

LABOR MARKET AND DEVELOPMENT: UNESCO RESEARCH DATA ON HUMAN RESOURCE TRAINING

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ABSTRACT: *The Sustainable Development Goals Program was adopted by the United Nations in September 2015 and is an evolution of the Millennium Development Goals Program (2000-2015). Its main axes are economy, society and the environment, with an emphasis on education and training for professionals, which are considered to be fundamental foundations of economic and social development. UNESCO is called upon to play an important role in implementing the Agenda, as it has both the right experience and extensive diplomatic networks. To this end, it has drafted official texts on the achievement of the Agenda 2030 objectives. Its recent text, "Third World Report on Adult Learning and Adult Education" (GRALE III), presents the results of an international research involving 139 UNESCO member countries on the impact of Learning and Adult Education on Health, Prosperity, Employment and the Labor Market, Social, Political and Community Life. This study, through the qualitative analysis of the above-mentioned text, reflects and investigates the impact of education on the labor market and the development of human resources. The thematic analysis shows that the development of the labor market and human resources is linked to the type of education and skills provided by population group, financing, strategies and policy-making.*

KEYWORDS: UNESCO, labor market, education, skills, policy

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology has led to major changes in the workplace, resulting in a change in wages, productivity, working conditions and relationships, types of occupations and organizational models (UN Human Development Report, 2015). This pace of change is expected to continue in the coming decades, causing workers to feel uncertain, complex and volatile. In addition, strong demographic changes and increased life expectancy have the natural consequence of increasing work life limits. More and more elderly people continue to work or are forced to work, as one major concern of many countries is to protect their insurance funds. These particular conditions, coupled with intense population movements, have the effect of increasing populations that are vulnerable social, economic and professional groups. Groups that need to redefine their work profile and strengthen it with skills that will allow them to respond to the mental, physical and emotional demands of the new labor market.

In such a context, the training and education of potential professionals becomes a matter of major importance and a reference point for the policies of international organizations. Thus, the UN with the Sustainable Development Goals program, adopted in September 2015, establishes seventeen key objectives for sustainable development. As it is stated in the preamble of its official text, it is "an action plan for people, the planet and prosperity", with its main axes being economy, society and the environment (paragraphs 7, 19, 25). In addition, it aims to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and high-quality technical and vocational education, and calls on governments to equip adults with skills that will ensure decent work for everyone, increase productivity, promote and defend of their labor rights. In an effort to align with UN objectives, UNESCO has drafted texts which aim, through the adoption of common cohesion and synergy policies, to help achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

UNESCO's "Third World Report on Adult Learning and Adult Education" presents the results of an international survey involving 139 UNESCO member countries (197% response rate of 71%), on the impact of Learning and Adult Education in Health, Prosperity, Employment and the Labor Market, Social, Political and Community Life.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Education and development

At a time of particularly societal and economic characteristics, with strong demographic and environmental changes, high unemployment rates and continuing work evolutions education and training are called upon to play an important role. A multidimensional role that has specific characteristics as these are dictated by local, national and international treaties, adapted to the need to shape citizens capable of meeting modern requirements and contributing to the development.

Development is a process of economic and social transformation, while at the same time increases the reading and analysis of problems, contributes to individual, social and economic development in a complex, fluid and dynamic way (Escrigas, 2008). It is not just a goal or a simple quest but a continuous improvement process where education, research and innovation play an important role primarily through the change of individual and societies (Obanya, 2002).

According to Abiodun (1999), training differs from education, since it concentrates on raising abilities and skills required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job. On the other hand education represents a rising in knowledge and abilities that are not necessarily related with particular work. Training also changes beliefs, ideas and knowledge, individual's behavioral aspects in their relationship with work groups in the organization. In addition, according to Peteraf (1993), it is one of the major mechanisms that help organizations or services achieve their targets and find a competition feature.

The training programs can have a positive impact not only for individuals and the employers but for the societies and economies in which we live as well. The benefits for individuals are that they become more employable, they can progress along the career ladder or even switch employment or even occupation. The wider benefits for

them are that they feel healthier, they have a greater sense of well-being and last but not least they are more satisfied with their job. Many studies have observed that training helps boost productivity and enhances the activity rates of the workforce (Barron et al, 1997; Hanushek et al, 2011). Consequently, better employment has a positive impact on health and on social cohesion.

