

RECOMMENDATION No. 40
TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION
concerning
THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION
(1955)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened in Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the International Bureau of Education, and having assembled on the fourth day of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-five for its eighteenth session, adopts, on the eleventh day of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-five, the following Recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering that education authorities must dispose of adequate funds to be able fully to implement Recommendations Nos. 32, 34, 36, 37, 38 and 39, on Compulsory Education and Its Prolongation, Access of Women to Education, Primary and Secondary Teacher Training, and the Status of Primary and Secondary Teachers, as formulated and adopted by the XIVth, XVth, XVIth and XVIIth Sessions of the International Conference on Public Education,

Considering that in the field of educational financing no discrimination should be made in regard to such matters as race, nationality, sex, religion or social position,

Considering that increases in the funds required for education are inevitable, in view of the development of education at all levels, due to an increased birth rate, to the introduction or extension of compulsory education, and to the extension of adult education, and in view of the rising costs of school equipment, staff and welfare activities,

Considering that increases in public education budgets have in many cases been largely offset by inflation,

Considering that without prejudice to contributions from both public and private bodies, the main source of financing public education should be the budgets of the public authorities at different levels, as these budgets are the most stable source of financing,

Considering that peace is the basic condition of the development of education, since it is a source of wealth whereas war is a source of destruction and non-productive expenditure, and that it is therefore desirable to devote to education a portion of the funds now devoted to armaments,

Considering that well-developed systems of education have promoted economic, social and human progress in countries where such systems exist, and that the progress in these countries offers a forceful argument for further increases in the funds for education in all countries,

Considering that the rapid development of national culture and education in dependent and under-developed countries is of great importance,

Considering that countries sharing similar aims, but having different economic, financial and administrative systems, need to find varied solutions to the problem of financing education,

Submits to the Ministries of Education of the several countries the following Recommendation:

General

1) Without contesting the importance of other items, education should be given, at all times, a leading place among the financial responsibilities borne by the public authorities;

2) The steady expansion of education requires increase of the education budget as a whole; the creation of new services or the development of already existing services should not involve a reduction in other essential educational services;

3) The leading place in regard to financing to which education may justly lay claim, should go hand-in-hand with the utmost care by the education services to make the best use of the funds placed at their disposal through the sacrifices agreed upon by the community;

4) In view of the increasing importance of the financial factor in the expansion of education, it is desirable that legal provisions, whether

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constitutional or statutory, should make reference to the financial responsibilities for education of the public authorities at the various levels;

5) It would be desirable to collect and publish data which might be used to inform the public of the economic, and the resulting moral and cultural, benefits of expenditure on education.

Study of educational financing

6) In order to raise the efficiency of systems of financing education, it is desirable, where other suitable methods and procedures are not available, to set up a commission of inquiry in each country, composed of representatives of the competent educational and financial authorities, and of the persons benefiting from education;

7) The activities of commissions of inquiry on educational financing should cover not only current problems, but also estimates of future needs as seen in the light of present trends, quantitative and qualitative changes in education, and changes in national income and tax revenues;

8) The findings of commissions of inquiry on educational financing should be used in

a) the preparation of the annual education budgets at the various levels of responsibility,

b) the planning of specific educational programmes with a term exceeding that of the fiscal year,

c) the drafting of all new legislation of educational financing, and

d) the preparation of all education acts and decrees involving appropriations;

9) The work of commissions of inquiry on educational financing should give emphasis to statistical data and include consideration of the following factors:

a) economic factors, such as level of national income, natural resources, degree of industrialization, agricultural production, standard of living, and possibilities of economic development;

b) administrative factors, such as administrative structure at national, regional, and local levels, fiscal system, and systems of financing;

c) demographic factors, such as changes in population, changes in distribution of population as between urban and rural areas, and

increases in school enrolments, in particular at primary level in countries where compulsory education is not yet universal;

d) educational factors, such as the level of development of the educational system in regard to staffing, equipment, auxiliary and extra-scholastic services, etc.;

10) Among the matters calling for study by commissions of inquiry on educational financing, the following appear most urgent: coordination of financing effected by the public authorities concerned with education; simplification of the administration and control of financing; comparison of the national system of educational financing with that of other countries; study of those types of education urgently needing increased financial support; estimation of future educational needs in terms of predicted fiscal resources.

