

RECOMMENDATION No. 30
concerning
THE TEACHING OF HANDICRAFTS
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
(1950)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened at Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Bureau of Education and being assembled on the sixth of July for its thirteenth session adopts on the twelfth of July, nineteen hundred and fifty, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering that progress in the science of education shows the necessity of developing all the potentialities of children and adolescents in order to obtain a complete and harmonious personality;

That this is a valid principle for the whole period of an individual's development and not only for the period of primary schooling;

That educational craft activities are indispensable for correcting the effects of a secondary training which is often too bookish, giving young people a greater sense of reality, turning to account their inner need to be active and helping them to appreciate the value of work with the hands;

That handicrafts constitute not only a valuable element in the moral, social and aesthetic training of children and adolescents, but also provide the pupils with inexhaustible sources of interest and means of self-expression, and that they help to make instruction concrete and to integrate the various subjects of the curriculum;

That handicrafts are especially valuable as a means of revealing the aptitudes and other aspects of the adolescent's personality, and thus of facilitating school and vocational guidance;

Submits to the Ministries of Education of the various countries the following recommendation:

1) That handicrafts be included wherever possible in the curricula of the different courses, of all secondary schools, as:

a) an obligatory subject in the lower classes,

b) at least an optional subject in the upper classes, and that where it is optional, students be encouraged to take it;

2) That the time devoted to handicrafts be sufficient to maintain interest, and wherever they constitute a separate subject, the periods be grouped so as to permit a reasonable continuity of work;

3) That the handicrafts syllabus comprise not only the customary activities (woodwork, metalwork, dressmaking, domestic science, cardboard work, etc.), but also other activities such as bookbinding, weaving leather work, ceramics, pottery and modelling, and gardening, animal husbandry or agriculture;

4) That, in selecting the crafts to be offered, due regard be paid to the resources, needs and facilities peculiar to each local, regional and national environment;

5) That greater opportunity be given to pupils of either sex to engage in crafts hitherto reserved for one sex;

6) That the teaching methods employed appeal to an adolescent's creative freedom, and give him the opportunity to make complete and useful objects suited to his interests and age, and his individual abilities and educational needs;

7) That educational handicrafts should not be confused with vocational training, but should not fail to inculcate correct habits of workmanship;

8) That teachers responsible for handicrafts endeavour to obtain from their pupils work that is not only useful but also beautiful, and thus develop artistic taste;

9) That handicrafts be treated where appropriate as a group activity so as to give pupils the experience of working together;

R 30

10) That secondary handicrafts classes should recognize the value of making things useful for the school, or simple materials for the infant or primary school, and thus help to create a relationship and a spirit of cooperation between the different levels of education;

11) That handicrafts teachers establish close contact with the teachers of other subjects, so as to give concrete support when possible;

12) That work cards should be published to guide the pupils, and books to inform teachers about the methods of the subject;

13) That an effort be made to provide every school with an adequately built and equipped workshop and, if possible, with a piece of land for gardening or agriculture;

14) That the equipment and tools used take account of the age, health and physical capacity of the pupils;

15) That materials for handicrafts be supplied free, wherever possible;

16) That the subject be taught by persons qualified pedagogically as well as technically;

17) That introductory and further training courses be organized periodically to keep teachers of the subject informed of current methods and developments;

18) That national or international exhibitions, such as the Permanent Exhibition of the International Bureau of Education, be organized, that educational authorities facilitate visits to schools at home or even abroad, and that exchanges of craft work be encouraged between the schools of different countries;

19) That all secondary teachers should be made aware of the importance and the value of handicrafts and of the help that can be derived from them in teaching general subjects;

20) That teachers of handicrafts be encouraged to form associations with a view to the organization of introductory and refresher courses and to the steady improvement of the teaching of the subject.