

PROSPECTIVE ELEMENTS FROM AN ANALYSIS OF THE FAURE, DELORS and MORIN REPORTS, DEVOTED TO LIFE-LONG LEARNING

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For the World Committee for Lifelong Learning (CMA), the Delors, Faure and Morin reports have been a key reference for establishing its line of action since its creation - in 2004. The study, conducted by the CMA:

«Lifelong learning for all in front of the challenges of the twenty-first century: what realities?
What needs? What prospects? »

stems from the themes dealt with in these three reports to UNESCO, with the aim of showing the relations to be established between various educational activities of all kinds.

These relationships could help to better articulate the educational purposes and functions - usually designed separately – in order to put them at the service of all, throughout life.

This study -available on our website- has been written by members of the CMA in the continuity of the activities of the CMA (international seminars, world forums, publications) which is based on the principles set out in its Charter:

- "Putting the economy at the service of man and not the reverse
- Taking into account the diversity of cultures and ideas
- Acting collectively through greater articulation between environmental, biological, political, economic and cultural subsystems. »

HISTORY

With this study we wanted to situate education **in the long term** to generate prospects of evolution.

The three important writings which have paved the way in the field of education at world level since the Fifties are:

- "*Learning to be: the world of education today and yesterday*," report to UNESCO under the direction of Edgar Faure (1972), collective work
- "*Learning: The Treasure Within*", Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the twenty-first century under the direction of Jacques Delors (1996), collective work and
- "*Seven complex lessons in education for the future*" by Edgar Morin (2000)

For each of these works, the context, the problems, the most sensitive topics and the

proposals are recalled through significant extracts. The influence of the "Delors report is examined as well as the proposals for the post 2015 period.

We have selected the permanent themes that illustrate the extent of the field of education in the general sense of the word. The main ones are:

- *Extracurricular* education, e.g. infancy, illiteracy or the educational role of companies.
- The *conditions for learning*, such as access to education for girls and women, non-conventional educators or e-learning
- The *content of the lessons*, such as "teaching human identity" or "blindness of knowledge due to error or illusion."
- The *place of education in society*, such as the learning environment, decompartmentalization, or the Learning City
- *Education issues* such as sustainable and equitable development, or Health.

COMPLEXITY OF LEARNING

According to Edgar Morin, complex knowledge is based on the principle of *dialogical*: relation both **complementary and antagonistic** between two concepts. Everything must be *connected* while we must be able to *distinguish*. The enemy of complexity is *disjunction* -in the sense of dichotomy, what separates one from the other. The other enemy is *reduction* that is to say, reductionism. We cannot understand the whole from its parts.

The complexity of the organization of learning activities therefore comes from the numerous «complementary and antagonistic" factors, sources of tensions, which are associated with it:

- Childhood (including the prenatal period) and adulthood: think of the interactions between the generations;
- feminine and masculine, with the problems of unequal access to education or power;
- local and global;
- personal and professional development;
- economic growth and sustainable and equitable development;

but also, as stated by Jacques Delors:

- Universal and particular;
- tradition and modernity;
- short term and long term;
- competition and equal opportunities;
- Inflation of knowledge and human capacity to assimilate;
- spiritual and material.

Thus, we should **not** reduce this complex phenomenon of education to simple elements that might deceive us, delude us.

"As a result we tend to content ourselves with a small number of variables and simple relationships leading to simple representations and recommendations. But ignoring complexity always has a cost, "says Edgar Morin.

Thus, it is illusory to believe that it is sufficient to establish **the** "good" education system to suppress problems. It is best to seek *complementarity* between what is taught by life and what is learnt at school.

Indeed, learning issues depend not only on these factors, but also on many other – linked to the context- that must be taken into account so that these issues concerning learning may be dealt with appropriately.

BACKGROUND OF LEARNING

Paul Bélanger in his contribution to the Delors report stated that

"Educational environments refer to the socio-cultural contexts or social background of children and adults: in private life, at school, in the community, at work, through the media, etc. As defined here, *educational environments* relate to organized learning processes, but constitute a separate reality. They show the diffuse weight of the various environmental backgrounds, in which individuals live and which *influence their participation in the learning activities which are organized*. Educational environments refer to the informal dimension of lifelong learning, but they first designate the cultural environments where the initial training and adult education take place. »

Therefore, the effectiveness of the learning process is influenced by the learning environment, itself in interaction with political, economic choices, living conditions, culture, the evolution of sciences and technology, demography, migrations, inequalities, etc. Therefore, the type of current education system depends heavily on the choice of society governing these different parameters. Faced with this complexity, we can imagine **three scenarios**.

THREE SCENARIOS

Scenario One: "A world of learning favoring the traditional humanistic dimension." In this scenario, the purpose of learning is to allow everyone to develop their potential so that they can fulfil themselves both in private life and at work and in their participation in civic life.

Illiteracy, preventing access to education, must be overcome in societies characterized by the predominance of writing, even if it is not a sufficient condition to achieve quality education for all throughout life. This condition does not apply to societies predominantly oral, as shown by their cultural development.

A public service, which favors the education of children from the age of 4, is in charge of basic training to ensure access is **equitable** to all, thanks to programs transmitting elements of a common culture, ensuring a balance between knowledge, expertise,

knowing to be and knowing to "live together". The *initial schooling* must prepare young people to manage their learning throughout life, with the support of the community (we never learn alone). The need to prepare oneself to make a living is a major concern, but not the only one.