However the benefits of training should not be expected too quickly nor should they be taken for granted. In addition their success depends on how well and wisely they were designed (internal factors), but can also be highly dependent on external factors, such as societal norms and cultural practices. They should be anchored in a clear strategy that engages the right partners and reaches out to the right target group, especially when these include the most disadvantaged workers (Desjardins, forthcoming, 2017). In addition, the design of training programs should be based on various cognitive and behavioral theories, such as adult education and team dynamics and its main goal is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of employees , organizations and services consequently (Amisano, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

Research aim

The aim of this study is to explore through the thematic analysis of the recent UNESCO' s text "Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education. The Impact of Adult Learning and Education on Health and Well-being; Employment and the Labor Market; And Social, Civic and Community Life" the way in which the improvement of the labor market and the development of human resources can be achieved.

Research Questions

- How is education linked to the labor market and the development of human resources?
- Through which actions can the employee's work profile be strengthened?
- What population categories are the target of these actions?
- Who is involved and how in designing and implementing these actions?

Presentation of research material

Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, Social and Civic Life, (GRALE III, 2016)" refers to the implementation of the framework for action of Belem, which was adopted by 144 UNESCO member states at the 6th International Conference on Adult Learning and Adult Education in Brazil in 2009. This conference agreed on country actions to improve adult education and training policy, governance, funding, participation, inclusion, equality and quality. Since 1949, UNESCO has championed global dialogue and action on adult learning and education. Since then, five major conferences have been held.

This report, like the previous two, collects the latest developments in adult learning, highlights good policies and practices, encourages governments to undertake a process of evaluation and redefinition of their efforts based on the degree to which they achieve their goals. In addition, the findings of this report relate to and relate to the efforts of

the global community to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030, a UN Program for Global Sustainability and Development.

Presentation of a methodological tool

In this research for the examination of the research material, the qualitative analysis was used, namely the thematic analysis tool, with the help of thematic networks, which is an inductive analytical process and is based more on the principles of the argumentation theory of Toulmin, as reported in Attride & Stirling (2001). This method provides a methodical and systematic analysis of the material under investigation, facilitates the organization of analysis and allows a profound and rich exploration of the superficial and deeper structures of the text (Gibbs, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Boyatzis (1998) states that the thematic analysis is a process of coding quality information. In addition, it provides a rich, detailed and complex report of the data, while interpreting various aspects of the themes (Braun, Clarke, 2006).

Three classes of topics are included: basic theme, organizing, and global. The basic one is about the simplest features of text data, and by itself it gives little information about the text as a whole. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the content of the text, we must read it in relation to the other key issues and together they form the second class of subjects, the organizing theme. The organizational theme is a middle class theme, which organizes the core issues in groups of similar topics. Its role is also to increase the meaning and importance of a wider subject, which unites several organizational issues. This creates the third issue, the Global Theme. The overall theme is a superordinate theme and includes the basic idea of the text as a whole (Attride & Stirling, 2001).

Setting up of thematic networks

The global issue of the research material is the labor market. The organizational issues that emerged from the analysis of the text are: learning / education, target populations, policies - finance and skills.

Description of thematic networks

The first thematic network is about adult learning to become capable professionals and more opportunities in order to entry into the labor market. Learning, in particular, the "learning regions", "learning cities" and "learning communities", can serve as a foundation for development as they seek to enrich human potential, promote lifelong personal development, equality and social prosperity (Noguchi et al., 2015; Kearns, 2015; Longworth, 2012). This type of learning is based on the needs of the community and is facilitated through the development of social cohesion, the creation of conditions of prosperity and economic development, creating learning centers as they are formed by the synergy of citizens, non - governmental organizations and government institutions. Knowledge can be provided through formal or non-formal education and relies mostly on the use of technology tools that are becoming more and more accessible and user-friendly. Various internet applications, video tutorials, Webinars, social media and video conferencing, massive open online courses (MOOCs) offered on platforms such as Coursera, Udacity and edX open up access to quality learning opportunities for learners across the globe.

