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ABSTRACT

Education has to play an important role in the cultural development of individuals, groups, and societies, but this paper argues that education has failed to play this role due in part to inappropriate teacher education. The introduction discusses cultural development and the contribution of the school. The second section proposes that an equal opportunity policy and intercultural education remain marginal in most of the schools in western society. The third section summarizes the purposes of formal education in democratic societies. The fourth section delineates the criteria for intercultural education: (1) balance of different educational purposes; (2) account of the knowledge and skills of all children; (3) curriculum as a reflection of the multicultural society; (4) curriculum presents knowledge from different perspectives; (5) equal opportunities at classroom level; and (6) evaluation and assessment. The fifth section describes the international basis for intercultural education by presenting parts of international legislation. Section 6 suggests the importance of cooperative learning in intercultural education. The final section supports the importance of preservice and inservice teacher education to develop the proficiency and the professional attitude of the teacher and presents a description of the organization of teacher training institutes. (CK)

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CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION TO CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

"Intercultural Education for Cultural Development:  
The Contribution of Teacher Education"

by

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## 1. Introduction

Cultural development is a dynamic process, which is affected by the media, the arts and sciences, commercial activities and technology. Cultural development is also a concern of national governments. They are particularly engaged in the development and promotion of the "national culture", but since the societies in the various nation states have identified themselves as "multicultural", the definition of the "national culture" can not any more be taken for granted.

Cultural development takes place through the interaction between the different sections of the society, individuals and through international exchange. Interaction is only possible on an equal basis. As long as minority cultures are referred to as "cultures of origin", these cultures will remain alien to the "culture of origin" of the dominant groups<sup>1</sup>. Jacques Berque proposes to speak about contributing cultures ("cultures d'apport")<sup>2</sup>. The cultural heritage of a country should include the cultures of all its citizens.

Education is an important instrument to affect cultural policy. It can be used to promote the cultural values of the dominant majority without any critical reflection, it can also be used to reflect on the multicultural and international character of cultures and to stimulate the interaction.

In this paper it will be argued that education has to play an important role in the cultural development of individuals, groups and societies, but that up till now education has failed to play this role, which is partly due to inappropriate teacher education.

Traditionally education has played an important role in the transmission of the culture of the dominant groups in societies, because, in general, the curriculum does not reflect the knowledge and culture of groups who are referred to as "minorities", as "others". This role is not in accordance with major international agreements and commitments on education.

The contribution of the school to cultural development should go far beyond the "transmission" of values which are taken for granted. The school ought to be the place where students learn to reflect on similarities and differences between cultures, where all

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<sup>1</sup> See also Batelaan & Gundara in IBE Bulletin no. 260 (forthcoming)

<sup>2</sup> Berque 1985, p. 46

kind of issues can be studied from different perspectives, and where children and students from different origins can (learn to) communicate and cooperate in a secure environment. Cultural *development* goes through interaction and negotiation. Therefore the issue of cultural development is not only concerned with the curriculum but also with the management of the learning process. It will be argued that cooperative learning methods are an important tool for teachers to achieve the goals of cultural development.

This paper will only touch upon issues of linguistic development, although it is an important constituent of cultural development. The linguistic competencies of children should not only be used to facilitate the learning of the national standard language. Development of multilingualism as such is crucial for the cultural development of individuals, groups and societies in a global society which is characterised by interdependency<sup>3</sup>.

This paper considers the issues of cultural development from a European perspective. On the other hand the opinions are based on universal principles as expressed in the relevant UN and UNESCO declarations and recommendations, which hopefully makes it also useful for a wider audience.

