (p. 110). In teacher education this is considered to be very important since if they are to become the teachers of tomorrow, student teachers should be able 'to understand what they actually did know and how that knowledge was acquired' (Sultana, 2005, p. 236).

The Maltese context

In Malta, examinations have traditionally exerted a powerful influence on educational practices (Chetcuti, 2001). There is a large preoccupation with measuring, predicting performance, selecting and channelling children, and certification based on ability (Sultana, 1996). The life of the majority of Maltese students is typically characterised by a number of highly selective examinations which include: (i) an examination at the end of primary school which allows the successful candidates to enter either State Junior Lyceums or Private Church Schools. These schools are similar to grammar schools and cater for the more academically able; (ii) the Secondary Education Certificate examination (the O-Level) set by the local MATSEC (Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate) examinations board at the end of secondary school, success in which allows students entry into post-secondary education; and (iii) the Matriculation Certificate (the A-Level) which qualifies students for entry into University. These examinations all have a direct impact on the development of student self-esteem and identity (Chetcuti & Griffiths, 2002) and from an early age Maltese students start to identify their success or failure in life with success or failure in examinations.

Concerns with the negative effects of examinations which can lead to labelling of students, teaching to the test, shallow learning and an inaccurate picture of student learning (Chetcuti & Grima, 2001), have led to a shift in ideas about assessment. The National Minimum Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999) proposes a number of changes in assessment practices within a culture of assessment which is predominantly dominated by tests and examinations. The call is for assessment practices which are more formative in nature, focus on the individual learner, focus on process rather than product and giving a more holistic picture of what the learner has learnt (Chetcuti & Grima, 2001). However, if one looks at the general situation in schools, research (Grima & Chetcuti, 2003) has shown that when primary and secondary headteachers were asked to talk about their current assessment practices, the majority (64%) stated that they make use of annual tests and examinations, and promotion from one year to the next is based

solely on the marks attained in these examinations. Despite the theoretical move toward new 'assessment paradigms' and new models of assessment in practice, the assessment system in Maltese schools is still very much dominated by the model of *assessment of learning*. As argued by Carless (2005), barriers to reforms in assessment practices are presented when teachers' existing beliefs are not congruent with those assessment elements which are being promoted. For the reforms to be successful there needs to be a lot of training done with teachers in schools and with prospective teachers.

In Malta, teacher education is carried out within the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. The students who enter the Faculty of Education do so with the intention of becoming primary or secondary school teachers. They enter the Faculty of Education after having been successful in a number of selective examinations throughout their years in schools. They are the students who have learnt how to work within an examinations oriented culture, and they bring with them these experiences and traditional models of assessment. At University they are also faced with a culture of examinations and their success continues to be determined by the accumulation of marks and grades. However, as trainee teachers they are in the theoretical parts of their teacher education course learning about new models of assessment, about the principles of assessment outlined by the National Minimum Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999), and they are expected to use these models during their teaching practicums in schools. Yet, simply learning about new models of assessment in theory is not enough to enable student teachers to understand what they really mean. Black et al. (2003) state that implementing assessment for learning requires personal change and means that teachers or prospective teachers need to change their views or the models of assessment which they are familiar with in order to be able to use assessment for learning in a profitable way. Klenowski (2002) suggests that when student teachers are exposed to the experience of formative assessment themselves they can better understand the underlying principles and equips them to adopt these ideas as part of their own practice as teachers. It is therefore necessary 'for teacher educators to model progressive assessment practices so that trainee teachers can themselves experience their impact' (Keppell & Carless, 2006, p. 179).

The need was therefore felt within the Faculty of Education to promote the philosophy of *assessment for learning*. It was deemed necessary to ensure that lecturers within the Faculty of Education were not only teaching the theory of new assessment paradigms but were themselves acting as role models and using the principles of *assessment for learning* in their own teaching. Hence, the idea to develop a set of assessment guidelines for the members of the Faculty of Education was born. A sub-committee of the Assessment Committee of the Faculty of Education started to work on trying to develop a set of guidelines which

would outline the main principles of assessment which the Faculty of Education believed in and would adopt. The idea was to explore the diverse and exemplary assessment practices being used by members of the Faculty of Education and come up with a set of principles and exemplars which would provide lecturers with alternatives to their current assessment practices.

