

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN PROMOTING CUBA'S INTEGRATION INTO THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY: LESSONS IN TRANSITION FROM THE POST-COMMUNIST STATES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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The evanescence of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989-91 is considered the end of the twentieth century, just as World War I, which led to the Russian Revolution in 1917, is presented as its beginning. During the first thirty years of that period, from the start of World War I to the end of World War II, there was remarkable political turmoil in Europe: leftist revolutions, coups d'état, military dictatorships, fascist regimes and civil wars. Yet this period might be placed as a relatively short parenthesis within a longer process dominated by significant progress in economic growth, political liberalization, and democratization, which have developed since the early nineteenth century.

Ultimately, the Soviet empire broke up into a myriad of nationalities and sovereign states. In August of 1991, in order to preserve the union, a group of politicians and bureaucrats performed a parody of a coup d'état against the communist leader Mikhail Gorbachev, which also failed unexpectedly. Soon thereafter, on Christmas Day, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proceeded peacefully to dissolve itself.

The surprise at discovering the previously unsuspected fragility of one to the two world superpowers detracted attention from the exemplariness of the transition processes. Never before had a number of such large and quick political transformations been attained with so high a rate of success and so low a level of violent conflict. From the late 1980's on, major

political and economic transformations were introduced in a total of twenty-eight countries. In a considerable majority of them, significant degrees of civil liberties and political competition to elect each of the new country's leader was established. This was mostly accomplished by creating and encouraging the expansion of an infrastructure that would help develop a civil society (create institutions) that would support these changes and transitions to a more democratic form of government in most of these countries.

The proliferation of old and new states now occupying the region of Eastern Europe and the Baltic Republics has created a tapestry of diversity in educational provisions, as in most other areas of civic life. Schopflin (1993) identifies three models of post-communist society that is worth mentioning. They are:

- **Traditional Society.** Defined by the area's rural past, its ideas strongly collectivist, negatively egalitarian or hierarchical, anti-intellectual, distrustful of politics and due to its lack of political sophistication, vulnerable to manipulation by populist demagogues. Recurring "revisionist" trends in Russia and its former states seem to go along with this definition.
- **Socialist Society.** This is where communist influence is still to be reckoned with. It is a society where the state is still considered the best guarantor of both individual and collective well-being.

It has a sizeable intelligentsia and upper echelons who have converted political power into economic power under post-communism. This is where the phenomenon of “Chauvino-Communism” emerged, where highly placed functionaries salvage political power by a rapid conversion to nationalism while often embracing market principles.

- **Liberal Society.** This is characterized by its openness to new ideas, to the market, to new initiatives, technology and a flexible political system based on compromise and openness to change. This system is the most difficult route to follow because it represents the total antithesis of what happened before. When it fails to deliver on its promises the consequences are extreme.

It will take sometime for the “new changes” introduced to rearrange themselves in patterns that seem appropriate to their changed environment. Of the institutions central to the perpetuation of the communist regime, education was the most jealously guarded because it represented the process of ideological transfer, without which the state had no claim on his citizenry. Communist societies such as Cuba, consider “ideas” weapons in the class struggle. They stress the function of education in particular in facilitating political indoctrination of the population and value education as a way to bring social equality. There is no question that the legacy of forty years of Soviet domination and central planning has been a major inhibitor in the restructuring of the education systems in these nations. What is emerging from the efforts of politicians looking at the West, and local leaders uncertain of their mandate is a disquieting mixture of radical progressivism on the one hand and historical nostalgia on the other.

CHALLENGES FACING TRANSITION

Transition from a non-democratic regime by agreement between different political actors is a rational game. If rulers are unable to maintain their unchallenged domination and the opposition is not powerful enough to impose its preferred regime alternative, two possible outcomes can result. The first is a civil war; that is, a confrontation between groups sustaining incompatible political alternatives in which they

will fight to eliminate each other. Eventually, one of the sides can become a single, absolute winner in what is usually called “revolution or counterrevolution.” Yet choosing a strategy of frontal conflict carries the risk of becoming an absolute loser, as well as the cost of significant destruction on both sides.