The offer proposed by education systems is standardized, with programs whose distribution is planned. All students must learn the same thing at the same time and at the same pace, making it difficult to take the diversity of students into account. Therefore, many students do not take advantage of the classes they attend, and some drop out before completing their studies. To fight against this phenomenon, the quality of the training and working conditions of teachers should be reviewed and strengthened, guaranteeing quality education. It is a challenge for countries with important population growth, where schools are overcrowded and poorly equipped, despite sometimes relatively high budgets devoted to education.

The rapid evolution of technology constantly changes the mode of organization of human activities and the skills necessary to conduct them. Lifelong learning is intended to answer the need for a fulfilling life in changing contexts. This involves individual responsibility (managing one's future) and collective responsibility (creating the conditions for such management to be possible).

Human interactions are essential to accompany the process of learning -in and out of the existing education and training systems -and they condition the mobilization of personal, technical, economic, financial and infrastructure resources for learning, particularly outside this system. A solid training of teachers, trainers and learners to take advantage of the potential of technical means is necessary. Teachers can appropriate the techniques that fit into their teaching approach and that generate reasonable additional costs as regards time or money.

The use of "educational social networks" is very useful to connect parents, teachers, students, administrators. Peer relationships (students / pupils, teachers / teachers) allow **mutual network learning** to take root and to develop, in addition to academic learning.

The evaluation of goals and objectives favors the qualitative aspect, due to the predominance of the cultural dimension, without neglecting relevant quantitative approaches. A degree guarantees a good level of **understanding** of a program, but does not guarantee the actual **skills** of the graduate.

The *limits of this scenario* are that many young people do not make a profit from their education, not counting those who did not have access to school. Lifelong training targets people who are already well trained rather than everyone: training favors training.

Scenario two: "A world of learning emphasizing the utilitarian dimension."

In this scenario, the primary purpose of learning is the development of skills in order to act in society in accordance with the needs of economy.

The organization of learning must seek effectiveness (developing useful skills) and efficiency (minimizing costs). Public service is in competition with the private service

offer. So an education market is beginning to emerge and grow with all its consequences (competition can be exclusionary or complementary).

As the cost of teachers, trainers and associates is constantly increasing due to rising living standards, we are looking for alternative ways to reduce costs by using technical devices (networking of human, physical and digital resources). However, the training of persons involved in teaching activities remains an important factor in improving the quality and productivity of these activities.

Literacy must be followed by post-literacy programs -in keeping with the local needs for skills- to promote the development of lifelong learning.

Assessment emphasizes the quantitative aspect through tests and surveys claiming to be appropriate, relevant and sufficient to achieve what is desired [Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) ...].

The *limits of this scenario* are that “professional” lifelong training is designed to adapt the workforce to the “needs” of economy which are difficult to specify and which keep evolving. It is up to the individuals to manage their personal development and to give meaning to their life. This is an individualistic approach.

Scenario three: “A dynamic ecosystem for learning linking humanism and usefulness for the development of *the person* and of *all people*.” In this scenario, to meet the diverse learning contexts and the variety of skills needed, a mobilization of all the resources available in a given area is indispensable. Not through a centralized management, but through a coordinated network of actors and resources to correct the effects of silo management. The specificities of each territory (urban or agricultural zone; developed or developing sector; increasing or decreasing population growth) condition the implementation of the means necessary to achieve the goals set at territory level.

The purpose of learning is to increase a sense of responsibility for the *human future* shared between *individuals* and *the group*, covering health issues, sustainable and equitable development, personal development and life in common.

This is the great lesson that can be learned from reading the three reports to UNESCO: education **is** life. The contribution of education to the seven human needs described by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP): Food, health, economic, cultural, individual (human rights), political, environmental gives full meaning to lifelong learning, beyond basic education.

The development of learning networks is based on the available expertise in a given area to provide guidance, transmission, support and recognition of prior learning. An approach avoiding compartmentalization- related to age or type of activity- should be favored systematically. Widespread practice of block-release creates links between

education and companies, governments and NGOs or other stakeholders for fruitful cooperation.

All the *technical* means are called upon to support learning activities associated with all types of skills.

Assessment is both qualitative and quantitative through the creation of relevant composite indices to better calibrate what we want to get.

The *limits of this scenario* are related to the complexity of the factors to be considered simultaneously so that, for a systemic approach, lifelong learning might become a reality for all. It is not impossible since the "Learning Cities" begin to act in this direction, in line with the action of states.

To conclude, we can say that the wide diversity of educational activities throughout life, constituting education in its broad sense, is the source of many forms of learning related with the increasingly rapid transformations of a more and more complex environment. This puts pressure on the existing education system that, by nature, evolves at a slower pace.

The CMA says in its charter that "it mobilizes all the skills worldwide **to make lifelong learning a reality, so as to enable everyone to have the possibility to learn throughout their life, in the respect for justice, law and fundamental freedoms.**

The establishment of a **rich educational environment**, with substantial and sustainable funding, to encourage the development of education in the broad sense, involving children, young people and adults, is a necessity to fight against poverty (which cannot be reduced to a low income), to improve health, to support sustainable development with a view to a more equitable and peaceful world.

The world is constantly confronted with many challenges, and the necessary mobilization to deal with them, although insufficient, limits their harmful consequences. The goals are far from being achieved as regards access to and quality of education, yet hunger is decreasing in the world and the enrollment rate in primary education increased between 1990 and 2011. This should encourage us to expand our efforts since it is possible to influence the course of events, provided **we want it and devote the necessary resources to this aim.**