## 2. Equal Opportunity Policy and Intercultural Education

As long as children experience alienation in schools, because the teaching and the organization are still based on the academic tradition of the academic culture (which reflects in fact the culture of the dominant groups in society), drop out rates will continue to increase. An equal opportunity policy is a decisive condition if the school has to play an important role in the cultural development of individuals, groups and societies. Intercultural education deals both with diversity and inequality. Diversity and inequality are two sides of the same coin. Many programmes which are aimed at equality of opportunities, including some antiracist programmes, don't take into account cultural diversity. On the other hand some multicultural programmes which are aimed at mutual understanding of different cultures ignore the social and economic inequality. The promotion of appreciation of cultural diversity includes far more than teaching about

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<sup>3</sup> See for IAIE's position toward language policy Jones 1990.

"other" cultures. Equality of opportunities is far more than providing equal access to education. Equality of opportunities includes equal access to participation in the learning process, and the recognition of knowledge and skills (including the language) which children already have.

In spite of all the documents, produced by intergovernmental institutions such as UNESCO, the recommendations, adopted by national governments, and in some cases even despite national legislation, intercultural education is still something marginal in most of the schools of western societies.

One of the conclusions of an OECD - CERI report in 1989 was that,

"Despite the importance of the debate on multicultural education, it should be noted that initiatives, experiments and programmes concerning multicultural education have a marginal place in educational curricula and policies, with the possible exception of a few countries, particularly Australia and Canada". (CERI, 1989, p. 65).

Only when educators are completely aware of the functions of education in a cultural and social diverse society, intercultural education will become more than a peripheral activity. The implementation of intercultural education requires an in-depth knowledge of what education is about. As is formulated in the Conclusion of the CERI - OECD Report "One School, Many Cultures":

"Situated as they are at the meeting point of conflicting educational postulates (individualism or collectivism) and of teaching methods which are also in conflict (spontaneity or artificiality), multicultural education programmes cannot be successfully implanted within education systems without in-depth consideration of the cognitive function of the school and of the mental processes involved in the transmission of culture within the school". (CERI, 1989, p. 74).

Where should teachers acquire this knowledge, which is an important ingredient of their professional identity? It will be argued that the marginal position of education for (inter)cultural development and equal opportunities in Europe is partly due to the fact that institutes for teacher education in general do not provide all their students with an appropriate training for intercultural education.

### 3. Purposes of Education

What education is about is usually taken for granted by politicians, administrators, interest groups, action groups, who want to use education to solve their problems. What education

is about always include their concern. It would be better to reflect on the purposes of education before each of these groups charges the school with any new demand. Why should education be used to prevent aids, to prevent vandalism, to promote good traffic behaviour, to promote peace, to save the rain forest, to prepare children for further education or for the social market, to contribute to cultural development. What can be expected from the school system and what can not be expected. How can schools, i.e. teachers respond to the demands of a dynamic society?

The purposes of formal education in democratic societies can be summarized as follows:

economic: qualification

social: education may contribute to democratization and emancipation, both of individuals and of groups

cultural: transmission and negotiation of values

pedagogical: personal development (which includes creativity and critical thinking skills)

In modern industrialized societies, characterized by labour division and specialization, institutionalized education is a condition for the economic development of society.

"Investment in education contributes as much to economic progress as investment in roads, power plants, irrigation canals, or any other physical capital. In fact the economic returns to investment in education, as measured by productivity and income, are often higher."<sup>4</sup>

Without education access to many jobs is not possible. A sound educational system is essential for the political, economic, social and cultural functioning of a modern industrial society. Education is a condition for qualification. Parents and societies assume that the primary function of the school is the teaching of academics. As a consequence of this thinking,

"the standard measures we use to determine the quality of schools get at academics almost exclusively - and a relatively narrow array of them at that"<sup>5</sup>.

In this paper the emphasis is on the cultural function of education. The importance of

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<sup>4</sup> Barber B. Constable, President of the Worldbank in his Foreword to *The Dividends of Learning. Worldbank Support for Education*. The World Bank. Washington, D.C. 1990

<sup>5</sup> See Goodlad, 1984, p. 61

cultural development is implied in Article 1.3 of the World Declaration on Education for All:

*Another and no less fundamental aim of educational development is the transmission and enrichment of common cultural and moral values. It is in these values that the individual and society find their identity and worth.*

However, the cultural function cannot be isolated from the economic, the social and the pedagogical ones. Qualification is important because it is a sine qua non to ensure employment and economic development.