The second thematic network is targeted at the most important population groups, which are the target of education, learning, training and support of countries' policies in order to be able to cope with new economic, social, technological and professional challenges. Such groups, as recorded by the 139 UNESCO member countries, including Greece, are:

- Adults with a low level of literacy and basic skills.
- Young people who do not attend a training, employment or training program.
- People seeking to enrich their knowledge and skills.
- Individuals seeking personal development and widening of their knowledge.
- Workers in low-skilled, low-wage or precarious jobs.
- Residents of rural or sparsely populated areas.
- Persons seeking recognition and certification of prior knowledge.
- Socially excluded groups (eg homeless, ex-prisoners).
- Long-term unemployed.
- Women and middle-aged men.
- Ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities and indigenous peoples.
- Immigrants and refugees from other countries.
- Adults with disabilities.
- Parents and families.
- Older and retired (senior citizens).
- Single parent families.

According to UNESCO statistics, about 750 million adults are functionally illiterate. Approximately two out of three adults have poor reading and arithmetic skills, while the majority (63%) of adults who lack basic skills are women (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016). These figures show that indeed many people have been left behind, as opposed to the goal of Agenda 2030: "No one will be left behind"

In addition, the number of international migrants is 244 million and the number of domestic immigrants is 740 million (International Organization for Migration, 2015). Out of 244 million, 104 were born in Asia, 62 in Europe, 37 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 34 in Africa. Besides, the global urban population is estimated to grow from 3.9 billion (2014) to 6.4 by 2050. In terms of refugees, the total number of refugees worldwide is 19.5 million, with Turkey being the largest refugee – hosting country (1.6 million), followed by Pakistan (1.5 million), Lebanon (1.2 million) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (1 million) (UN, 2016). In addition, between 2015 and 2030, the world's number of people aged 65 and over will double and reach one billion, accounting for a total of 13% of the total population. These global trends vary from country to country, of course, as in some countries young people will still be at the bottom of the population pyramid.

The third thematic network concerns the knowledge and skills that are intended to be developed through the education provided. These skills at a first level relate to literacy and the provision of literacy and numeracy. Research shows the important benefits of these skills in the lives of adults, their families and their communities, as better socio-economic opportunities and employment opportunities are guaranteed (UNESCO

Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2013; Vorhaus et al., 2011). In addition, people who are literate trust a wider circle of people.

Of equal importance are the practical and digital skills, which increase the opportunities for information, communication and dialogue (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; Zinnbauer, 2007). In addition, the use of technology facilitates communication between students and schools, promotes the exchange and collaboration of students and staff, and develops knowledge feedback systems and learning techniques. However, all social and professional groups should have access to the internet and become capable users of technology (Carlsen et al., 2016). Research data show that despite the fact that 3.2 billion people worldwide use the internet, only 7% of households in the less developed countries have access to the Internet (International Telecommunication Union, 2015).

Another important category of skills, especially for vulnerable groups, is life skills, which can help adults become more flexible, improve their life quality, their mental health, and solve problems (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013; Jenkins, 2011). The building of these skills can contribute to the development of self-confidence, self-fulfillment and personal efficiency and performance (Schuller et al., 2006). Through these skills, people can take on new challenges and provide practical and emotional support to those around them (Balatti et al., 2007).

Another category of skills relates to cultural learning, thematic such as music, art, creative writing, theater, libraries. Their positive impact on identity, creating hope and developing motivation, trust, empathy and social commitment is great (Innocent, 2010). They are also associated with improving the quality of life (Jenkins, 2011) and help the individual to make a process of reconnection with classical cultural heritage (Zhang, 2008). In culturally heterogeneous societies such skills promote tolerance, tolerance, social cohesion and integration (Feksi, Mtey & Sulle, 2013; Fragozo et al., 2011; Kil et al., 2012; Nafukho et al., 2005; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007). The ability to co-operate and harmonize with others empowers workers and empowers them to participate in decisions concerning their workplace. Then they learn more about democratic participation and political conditions (Casey, 2009). In this way, economy and society can also be benefitted (De Leonardis et al., 2012).

In addition, skills related to "social capital" are also reported. These skills help the individual to participate in community and political life, to broaden their general knowledge, to become an active citizen and to maintain social connections (Bosche & Brady, 2013; Field, 2005). In addition, the strengthening of social capital is associated with the reduction of crime (Dawe, 2007) and the increase of volunteering (Boeck et al., 2009). Citizenship education programs not only promote active participation in political affairs but also adult political capacities (Vicente, 2014). This has the effect of making the political system more reliable. Finally, economic skills are equally important as they contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainability and Development. Through the thematic analysis,

these skills are also associated with ethics that help workers develop their "moral compass" and thus fulfill their corporate and social responsibility (Hartman, 2013).