Financial responsibilities of public authorities at the various levels

11) Without evaluating the educational financing system of any given country, which derives from that country's administrative structure, which in turn derives from its geographical, historical, political, economic, social, and other conditions, endeavours should be made to eliminate all duplication of effort to simplify without prejudice to efficiency the distribution of financial responsibility among the central (federal) authorities, the regional authorities (states, provinces, cantons, etc., in federal countries, provinces, departments, etc., in non-federal countries), and the local authorities (municipalities or school district authorities combining a number of communes);

12) In countries of large area or with sharply differentiated racial and cultural groupings, a large measure of financial responsibility for education should be given to the public authorities of the states, provinces, cantons, etc., the function of these authorities then being comparable to that of the central authorities in other countries;

13) In deciding the part to be played by local authorities in educational financing, in relation to the central (federal) and regional authorities, due account should be taken of the degree of development and vigour of local activity, and of the resources available to local authorities for meeting the financial and other responsibilities envisaged for them; the central authority should concern itself with a just distribution of the funds available for education in each district, so as to ensure each citizen the full exercise of his right to education;

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14) In countries where financial responsibilities are distributed among the public authorities at the different levels, it is desirable that with a varying amount of support from the central (federal) and regional authorities, local authorities should mainly be made financially responsible for pre-primary and compulsory education, and auxiliary services, and (especially where the local authorities are of adequate size) for other kinds of educational expenditure;

15) Where financial assistance is provided by a higher authority to local authorities, such assistance should be based on the principle that assistance should be higher in the case of local or regional authorities whose economic or tax-paying ability is low, and vice versa;

16) The financial control exercised by the several public authorities over the various categories of schools and educational activities they finance, should be rationalized and simplified as fully as possible, and should never be allowed to impede the operation, efficiency, and development of educational work.

Financing the several levels of education

17) Although the public authorities generally attach less importance to pre-primary education, their attention should be drawn to the increasingly heavy responsibilities they will be called on to bear in this field, due account being taken of the rights and duties of the family;

18) In countries where compulsory primary education for both sexes is not yet effectively universal, priority should be given to the capital and operational expenditures involved, so as to make it universal as rapidly as possible;

19) The attention of the public authorities of all countries needs urgently to be drawn to the financial implications of the growing movement towards equality of access to secondary education without discrimination as to race, sex, social position, or religion; all the evidence seems to indicate that secondary enrolments will reach the level of primary enrolments, by a date varying from country to country;

20) In view of the quantitative and qualitative development of technical and vocational education (involving increasingly advanced specialization) and of the high cost of the equipment required, there is every reason to believe that expenditures on this type of education will increase; inasmuch as the structure of technical and vocational education is still fairly elastic in certain countries, it is now the time to envisage

a) coordination of that structure with that of primary, secondary, and higher education,

b) efficient planning of the financing of technical and vocational education by the central (federal), regional, and local authorities,

c) coordination of the financing effected by Ministries of Education on the one hand, and non-educational Ministries on the other, and

d) an increase of voluntary assistance from private quarters, which thanks to the development of technical and vocational education have now been largely relieved of responsibility for apprenticeship training;

21) Since universities in all countries are facing additional expenditures because of increased enrolments, additional specialized courses, the need for modern equipment in certain departments and faculties, the expansion of scientific research, and the introduction of new methods, such as seminars, which involve an increase in staff, additional funds should be supplied to the universities from public authorities, without prejudice to the increasing trend toward the autonomy of these institutions in certain countries;

22) All countries, in particular those in which compulsory education is not yet universal, are being called on to bear increased burdens in respect of teacher training, arising from the increase of primary enrolments and the resulting shortage of teachers, and the need for longer and more thorough programmes of teacher training; primary teacher training is most affected, but steps should nevertheless be taken at once to make plans for expanding the training of teachers for secondary and technical and vocational schools;

23) Public authorities should give financial support, both directly and through other organizations working in the field, to the establishment and development of adult education programmes, already being developed in some countries in the form of literacy and fundamental education campaigns linked up with the universalization of compulsory education, and in other countries as part of post-primary cultural education schemes which will gain in importance and be increasingly demanded as working hours diminish;

24) The education of handicapped children (mentally deficient, blind, deaf-and-dumb, backward, physically handicapped, socially maladjusted children, etc.), should receive adequate financial support from public authorities, and there should be close coordination between these authorities and the various public and private bodies engaged in this field in certain countries.

Financing specific categories of expenditures

25) The unavoidable necessity of ensuring teachers living conditions worthy of their mission, and the increased need for teachers at all levels of education, will necessarily accentuate the increase of operational costs; while a better organization (of secondary, and technical and vocational education, for example) may effect some economies, it is nevertheless evident that delay in considering the whole problem of increasing expenditures on the recruitment and salaries of teachers will merely retard and impede the solution of that problem;

26) The increase of enrolments at all levels, new educational, hygienic, and technical demands in respect of buildings and equipment, and the steadily rising cost of materials and labour, will call for a series of emergency measures based on sound statistical data and embracing among others:

a) simplification and standardization of plans for school buildings and equipment,

b) the drawing up of school building programmes where need be in the framework of long-term economic and social development plans;

c) appeals and loans to implement these programmes, and

d) assistance in money or kind from private sources;

27) The public authorities should set up and develop such services as school meals and clothing services, scholarship schemes, excursions and holiday camps; they and the private bodies concerned should coordinate their work in these fields, in order to secure satisfactory distribution of the available resources.