The guidelines were not intended to be a prescriptive cookbook type recipe but rather a guide providing snapshots of various techniques which could be used to provide quality assessment for student teachers. Lecturers could feel free to select and choose what they liked from the guide. While it was intended to include a set of diverse ideas and examples of practice, it was also meant to make a statement about the Faculty of Education's commitment to the use of assessment for learning rather than simply for providing information about success or failure in the course. As stated by Chetcuti (2006):

> 'The Assessment Committee has developed these guidelines which inform and offer practical suggestions for full-time lecturers, part-time lecturers and especially newly enrolled lecturers within the Faculty of Education. This has been done so as to ensure that all student teachers are receiving a fair and authentic account of the competencies, skills and academic abilities which they have developed throughout their study units and the course ... Hopefully these guidelines can act as a catalyst for the evaluation of current assessment practices and the continued development of alternative and innovative examples of quality assessment.' (p. 5)

The *Assessment Guidelines*

The *Assessment Guidelines* (Chetcuti, 2006) include information about a number of different topics ranging from the purposes of assessment to assessment for learning to methods of assessment including assignments, tests and examinations, and feedback. In each case, the theoretical aspect is embedded within a familiar context of practice such as the teaching practice, the dissertation or long-essay and the Professional Development Portfolio (all of which are core components of the teacher education course at the University of Malta). The guidelines also include examples of feedback sheets which can be given to students with comments and critical feedback regarding their work.

The *Assessment Guidelines* are based on the following ideals:

- 'Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, and cannot be separated from it.
- Assessment practices should be fair, transparent and authentic.
- Multiple forms of assessment are used to encourage learning in different situations.

- Assessment methods are carefully planned and chosen so as to allow all student teachers to show their knowledge, skills and competencies.
- Clear guidelines and criteria are given to student teachers so that they know what is expected of them at the beginning of a study unit.
- Student teachers are given qualitative feedback which allows them to understand their strengths and areas of improvement in order to grow and develop as professionals.
- Assessment practices are to be constantly monitored to ensure standards, consistency and comparability among the different subject areas.' (Chetcuti, 2006, p. 5)

These ideas reflect the principles of *assessment for learning* as described in the previous section. They are embedded within a constructivist framework for learning where, as stated by Murphy (1996), students are expected to engage in dialogue with each other and with their teachers to validate their own understandings rather than merely accept transmitted views. The emphasis is on a Faculty committed to the improvement and development of competence and professional practice rather than one which is interested only in providing certification for teachers. As stated by Bezzina & Camilleri (2001):

> 'The University of Malta Faculty of Education is slowly moving away from a skills-based approach to teacher development to one of personal reflection as a means of teacher formation ... Through this process of development at undergraduate level, it is hoped to inculcate the right type of attitude that all teachers are considered to need to have as they take on the challenging but essential work of building schools as learning organisations.' (p. 163)

Within such a framework the development of assessment practices by University lecturers which encourage deep and active learning and help the learner to plan, monitor, orchestrate and control his or her own learning through a variety of self-awareness processes (Gipps, 1994) becomes of utmost importance.

The *Assessment Guidelines* also place great emphasis on the feedback which is given to student teachers. Black et al. (2003) state that 'an essential part of formative assessment is feedback to the learners both to assess their current achievement and to indicate what the next steps to their learning trajectory should be' (p. 42). In higher education the feedback is usually given solely for the first reason, to assess current achievement and in very few instances are qualitative comments given to the student teachers to try and help them improve their learning. The assignments or examinations handed in are considered to be the final effort of student teachers showing standard rather than tools which can be used for learning.

First of all, the problem with giving feedback at tertiary level is that once a grade is assigned it cannot be altered unless it had been previously agreed between the student teacher and lecturer to present a draft assignment and to give a provisional grade. In the case of tests and examinations, once a grade is assigned it cannot be changed. Therefore, in this scenario, some lecturers consider it superfluous to give qualitative feedback which the student teachers might not even read because any changes to be made will not enable them to change their grade anyway. In research carried out by Black et al. (2003) it was seen that students very rarely read comments, preferring to compare marks with peers as their first reaction after getting their work back. A second difficulty faced by lecturers in giving feedback is the large number of student teachers who take up some of the compulsory study units. It is one thing to give qualitative feedback to thirty student teachers and another one to give feedback to more than two hundred student teachers following a particular study unit.