Without democratization and the emancipation of groups and individuals culture will be narrowed to the interests of the dominant upper and middle class and will only be defined in terms of traditional Western arts and sciences.

Without personal development, people will be at the mercy of producers of popular mass culture. On the other hand, economic development cannot be isolated from cultural development; emancipation includes the empowerment of a person's cultural identity<sup>6</sup>.

Cultural development at all levels depends on the balance of the different purposes of education.

#### 4. Criteria for Intercultural Education

Intercultural education can be seen as the educational consequence of democratic principles in multicultural societies. Education is intercultural when it is aimed to fulfil the following criteria:

1. Balance of different purposes of education

- economic function
- social function
- cultural function
- pedagogical function

2. Take into account the knowledge and skills of all children

- language
- cultural knowledge
- different individual skills and aptitudes (which requires a "multi ability

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<sup>6</sup> See Batelaan & Gundara 1991

approach")

3. Curriculum reflects the reality of the multicultural society
  - not ethnocentric
  - global
4. Curriculum presents knowledge from different perspectives
5. On the level of classroom organisation it provides
  - equal opportunities for participation in the classroom interaction
6. Evaluation and assessment
  - fair tests

These criteria are related to the level of the teaching and learning process. Other criteria are to be formulated in the areas of personnel management, administration, school organization and grouping, and parental involvement<sup>7</sup>.

## 5. The International Basis for Intercultural Education

Although the different criteria are not stated explicitly in the different international conventions, resolutions and recommendations, they are derived from the same basic values, which underpin the activities of many intergovernmental organisations including the U.N., UNICEF, UNESCO, the CSCE (Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the Council of Europe.

It is always surprising to observe that professionals responsible for the development of education or for their institutional policy hardly refer to international conventions and resolutions to which their governments have committed themselves. Therefore some of this international legislation will be quoted here:

### 1. Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- (Article 29) *State Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:*
- (a) *The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;*
  - (b) *The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;*
  - (c) *The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the*

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<sup>7</sup> See Banks, 1988 p. 293-301 for a more complete checklist

*child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;*

*(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;*

*(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.*

*(Article 30) In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise her or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.*

The UNESCO Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session (Paris, 19 November 1974) includes cultural aspects:

*(Article 17.) Member States should promote, at various stages and in various types of education, study of different cultures, their reciprocal influences, their perspectives and ways of life, in order to encourage mutual appreciation of the difference between them. Such study should, among other things, give due importance to the teaching of foreign languages, civilizations and cultural heritage as a means of promoting international and inter-cultural understanding.*

Declaration on race and racial prejudice adopted by the General Conference of Unesco at its twentieth session, Paris, 27 November 1978

*(Article 5.2.) States, in accordance with their constitutional principles and procedures, as well as all other competent authorities and the entire teaching profession, have a responsibility to see that the educational resources of all countries are used to combat racism, more especially by ensuring that curricula and textbooks include scientific and ethical considerations concerning human unity and diversity and that no invidious distinctions are made with regard to any people; by training teachers to achieve these ends; by making the resources of the educational system available to all groups of the population without racial restriction or discrimination; and by taking appropriate steps to remedy the handicaps from which certain racial groups suffer with regard to their level of education and standards of living and in particular to prevent such handicaps from being passed on to children.*

*(Article 6.2.) So far as its competence extends and in accordance with its constitutional principle and procedures, the State should take all appropriate steps, inter alia by legislation, particularly in the spheres of education, culture and communication, to prevent, prohibit and eradicate racism, racist propaganda, racial segregation and apartheid and to encourage the dissemination of knowledge*