The second possible outcome is a compromise of national actors with different regime preferences on an intermediate formula between dictatorship and democracy. In order to be agreeable, a compromise must be reached which includes the calling of a multiparty election, which does not secure an absolute winner. On the other side, the ruler(s) can rely upon their advantage as an incumbent(s) to turn the compromise into a lasting “semi-democratic” regime, which would allow the ruler(s) not to be expelled from power or even, to recover some of their previously challenged positions. On the other side, the democratic opposition can envision the agreement as a merely transitory stage, giving it some chance of gaining power and introducing further reforms, which can lead to the eventual establishment of a democratic regime.

All of these scenarios cannot take place without having an educated and well-informed populace that can at least comprehend the purposes and principles behind all of these possible transitional scenarios.

The phrase “nations in transition” or “countries in transition,” as it is currently used in the literature, usually refers to the former communist countries (Birzea, 1994). However, the concept of “educational transition” discussed in this paper is not confined to transformations in the education system of communist countries since 1989. It is equally applicable to other countries that have experienced a transformation in their education system following a political transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic government.

In order to fully understand the processes of educational transition, it is necessary first to establish exactly what is meant by the phrase “educational transition.” What is the nature of education transition in countries moving from authoritarian rule to democratic government? The concept of “education transi-

tions” will be defined and the process described in board, non-country specific terms, with the help of the model depicted in Figure 1, which is offered as a tool to assist in the description and explanation of the educational transition processes which have occurred following recent political transitions.

Figure 1. Process of Educational Transition From Authoritarian Rule to Democratic Government

PHASE V:	IMPLEMENTATION AT SCHOOL LEVEL Micro-level Transition
PHASE IV:	EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION Macro-level Transition
PHASE III:	PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS Nature Of Future Educational System Clearer
PHASE II:	NATIONAL ELECTIONS National Policy Formulations
PHASE I:	INTERIM PHASE Uncertainty Prevails
PRE-PHASE:	Ideological Collapse Anti-authoritarian Climate
AUTHORITARIAN SYSTEM:	PREVAILING IDEOLOGY Threatened

The model was created by a small group of research scholars in Oxford, England (Oxford Studies in Comparative Education) in 1995. The group’s intention was to create a model, which would undergo considerable modification according to the situations in each country.

The beginning stage of the model intends to contrast certain states or conditions or education systems as they move from authoritarianism to democracy. This led the group to develop a list of descriptors and their opposites as reflected in the table below.

The model introduced in Figure 1 lays out the process of educational transition in countries moving from authoritarian rule to democratic government. The term “transition” is used in common discourse to refer to changes in such areas as age, occupation and social status. The tendency to equate changes and transition in this way, and to view life as “but a constant succession of changes in transition” (Birzea, 1994) has prompted certain scholars to define transi-

tions as a “permanent state of discontinuity in personal and communal life” (Adams, Birzea, 1994). However, the concept of transitions with which this paper is concerned is a far more complex phenomenon, and one which cannot simply be equated with change, where change is defined as no more than a variation, an alteration or the substitution of one thing for another.

Similarly, the standard use of the word “reform” fails to capture the essences of the transition processes addressed later in this paper, and thus the use “change” and “reform” interchangeably with “transition” in this context is to distort the essence of political, social and economic transformations which have occurred in many of the Soviet bloc countries since 1989. The educational transition processes in these countries following the collapse of the incumbent totalitarian regimes transpired not because of the simple change in government, but because of the wholesale transformation or transition of the prevailing political system. The educational transition process is not exemplified by the passage from one class to the next within a school, or even the graduation from one level to another within the education system as a whole. It is a far more complex concept, which as Badat has explained, is clearly related to the broader political arena (Badat, 1995). That is not to argue that every political change is accompanied by a change in the education system.