The *Assessment Guidelines* try to make practical suggestions on how to deal with these issues. Firstly, it gives ideas about how to give good quality feedback which indicates the difference between the attained level and the set level of the target outcome and supplies information about how to improve learning and/or applications of knowledge, skills and competencies (Chetcuti, 2006). It also focuses on the quality of the work rather than on the individual and on comparisons between individuals (Black & Wiliam, 1998). This helps the student teachers to gain a better understanding of achievable targets and enables them to believe in themselves and their abilities. Ways of giving feedback to groups are also identified, such as giving group feedback, allowing student teachers to self-assess and also peer feedback. Most important of all, the *Assessment Guidelines* include examples of Feedback Sheets which can be given to student teachers with comments on the work. The Feedback Sheets are actual sheets used by lecturers in the Faculty of Education. A wide selection is included ranging from feedback sheets for essay type questions, philosophical essays, project and scientific work, and feedback given during seminar sessions. The Feedback Sheets show that there is a wide variety of ways in which feedback can be given to students and once the criteria of success are developed it is then not so difficult to give qualitative feedback, even to large groups of student teachers.

Developing the *Assessment Guidelines*

The guidelines were developed by members of the Assessment Committee who worked together as 'a community of practice' (see Black et al., 2003, p. 66). We wanted to create a common understanding of our assessment practices drawing on the diverse experiences of the members of the Faculty of Education.

The members of the community came from different disciplines ranging from educational studies, arts and languages to the sciences and all had their own views about what constitutes good assessment practice. Like Elwood & Klenowski (2002), we wanted to develop a general idea of what constitutes the assessment practices of the community (in this case the Faculty of Education, University of Malta) so that these ideas could be taken up by other lecturers and provide student teachers with an understanding of why and how they were being assessed in a particular way. We wanted to develop a community of assessment practice where ideas about assessment were shared and made accessible to all lecturers and student teachers. The main audience for the assessment guidelines were the lecturers, but in order to make the guidelines more authentic, the views of the student teachers regarding assessment practices within the Faculty of Education were also included. As argued by Elwood (2006), 'changing the culture of assessment means developing a shared language regarding goals of learning and teaching as well as shared understandings of the purposes of assessment in meeting such goals' (p. 220).

The development of the assessment guidelines enabled us to reflect on our assessment practices both on a personal and professional level and to come up with ideas of good practice which could be shared. We also constantly shared our ideas and drafts of the guidelines with all members of the Faculty and the University Student Teachers Association, asking for feedback and additional examples of good practice. This reflection enabled us to grow professionally through what Sultana (2005) describes as professionalism evolving through participation in active learning communities, providing a dynamic interchange that drew on all the strengths of the different individuals involved in addressing issues of assessment within the Faculty of Education. Like Elwood & Klenowski (2002), 'working collaboratively we were engaged in meaningful conversations related to our aims in teaching, our values in relation to teaching and learning, theories of educational assessment and implementing those theories of educational assessment into practice' (p. 253). The reflective evaluation of good assessment practices and their philosophical underpinnings will hopefully act as a catalyst to ensure that assessment within the Faculty of Education becomes a vehicle for learning.

The development of a 'community of practice' and a shared understanding of assessment was not an easygoing initiative. The main problem was taking into consideration all the diverse needs of the different lecturers who all had differing views of what assessment meant. We needed to develop a strategy which celebrated difference in line with new assessment paradigms, but at the same time we needed to come up with a holistic understanding of an assessment culture which the Faculty of Education has been building over the years. We realised that

assessment practices are 'not all value-free but have social consequences' (Elwood, 2006, p. 229) for both student teachers and lecturers. Therefore, the context and the relationship between the lecturers themselves and the lecturers and student teachers needed to be considered when developing a common set of guidelines. We worked from the premise that, as pointed out by Elwood (2006), the success of assessment practices necessitates a changed lecturer-student relationship, but not everyone was willing to embrace this need for a changed relationship. We needed to constantly dialogue, reflect and review our ideas and we needed to ensure that both lecturers and student teachers engaged with the principles of assessment outlined in the guidelines. We therefore organised a number of meetings with individual members of the Faculty of Education, with the student teachers and held a Faculty Seminar where all issues were open to debate and review. Finally, the Assessment Committee itself had to take a stand and decide on what would be included in the final version of the guidelines.