*and the findings appropriate research in natural and social sciences on the causes and prevention of racial prejudice and racist attitudes with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.*

It should be a concern of the Ministers of Education, who are represented in this UNESCO conference and who meet and adopt resolutions also in other intergovernmental settings, that these and other recommendations are not implemented by the educational institutions in their countries. It should also be noticed that the implementation goes beyond legislative activities. It is a far more complicated process. In an evaluation report on teacher education in Sweden, which is drafted by a committee of the International Association for Intercultural Education, it is concluded that in spite of supportive national legislation and directives the intercultural dimension of teacher education in Sweden is limited to marginal activities. The same applies for many institutions in the Netherlands, in spite of the legal requirement that *"education should also start from the principle that children grow up in a multicultural society"*.

Governments have to be careful with directives which interfere the ideas of "freedom of education" and "academic autonomy". On the other hand, the educational institutions should be more aware of their societal responsibility, which goes beyond their responsibility for the qualification of students for jobs and positions in the society.

This does not release governments from their obligations to encourage universities to implement international agreements and to compare their own policies with the commitments they made at the international level. The call for a national curriculum emphasizing "national values" which can be heard in various countries should be a concern of the international community. Monitoring of policy development in relation to cultural development which does justice to cultural diversity both at the national as at the institutional levels, should be put on the agenda of the ICE.

## 6. Intercultural Education and Cooperative Learning

The problems with the implementation of intercultural education are not only due to the (lack of) policies of governments and institutions. On the individual level the advocates of intercultural education still lack a sound theoretical foundation. In many countries much

of the materials which are developed in the frame work of an intercultural or anti-racist project, is often without any reference to theoretical work. One of the findings of the OECD analysis of educational programmes states:

"Most multicultural education programmes are not supported by a solid and clear theoretical structure" (CERI, 1989, p.63).

Another concern is that intercultural education is seen as marginal. This marginality is due to the fact that, particularly in Western societies, "intercultural education" is only seen as a pedagogical movement, which has to compete with other movements including environmental education, peace education, global education, development education, and not as an ideology which also deals with issues of qualification (see the previous section). In their contribution to a workshop in Budapest last year, Batelaan and Gundara advocate an integrative approach, based on the recognition that education has not only the economic purpose of qualification, but is also an instrument for the negotiation of cultural values.

Cultural development through education is more a learning process of negotiation and interaction than of transmission. Intercultural education as defined in this paper is an appropriate frame work for the organization of this learning process, because it does not only deal with the curriculum, but also with the organisation of the learning process. In a recent paper for the International Convention on Cooperative Learning I argued that cooperative learning methods should be integrated in intercultural education or that cooperative learning should meet the criteria for intercultural education.

Intercultural, multicultural, anti-racist education are traditionally primarily concerned with the content of education, which means concerned with the question **what** to teach, or **what** students should learn.

Cooperative learning is primarily concerned with **how** to teach, or **how** to organize the learning.

"Cooperative learning is an ideal solution to the problem of providing students of different ethnic groups with opportunities for non superficial, cooperative interactions" (Slavin, 1990, p.35).

In most of the work of specialists in cooperative learning such as Slavin and Johnson & Johnson there is no explicit reference to the consequences of diversity within the classroom. Both aim at better results for those who are the low achievers in the traditional

teaching-learning situations, but in their work there is no attention for the essence of inequality which exists within the classroom as a result of differences in societal, academic and peer status. "If status characteristics are allowed to operate unchecked in the classroom, the interaction of children will only reinforce the prejudices they entered school with" (Cohen, 1986, p. 31). Cohen's work is so important for multicultural or intercultural education, because it deals explicitly with inequality on a classroom level.

The work of Cohen is also important from the perspective of this conference, because her work is aimed at the participation of all children, regardless their social-economical, cultural, linguistic, or peer status, in the interaction, which is a prerequisite for cultural development.