Unlike political transition, educational transition is neither easy nor simple to delimit. It may be relatively straightforward to identify the process of political transition as the primary catalyst, but to determine both a finite start and the end to the educational transition process is somewhat more difficult. With respect to its beginning, it can be argued that this coincides with the ideological collapse and that the process of educational transition, though passive at first, becomes active with the start of Phase I or the interim phase. Its end-point is even more of a challenge to delimit.

To summarize the nature of the educational transition process, it is important to emphasize that wholesale educational transition has its roots in the prevailing political climate and not in legislative reforms

pertaining to education (Birzea, 1994). This reality is clearly represented in the model presented. Another very important feature of educational transition is that it is a process, which takes a considerable length of time. Like the political transformation from authoritarianism to democracy, it does not occur instantaneously and involves the passage over time from a starting point that is certain to an end-point, which is, in the beginning, almost always relatively unknown.

TEACHING CIVIC EDUCATION FOR A DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The ideas of liberty, democracy and constitutionalism have risen in the world as the bastions of totalitarian communism crumbled and collapsed. The newly empowered citizens of these countries have tried to build democratic foundations for their evolving nation-states. In their daunting pursuit of liberty, they have understood that new curricula for their schools are as important as new constitutions for their governments. Among other educational goals, they have recognized that schools must teach young citizens the theory and practices of constitutional democracy if they would develop and sustain free societies and free governments.

Regardless of their differences in history, culture, and resources, all people interested in teaching constitutional democracy authentically and effectively must address general educational elements pertaining to civic knowledge, civic skills and civic virtues. These general and basic categories of civic education may be treated differently by educators of different countries according to their specific needs. But there are certain themes within each category that should apply to everyone. They are the criteria by which we define civic education for constitutional democracy. These criteria are: civic knowledge, civic skills, civic virtues and the role of the teacher.

Civic Knowledge

The first objective of civic education is to teach thoroughly the meaning of the most basic ideas, so that students will know what a constitutional democracy is and what it is not. If students would be prepared to act as citizens of a constitutional democracy, they must know how to distinguish this type of govern-

ment from other types. The label, constitutional democracy, has often been used by regimes with show-case constitutions proclaiming popular governments and individual rights, which have meant little or nothing to the regime's victims of tyranny. The so called "people's democracies" of former communist countries are tragic twentieth-century examples of the bogus use of a political label.

Through their civic education in schools, students should develop defensible criteria by which to think critically and evaluate the extent to which their government and other governments of the world do or do not function authentically as constitutional democracies. A few key concepts necessary to a deep understanding of constitutional democracy must be taught and learned. These are:

- Rule of law
- Limited government
- Representative government
- Individual rights
- Popular sovereignty
- Political participation
- Civil society

Students must learn how these key concepts of democratic political theory are institutionalized and practiced in their own country in comparison to other nation-states of the world. Finally, students must pursue inquiries about the transitional, generic, perennial problems of any constitutional democracy, such as: (a) how to combine liberty with order, majority rule with minority rights; and (b) private rights with the public good.

Everyone must understand that a constitutional democracy will fail if (a) the government has too much power or too little power; or (b) the government over-emphasizes majority rule at the expense of minority rights or vice-versa.

How to practically and effectively address these dilemmas is the ultimate challenge of citizenship in a constitutional democracy and the determiner of the political system's destiny.

Civic Skills

Core knowledge must be applied effectively to civic life if it would serve the needs of citizens and their "civitas." Thus, a central facet of civic education for constitutional democracy is development of intellectual skills and participatory skills, which enable citizens to think and act on behalf of their individual rights and the common good. Intellectual skills empower citizens to identify, describe and explain information and ideas pertinent to public issues and to make and defend decisions on these issues. Participatory skills empower citizens to influence public policy decisions and to hold accountable their representative in government. The development of civic skills requires intellectual active learning by students inside and outside the classroom. Students are continually challenged to use information and ideas, individually and collectively, to analyze case studies, respond to public issues, and resolve political problems.