The fourth thematic network is related to human resources development support policies, which, according to thematic analysis of the text, are inclusive, holistic, inclusive and link all aspects of learning and education (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2010). The "Belem Framework" (2009) and the "UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Education and Learning" (2015) are key tools for promoting adult education and training. Policy makers are called upon to modernize their policies, control and evaluate their implementation, to have a framework for the allocation of educational resources (Schuller, 2009). According to UNESCO research data, 75% of the countries that participated in the research significantly improved adult education and learning, 70% introduced new policies, 71% had a framework for political recognition and certification of formal and non-formal education. As far as funding policies are concerned, 42% of countries spend less than 1% of the public education budget for adult education and only 23% spend more than 4%. However, 57% of countries in total and 90% of low-income countries are planning to increase public spending on adult education. Moreover, not all countries interpret policies in the same way. Others use them as a more general frame of reference for their decisions and actions and others to refer to established practices. In any case countries should invest in training programs for all groups, especially the most vulnerable.

DISCUSSION

The research results obtained through content analysis have shown that the labor market is significantly influenced by the education and training provided to human resources. Countries are trying, through concrete actions, to upgrade labor supply to meet new work evolutions. The main characteristics of education are quality and equality. The development of common policies, as defined by international developments and by the particular requirements of society, contributes towards this direction. Emphasis is placed on the type of skills that are inevitably linked to the efficiency and effectiveness of employees. However, the planning of programs should take into account the needs of the target group. Training for elderly people, for example, should be taken seriously into account, given that life expectancy after retirement has risen to 19 years for men and 23 years for women. Thus, often mature people are willing to continue to work formally or on a voluntary basis. They therefore need appropriate opportunities and skills. The most disadvantaged groups need basic literacy and numeracy skills to feel safe, effective and efficient in their workplace. Other categories of professionals need training that will enhance the skills they have already acquired (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015).

In any case the labor market needs to recognize and certify participation and completion of training programs (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010). Some countries, such as the Netherlands and Finland, are continually reinforcing workers' skills profiles and qualifications certification structures (Singh & Duvekot, 2013; Gaylor, 2015). In countries such as Ghana, China and India, emphasis is placed on formal qualifications. In Ghana, the new certification system is expected to recognize non-formal education related to specialized professions (Baffour-Awuah, 2013). Thus, UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning, in collaboration with Cedefop

and the European Training Foundation, has developed the Global Record of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (2015) Inventory of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (2015).

IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The usefulness of this study lies in the fact that it provides useful information about UNESCO's efforts to meet the demands of contemporary work. These efforts can be compared to those of other international organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the UN, thus creating large databases. Data that will multiply and will be indicators of evaluation and comparison of relevant actions at local, national or international level.

CONCLUSION

Underemployment is now a global phenomenon. More and more people are either inactive or working somewhere below their level of skills and abilities. In addition, the nature of work and employment contracts are constantly changing and there is a shift from full employment to short-term contracts with irregular hours of work. These phenomena mainly affect women. In addition, the new trends shift the responsibility for training and developing skills to the individual (International Labor Organization, 2015). Countries, through appropriate policies, should strike the right balance between public and private provision of education and training. Education, through its various forms, should be aimed at the real needs of all professionals and prospective professionals. Research data show that training primarily concerns groups of workers with already recognized qualifications and not disadvantaged groups. In such a case, however, there is a risk that inequalities between workers will be mitigated. Education needs to reduce inequalities, not to exacerbate them.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This UNESCO text highlights with research evidence the impact of education on the labor market. Most countries would agree that education has a major impact on productivity and labor market. Emphasis is placed on the adoption of corresponding policies, on the search for ways of financing, on the cohesion and co-operation of many actors and partners. The main axis of education is skills. Economic, cognitive, digital, social, ethical skills that will contribute to global development and sustainability. It would be useful in future other countries to be involved in surveys conducted by all international organizations. A comparative approach could then be made regarding their actions and their willingness to contribute to the implementation of the UN's seventeen goals of growth and prosperity. A comparison that will lead to the enrichment of international data and its subsequent dissemination. As policymakers look to the future, they will need to develop a deeper understanding of the interrelationships of different policy solutions, and how different mixes of policies can either exacerbate or redress inequalities.

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