## 7. Concerns for Teacher Education

To achieve the purposes of education, including the goal of cultural development in diverse societies, conditions have to be fulfilled at the national level, the institutional level and the level of the classroom. The most important condition is the proficiency and the professional attitude of the teacher and therefore teacher education, both preservice and inservice, is one of the most crucial factors for the quality of education.

In a recent evaluation of teacher education in Sweden by an IAIE committee it could be concluded that in spite of a relatively supportive government policy, intercultural education has a marginal position in Swedish teacher education. From the experience of the members of the committee, it can be hypothesised that the same applies for most teacher education institutes in Europe. There is no clear commitment to their responsibility to the community and the wider society. Without such a commitment, educational institutions may become subject to pressures of the educational market. Throughout Europe higher education is being pressurised into becoming more market oriented. The tendency in higher education to become more market oriented is not the result of a fundamental discussion about the purpose of education for the society but resulting from economic pressure. The "market" is here defined by "clients" who need to "purchase" qualifications for employers. Hence institutions now need to present themselves as being attractive for students. Some educational "features" have a higher

"status" than others. The danger of this narrow orientation is that the cultural, the emancipatory and the pedagogical functions of education in a democratic society may disappear or can become marginalized and that only the narrowly defined economic function of education will be one of the served. The challenges for the future of higher education institutions, particularly institutes for teacher education, is to accord greater importance to issues related to the needs of society, including cultural development. The marginalisation of intercultural education in teacher education could be the result of the marginalisation of the emancipatory, cultural and pedagogical functions of education<sup>8</sup>.

Another important factor is the organisation of teacher training institutes. Intercultural education requires an interdisciplinary approach. Universities and other institutions for higher education, including teacher education, are organised in faculties and disciplines. Functionaries within these sections derive their position from their discipline. They have no interest in the development of interdisciplinary courses as long as nobody who is in charge with the allocation of financial resources complains, and as long as those responsible for quality control ignore the importance of social and cultural diversity in the society.

In this respect some articles of the chapter on teacher preparation of the UNESCO recommendation of 1974 should be brought to the attention of the managers of teacher education, in which member states are recommended to *constantly improve the ways and means of preparing and certifying teachers and other educational personnel for their role in pursuing the objectives of this recommendation and should, to this end:*

*(33 e) develop aptitudes and skills such as a desire and ability to make educational innovations and to continue his or her training; experience in teamwork and in interdisciplinary studies; knowledge of group dynamics; and the ability to create favourable opportunities and take advantage of them*

To improve the quality of teacher education, both preservice as inservice, it is needed that

- institutes of teacher education explicitly position themselves with regard to the international commitments which are made by their governments, including the

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<sup>8</sup> Batelaan et al 1992, forthcoming

declaration of human rights, the convention of the rights of the child.

Governments may require them to be accountable towards society respecting the academic autonomy of each institution.

- The intercultural dimension in teacher education should be monitored in all quality control activities. The organisational structures of teacher education in the various countries should be evaluated, not only with respect to economic efficiency, but also with respect to the possibilities for interdisciplinary courses and activities.

- the development of an intercultural curriculum and appropriate organisation of the learning process which ensures the participation of all children, should be encouraged

- international networks of institutes for teacher education and schools to which they are related should be established. Such networks could be used for exchange of information, materials and methods, but also of staff. Funded international exchange programmes should be supportive for staff development.

What is needed is also an information campaign directed at teacher education. One of the problems of bureaucratic international institutions such as UNESCO who deal with national bureaucratic institutions such as governments, who deal with the institutional bureaucratic level of universities and colleges for teacher education, is that the professionals who have to carry out the decisions which are taken in conferences of bureaucrats, don't get the relevant information. National UNESCO committees are often marginalized within the national bureaucracies. Therefore a network of institutes for teacher education should - in cooperation with the respective NUC's - publicise the results of its work.

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