Another difficulty which the members of the Assessment Committee faced was writing the guidelines in line with the regulations of the University of Malta. We needed to be careful that although we wanted to suggest new ideas, such as negotiating assessments and developing criteria with student teachers, these fitted in with the University regulations and we could not go about reinventing the whole Assessment Programme. While we were trying to encourage innovative assessment practices within the Faculty of Education, we were also limited by the existing University regulations. For example, even though we wanted to suggest that lecturers and student teachers negotiate the type of assessment together, this was not possible as University regulations explicitly state that methods of assessment need the approval of the Board of Studies at the time the study unit description is being considered followed by approval by Senate. Once approved and published, it cannot normally be changed. A draft of the guidelines was therefore edited by the Assistant Registrar of the University of Malta who gave her feedback and comments and brought the guidelines in line with University regulations.

The lessons learnt

The *Assessment Guidelines* draw on existing good practice in the Faculty of Education, University of Malta, but they are similar to a number of initiatives which have been carried out internationally at primary and secondary level (see Black et al., 2003) and tertiary level (see Elwood & Klenowski, 2002). The lessons learnt from the Maltese context can be applied to other institutions. While they draw heavily on international ideas about new assessment models, the *Assessment Guidelines* are unique in that they try to introduce a new model

of assessment within a traditionally examination oriented context and within the constraints of University regulations. The *Assessment Guidelines* thus attempt to 'align formative assessment with accountability mechanisms' (Elwood, 2006, p. 228).

The three main lessons learnt are:

(i) Lecturers, especially those in the Faculty of Education, need to act as role models for student teachers to transmit to them the major philosophies of new models of assessment. As stated by Buhagiar (2006) in his review of the guidelines:

> 'With actions speaking louder than words, teacher educators can do much to promote the current local assessment reform efforts by translating into good practice the spirit of the newly emerging assessment paradigm in their dealings with student teachers. Towards this end, teacher educators need to have a good grounding in current assessment theories and a willingness to move from words to action. The published guidelines can be considered as an important first step in this direction.' (p. 24)

(ii) Change and innovation can be carried out even within a context of traditional assessment. 'The challenge facing the lecturers at the Faculty of Education is therefore to adopt new assessment practices that help students become self-monitoring, autonomous learners in spite of an educational system that is still largely bent on simply passing or failing them' (Buhagiar, 2006, p. 25). Once the new assessment practices are in place and they have been evaluated by rigorous research, then they can be used to introduce and implement innovation and catalyst change which will make assessment practices more fair, valid and authentic for all students. 'By attempting to put learning into the assessment discourse within the Faculty of Education, these guidelines may serve to bridge the gap between what is being advocated by assessment experts on one hand and the contextual barriers to improved assessment practices on the other. To their credit, these guidelines offer what appears to be an opportunity to integrate better the lecturers' assessment practices with teaching and learning – a vital step towards guiding the first and facilitating the latter' (Buhagiar, 2006, p. 25).

(iii) The getting together of members of a Faculty to discuss assessment issues and principles created 'a community of practice' which grew and developed professionally and provided 'a catalyst for change' (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002, p. 254). As stated by Black et al. (2003), discussion among colleagues is essential for clarifying understandings of the purposes and practices

involved and for ensuring a context of collegial support as individuals take on the risks of changing practice and it promoted reflection on numerous issues raised and how they could be tackled by individual lecturers. The forum of discussion created by the development of the *Assessment Guidelines* helped members of the Faculty of Education understand better the difficulties and constraints faced by members of different departments and different disciplines. It enabled members of the Faculty to reconstruct their definition of what it meant to provide fair, valid, reliable and authentic assessment practices for student teachers. It also enabled lecturers to engage in dialogue with student teachers to try to understand the shortcomings of current assessment practices and to try to build new models based on the needs of the student teachers themselves. The discussions based on communication, collaboration and leadership focused on learning, teaching and assessment to foster improvements for both lecturers and student teachers and lead to assessment practices which would enhance learning.