Civic Virtues

A third generic category of democratic civic education pertains to virtues. These are traits of character necessary to presentation and improvement of a constitutional democracy. If citizens would enjoy the privileges and rights of their polity, they must take responsibility for them, which requires a certain measure of civic virtue.

Civic virtues, such as self-discipline, civility, compassion, tolerance, and respect of the worth and dignity of all individuals are indispensable to the proper functioning of civil society and constitutional government. These characteristics must be nurtured through various social agencies, including school, in a healthy constitutional democracy.

The Democratic Teacher

As educational reformers in former communist countries have begun to build new education programs for transition that will support democratic values, they have turned to the "Western World" for assistance in overcoming an imposing array of obstacles left by the communist system. These obstacles include the lack of classroom instructional materials, teachers with little or no understanding of democracy and no formal training in appropriate pedagogical techniques. However, transitional reforms moved forward. There

are three general components of democratic civic education, which transcends political boundaries and cultures. They are:

- Core concepts that denote essential knowledge.
- Intellectual and participatory skills that enable practical application of civic knowledge.
- Virtues that dispose citizens to act for the good of their community.

The effective democratic teacher develops lessons and learning activities for students that emphasize and intertwine the three generic components of civic education in a classroom environment compatible with the theory and practices of constitutional democracy and liberty.

The democratic teacher, for example, emphasizes interactive learning tasks in which students are challenged to take responsibility for their achievement of educational objectives. The democratic teacher encourages and protects free and open expression of ideas in an atmosphere of academic freedom.

Further, the democratic teacher establishes and applies rules fairly, according to principles of equal protection and due process for each individual. This is recognition that true liberty is inextricably connected with just rules, and that equal right to freedom of individuals depends upon an equitable rule of law for all members of the community. Finally, the democratic teacher creates a classroom environment in which the worth and dignity of each person is respected.

CASE STUDIES

Three countries in particular are worth mentioning in terms of their success in developing and implementing their respective education transitions projects. As we will see, their projects focused on providing training and skills for their citizens in the development of a democratic system. These countries are the Czech Republic, Latvia and Poland.

Czech Republic

On January 1, 1993, the establishment of separate Czech and Slovak Republics marked the start of separate democratic reform movements. After more than forty years of Soviet communist ideology as the cen-

tral theme in teacher education and curriculum development, Czech educational reformers turned to various western sources for assistance in reforming civic education. For example, the Center for Civic Education in California has worked closely with Czech reformers to establish national educational standards for the teaching and learning of civics and government. This project was funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Briefly, the intent of the project is to revise the existing social studies curricular framework for secondary schools (ages 17 to 18) by taking particular aim at overarching objectives for civic education reform started in 1989. These objectives include the elimination of Marxist-Leninist perspectives in the historical, philosophical, and social science content of the curriculum; the re-introduction of the study of religion into the curriculum; a renewed study of Czech history, culture, heritage, and geography; and a pedagogical shift from transmitting information to passive students in order to prompt inquiry and active learning. Accompanying each lesson is a teacher's manual that presents a rationale and suggestions for further use of the teaching methods employed in the new lessons.

As originally designed, the project included a core component known as the "Curriculum Development Workshop." The workshop provided training and practice for teachers on how to implement these concepts into the curriculum. The other two components were a partnership program linked to the workshop (U.S. teachers and Czech teachers) and the evaluation of the product by both parties. The evaluation provided the opportunity to access the effectiveness of the program in a timely manner that allowed for changes (if needed) to be developed and implemented.

The Curriculum Development Workshop met weekly on the University of Iowa campus. A selected group of Czech teachers took part in a twelve-week workshop. The workshop focused on the main task which was to develop a set of lessons based on the active learning strategies that foster democratic skills and attitudes. The content of the lessons centered on

five key concepts derived from the existing social sciences curriculum. These were:

- State and Government Policy.
- Constitutional and local law.
- Citizenship and Human Rights.
- Free Market Economics.
- The Czech Republic in a Global Community.