Special means of financing education

28) The execution of large-scale programmes of school construction, and of plans involving, for example, literacy and fundamental education campaigns, can be accelerated if, in addition to the ordinary budgets, the responsible public authorities provide special funds or extraordinary budgets for financing such programmes or plans;

29) The drawing up of plans for financing education, the term of which exceeds that of the financial year (five-year plans, for example), seems to be necessary in connection with the planning of programmes; gradual realization over a number of years makes a rationalization and coordination of efforts possible such as could not be hoped for with programmes which have to be completed within twelve months;

30) It is desirable to resort, where appropriate, to loans for financing capital expenditures (school building, repair, equipment, etc.); this system permits the financial charges to be spread over a number of years and enables the coming generations to share in paying for improvements in which they will benefit; while the higher authorities should authorize and control the use of loans, they should also facilitate the negotiation of such loans on advantageous terms;

31) From the financial point of view, in those countries where some educational establishments are under non-educational Ministries or Departments (of Labour Public Works, the Interior, Justice, Public Health, etc.), it is desirable that close coordination should be instituted among all the authorities responsible for financing;

32) In those countries where some specific categories of educational expenditures (school building, for example or school meals or medical services) are under non-educational Ministries or Departments, the same close coordination should be set up among all the authorities involved.

Sources of educational appropriations

33) In most countries funds for financing education derive from general receipts, especially in the case of central authorities, and regional authorities in federal countries; it might nevertheless be useful to note that some countries have recourse to special taxes (on property, sales tobacco, liquors, etc.), particularly at local level;

34) As part of the movement to extend free education the abolition of enrolment, examination, and certification fees for all kinds of education may well be envisaged;

35) Collections, gifts of materials, festivals, sport events, school cooperatives, aid from parents' associations, etc., are all useful aids to financing certain educational expenditures, and are of special value at the local level.

Private initiative and educational financing

36) In certain countries where compulsory education has not yet been universalized, substantial commercial, industrial, mining, and agricultural undertakings are required to assist with the financing of compulsory education from their own resources; this requirement appears to find its main justification in isolated areas or places situated at great distances from centres operating public schools;

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37) The immediate beneficiaries of certain educational programmes should, whenever possible, actively assist in their implementation; the press and publishers, for example, might assist in literacy campaigns and industrial undertakings in the promotion of technical and vocational education;

38) Appropriate means should be found (publicity for donors, for example) to foster and encourage bequests and gifts from private sources, for such purposes as school building, sites, scholarships, and the establishment of endowments for research;

39) In countries where the public authorities deem it desirable to raise the standard of independent educational establishments through the grant of assistance in money or kind, the following considerations, due account being taken of the diversity of the problems involved, merit attention:

a) without prejudice to the rightful independence of a private service, independent educational establishments receiving public aid may reasonably be asked to give certain minimum guarantees in respect of the standard of their buildings, equipment, materials, and teachers' qualifications and salaries;

b) the various steps taken to assist independent educational establishments should be coordinated, whether such steps take the form of grants and subsidies, free equipment and materials, teachers seconded from the public service, free provision of school materials, medical attention, transport of pupils or public provision of welfare services, etc.

Aid from international sources

40) While all thanks are due to the international, regional, and national bodies responsible for the increased aid given to educational activities in certain countries, it is nevertheless desirable to remind all such bodies that even more aid is urgently required, either by increasing the proportion which is to be given to education in the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, or possibly by the creation of an international fund for education;

41) For financing projects such as school building, literacy and fundamental education campaigns, aid from foreign international or national sources can perhaps most usefully be offered in the form of loans or subsidies; other forms of aid, however, are also of very great

value, whether technical (the dispatch of experts on missions, seconding of teachers, organizing of conferences and seminars, grant of scholarships and fellowships, etc.) or made in kind (school equipment and materials, scientific and other books, food for school meals services, etc.);

42) National isolation in regard to educational matters is now almost a thing of the past, thanks to the scholarships offered by international and national bodies to the citizens of all nations, and the aid given from external sources to educational establishments in certain countries; the coming of the spirit of worldwide cooperation to which this fact witnesses has an important bearing on the financing of education, and will strengthen the cultural linking-up of different nations and civilizations.