The impact of the *Assessment Guidelines* on actual assessment practices within the Faculty of Education still needs to be evaluated, but it is a first step in providing lecturers with the tools they need to continue working on their exemplary practice and leaves enough room for innovation and change. It also makes transparent to student teachers the assessment philosophy of the Faculty of Education and helps them understand how assessment can be turned into a positive experience. The challenges facing lecturers and student teachers in the Faculty of Education are to actually implement the ideas of the guidelines and constantly examine and re-examine the practices. This process, as Roger Murphy's comment reported on the back cover of the *Assessment Guidelines* augured, will hopefully inspire some new and effective assessment innovations.

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BOOK REVIEW

Fausto Telleri (ed.) (2004) *Professioni Educative – Esperienze e Prospettive*, Milan, Guerini Scientifica Editori, 246 pp., ISBN: 8881071576.

This publication forms part of a book series entitled *Processi Formativi e Scienze dell'Educazione*, the aim of which is to present pedagogical and educational issues both to the specialist and to the non-specialist reader. Telleri's book presents the learning professions from a varied and wide-ranging point of view, with emphasis mainly placed on the role of the educator in the society at large, that is outside rather than within schools. Learning is therefore viewed as a lifelong experience and in this publication the role of the educator is examined within different social contexts including the family, the leisure sphere and in communities for youths with social problems.

This publication includes a number of papers which draw on the personal experiences of the authors who also provide a number of practical suggestions regarding the formation of educators. The professional formation that is to be provided by *Scienze dell'Educazione*, (equivalent to the Faculty of Education), should go well beyond a teaching degree. This aspect is especially evident in the concluding paper of the volume, in which Paolo Calidoni reviews the role of research and of tertiary institutions in the preparation of professional educators. The context of the traditional classroom is viewed as one of the realms in which the educator may exercise his/her expertise, but he/she also ought to possess the expertise in order to plan, coordinate, deliberate and evaluate within various contexts. The role of the educator is dynamic rather than static, proactive rather than inert as this is essential to avoid the burnout which is often witnessed in teachers in schools. The specialist in the field is also able to teach social skills, as illustrated in Giusy Manca's paper, in order to help youths learn how to cope with circumstances they will face as they mature. The importance of having the necessary skills to intervene in critical situations is essential as Telleri himself points out in his introduction to this volume. The educator's role becomes exigent when his/her intervention is crucial and when it leads to meaningful change, and not within contexts where learning is institutionalised and deemed as unchallenging and unchallengeable. This aspect also emerges in a number of considerations included in the papers by Giuseppe Filippo Dettori, M. Francesca Ghiuaccio and Fabio Pruneri which all deal with issues pertaining to juvenile communities which host youths who are often defined as failures within the traditional educational sphere. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that these three

papers all include personal experiences of the authors and are rife with practical suggestions in order to improve the current situation.

Antonello Mura's and Antoni Arca's papers deal with educators involved in animation. Drawing a number of comparisons from theatre, the animator is viewed in the light of his/her role of using activities and games in order to motivate the learner. Arca also explains the relevance of these activities in order to encourage the learner to develop reading skills. M. Francesca Dettori's contribution focuses mainly on the family as a learning environment, particularly in the light of changes in Italian legislation on family policy. Fabio Pruneri's article precedes the paper by Calidoni and is directly related to it, as the author explains the necessity of keeping track of the educational process and of the relevance of primary sources in educational research.

In this publication the link between theory and practice is given prominence and whenever authors deal with the formation of professional educators the need for hands-on experience is seen as an essential factor. The emphasis is clearly on *learning* rather than on *teaching* and the underlying philosophy portrays the educator as a professional who is capable of applying the skills acquired in his/her formation in order to face challenges of modern-day society. This underlying insight of the papers included in this volume is represented by Paulo Freire's works, who Telleri refers to in a number of occasions in his introduction. We are therefore presented with the concept of 'literacy' in the broadest sense of the term. In order to achieve enlightenment in today's society reading, writing and mathematical skills do not suffice as they become effective only when accompanied by the acquisition of a number of social skills. The whole educational process is therefore formative and lifelong and the learning professions must be geared precisely towards this goal.

This volume, published in Italian, provides interesting and insightful reading. It draws rather heavily on the Italian social context and consequently a basic knowledge of the Italian educational system will undoubtedly help the reader comprehend better the authors' considerations. On the other hand, the theoretical background of the book as well as the practical suggestions provided in the papers may be applied to any context. For this reason one augurs that the main notions of this volume are collected and published in a paper in English, in order to be made accessible to a more far-reaching audience.

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Notes for Contributors

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