By the end of the workshop, the Czech teachers had written 61 lessons on 20 topics related to both the civic education reform objectives and the five key concepts of the social studies curriculum noted earlier. These lessons introduced teaching strategies rarely practiced before in the Czech Republic, such as role playing, simulations, educational games, decision trees, civic writing, and cooperative learning. Additionally, some lessons highlighted content areas new to Czech social studies courses including aids awareness, industrial pollution, and civic activism.

Four years later the same teachers involved in the development of the new curriculum conducted a workshop in the Czech Republic and invited educators from the United States to participate. The aim of the workshop was to review, evaluate and prepare new material for schools. At the same time, the Czech teachers conducted a workshop with Czech researchers on the methods of data collection and analysis required for a systematic evaluation of the new lessons. This component of the project focused on an evaluation of knowledge, skill, and attitude outcomes commonly associated with life in a democracy.

Given forty-three years of totalitarian communism, it is unreasonable to expect complete educational reform to result from one curriculum development project. However, the new education reform represents the kind of project that combines the educational expertise of a developed democracy with the contextual understanding of a transitional democracy in an effort to reform civic education through classroom practice. As Czech teachers continue to implement new curricula for democratic citizenship education, the greater the hope for a democratic citizenry becomes a reality in the Czech Republic.

Latvia

Knowing the close connection between well-educated citizens and democratic well being, many Latvians decided to reform their existing curriculum and teaching methods of their schools. They replaced the "Soviet-era" courses on citizenship with new teaching materials and methods suitable for citizenship in a "true" constitutional democracy. They also looked to the "West" for assistance which came initially from the World Federation of Free Latvians, an international organizations that nurtured the spirit of national independence and liberty during the long and difficult Soviet occupation of their homeland.

The American Latvian Association, a component of the World Federation of Free Latvians started a civic education project. Financial support for the project was provided by the National Endowment for Democracy, an agency of the Federal Government of the USA. The project started in 1993. Its purpose was to design and develop materials for new courses in the following areas:

- Civic Education
- Constitutional Law
- Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens
- Institutions of Government

These new courses were targeted at the upper-primary levels of school (8th and 9th graders). The introductory courses emphasized the interactions of citizens with the new constitutional government. More importantly, the teaching method adopted emphasized active learning instead of passive reception of information. The lessons required students to acquire and apply information and ideas to problems and issues rather than merely receive and repeat them. The teachers also adopted the use of higher-level cognitive operations involved in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of the subject matter. Various kinds of work group were used to teach skills of democratic participation and decision-making, such as: role playing, simulations, and political problem solving skills. All three of these ideas were accompanied by materials including a teacher handbook on civics, a student handbook on civics and testing materials.

From the beginning, the staff of the project considered the education of teachers to be a critical component of their work. Unless teachers understood the content and pedagogy of civic education for democracy, the core mission of the project would go unfulfilled. Therefore, starting in 1994, the project staff conducted more than 100 seminars and workshops for teachers in schools throughout Latvia. More than 800 teachers participated in these workshops the first year alone. These workshops were based on lessons and teaching methods developed in the teacher and student handbooks. Thus, by 1996, civic education had become part of the teacher education at three major universities in Latvia.

In its short life, the project has been very productive in promoting civic education for democracy in Latvia. Its mission its far from being finished. Challenges of the present and future include further promotion and development throughout Latvian society of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective and responsible citizenship in the constitutional democracy of the country.

Poland

One of the largest, most comprehensive projects of transition is the "Education for Democratic Citizenship in Poland," a cooperative effort of the Polish Ministry of National Education in local control schools in Warsaw, Poland. The project is often cited as a model of how to construct a long-term multi-dimensional approach to civic education reform.

The project started in 1991. The plan called for a set of distinct but related activities that would respond to specific, urgent problems identified by the Poles, such as the desperate need for new teaching materials. The overall goals of the project was to institutionalize civic education in all schools in Poland for the next decade as well as to build a national dialogue among Polish educators on the meaning of democratic citizenship and civic education with American educators.

To start, the National Endowment for Democracy funded a smaller-project, which involved twenty-five polish educators in developing curriculum guides and support materials. The guides presented the ra-

tionale, goals, objectives, and content outlines for primary and secondary school civic curriculum. For example, one supporting book presents 16 sample lessons plans illustrating topics and goals set forth in the curriculum guide. A second book consists of 36 readings on political life, citizenship, and human rights by prominent Polish scholars and political activists.

Another project was the “Primary School Civics Course,” funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. In this case, Polish university professors prepared detailed syllabus for a two-semester course on the principles of democracy as they applied to the organization and operations of schools. The syllabus was organized around topics. These were:

- Student rights and Responsibilities.
- Schools and the Local Community.
- The Role of Schools in a Democratic Society.

The syllabus included goals, detailed explanations, suggested readings, and sample teaching strategies for each topic.

In December 1993, a group of prominent educators and scholars across Poland met in Warsaw to critique and discuss the materials developed for these projects. The outcome of these meetings were very useful in the sense that new ideas were introduced and the curriculum and teaching methods were adopted according to the needs of the rapidly changing Polish society.

This program has been very successful from the point of view of integrating individuals and organizations within a democratic society. However, like the other cases, the program was reformed several times to address the rapidly changing needs of the Polish citizens and their governmental institutions.

What occurred in the Czech Republic, Latvia and Poland will not take place in Cuba. Why? First and foremost Fidel Castro has no intentions of retiring, sharing power, or even passing his authority to anyone including his brother Raúl while he is still alive. In the last several years, Fidel and Raúl have taken steps to plan for the day Fidel will no longer be around to govern Cuba. The initial plan can be de-

finied as measures that would centralize the authority of the regime under the leadership of his brother Raúl who lacks his older brother’s charisma and leadership qualities. This will also help preserve the ideological values of the revolution. The plan can be defined more of a “succession of power” rather than a “transition” like those that took place in Eastern Europe.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from Central and Eastern Europe. However, the Czech Republic has been the one country at the forefront in having its education system play a key and active role in their transition.

The government of the Czech Republic in 2001 approved “The National Program of Development Education.” The document is part of their strategy to further expend social and economic development in the country. The main focus of the plan is the development of the human and social capital by focusing on the creation of a “new” value system that emphasizes democratic citizenship and the quality of everyday life for its citizens. This was the first project adopted by the new government after the political changes of 1989 that focused on systematic reform.

The adopted strategy was an effort to upgrade the level of education and human resource development across all ages of society with the sole purpose of creating a strong civil society that could sustain a democratic society for years to come.

The creation of political and economic conditions for permanent change in attitudes towards investment in education was the main strategy behind the plan. These were:

- The implementation of a system of lifelong learning for all citizens.
- The adaptation of an educational system that takes into consideration the “everyday” needs of the “new” society and the “individual.”
- The development of a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. The promotion of internal reforms and openness of the edu-

educational institutions to deal with these new set of needs.

- Change the role and professional standards of the academic community at all levels.
- Transition from a centralized system of management to a decentralized system with specific accountability standards and measures.

Each strategic concept was characterized by the following aims and provisions:

- The implementation of a flexible system of life-long learning: The idea was to saturate and initiate educational needs in children, youth and adults in order to develop a civil society that could support a democratic form of government and a free economic system.
- The adaptation of an educational system that takes into consideration the "everyday" needs of society. The goal was to increase the quality and practical function of the education system in preparation for the demands a new system of government will place on its citizens. At the same time meet the demands of professional and technical training that would create individuals with employable skills that would sustain a developing economy.
- Development of a system that would monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. The idea was to monitor the input and output (product) of the education system to assure that the "new" citizens needs were been met.
- Promotion of internal reforms and openness of the educational institutions. The plan called for an autonomous system that would allow institutions to experiment with "new" educational techniques. The system also encouraged collaboration between the public and private sectors. Specifically along the lines of training, research and development.
- Change the role and professional standards of the academic community. Support and reward (financially) the academic community for designing academic programs that met the needs of society and that would be coordinated with the business sector. At the same time, the plan called

for strengthening the social and professional status of teachers and academics.

- Transition from a centralized system of educational management to a decentralized and flexible system that can react to the needs of its citizens quicker. This would be accomplished by having the active participation of the public and private sectors of civil society in the process of planning, organizing, implanting and evaluation. The plan also called for very specific accountability measures.

CONCLUSION

In summary, education reconstruction in a post-Communist country will continue to face many problems and obstacles. The key will be focused on the following: (a) physical reconstruction; (b) ideological reconstruction; (c) psychological reconstruction; (d) provision of materials and curricular reconstruction; and (e) human resources.

UNESCO's unit for educational rehabilitation and reconstruction speaks of reconstruction as a more or less protected process with short, medium and long-term goals. Emergency programs, concerned with basic requirements needed to get the education system working again, respond to the most urgent needs, both for the infrastructural and material, and for the human component. Priorities must be determined, as efforts will be directed toward basic needs. UNESCO argues that reconstruction must not be carried out piecemeal, but must be carefully planned implemented. Agencies concerned with reconstruction should ideally be formulating plans for intervention in education long before it is possible to put programs in place.

For the medium and longer-term reconstruction, UNESCO speaks of a "master plan" for the education system, which will emerge from the needs analysis based on the following dimensions and components. These are:

- Environmental
- Organizational
- Infrastructural
- Material and Financial

- Human
- Institutional
- Pedagogical
- Curricular

Effective planning for all aspects of educational reconstruction and capacity building will depend on the creation of organizational frameworks at the national, local and institutional levels.

Finally, the toughest challenge facing any post-communist country in its transition will be ideological and psychological reconstruction. These two issues need to be further explored and researched. However, they are worth mentioning in this paper. Ideological reconstruction in democratization is seen as a major concept in reforming authoritarian, totalitarian, autocratic systems and the attitudes of individuals and encouraging the replacement of previous structures and values. A vital aspect in the democratization of education is the encouragement of critical, independent and creative thinking. UNESCO strongly believes that to accomplish this task, the “new” education system in a transition should: (a) educate children and adults with a sense of openness and comprehension toward other people, their diverse cultures and histories and their fundamental shared humanity; and (b) teach them the importance of refusing violence and adopting peaceful means for resolving disagreements and conflicts.

A common feature of post-conflict situations is the presence of various psychological problems ranging from demoralization to severe trauma. The need for urgent psychological reconstruction has been recognized by a number of international agencies, as a key to any form for a successful transition.

In the confusion and deprivation, which often characterize post-crisis situations, it is not uncommon for

those affected to experience lack of confidence, low morale and frequently, nostalgia for the past. The re-establishment of morale and restoration of confidence is an arduous process that often creates a feeling of nostalgia for past practices and lifestyles as, for example, in many post-Soviet bloc countries where teachers and student continued to find the implementation of new policies, practices, and teaching and learning styles with which they are unfamiliar particularly difficult to cope with.

The uncertainty, insecurity and instability that follow periods of crises inevitably result in stress, anxiety and depression, conditions which often lead to physical illness in both adults and children. There is a widespread need for special rehabilitation programs designed to assist children traumatized by crises, especially following violence or the loss of a family member as a result of conflict. There are numerous examples of programs used by countries going through transition to help identify and treat trauma sufferers. However, it is important to recognize that psychological reconstruction, especially in the case of trauma is a long-term process. At the same time, trauma represents a serious obstacle where educational processes in schools are concerned. Regular schooling is important in the establishment of the secure, caring environment deemed by psychologist to be the most effective means of relieving psychological repercussions for children. However, we must not forget that psychological support for the teachers is also very important.

It is important in any transition to listen to individual needs and develop plans of actions, which are flexible and can be adopted to various ideological and psychological conditions. If this is not done from the beginning, then the transition process will be superficial and will eventually fail.

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