

**RECOMMENDATION No. 60**  
**TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION**  
**concerning**  
**THE ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**  
(1966)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened in Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Bureau of Education, having assembled on the seventh of July, nineteen hundred and sixty-six for its twenty-ninth session, adopts on the fifteenth of July, nineteen hundred and sixty-six, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering that, ever since its first session, the International Conference on Public Education has, in a number of its recommendations, stressed the need for the systematic understanding of the child and of the human being in general as the starting point for any educational activity,

Considering also Recommendation No. 44 on the expansion of school buildings and Recommendation No. 54 on educational planning,

Considering the importance of scientific research—of which educational research forms an integral part—in all fields, and its bearing on the development of human activities and their efficacy,

Considering that the aim of the science of education should be to promote the fullest development of the human being from the physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic and social points of view and to ensure that he obtains the best possible training and can adapt himself to his social environment,

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Considering that the solution of educational problems and the application of numerous educational reforms will sooner or later demand objective research and experiment while, at the same time, preserving the essential underlying values which determine the true meaning and successful outcome of all education,

Considering the ever-increasing importance which the identification and study of educational problems has for the moral, cultural, social and economic improvement of mankind,

Considering that school curricula are becoming more exacting at all stages of education, and having regard to the fact that a child of whom too much is required at a given stage in his development may suffer serious physical and mental consequences, which can impede his further progress,

Considering the extension of the fields of education to include continued education and adult education, thus implying the use of new methods and techniques,

Considering the increased demand in various countries for experts in educational psychology, experimental education, educational planning, school guidance, educational sociology and problems connected with development, etc.,

Considering the existence of and the work done in various countries by, institutes for educational research, university laboratories of experimental education and national and international non-governmental bodies carrying out educational research,

Considering that, although aspirations are similar, it is necessary to provide differing solutions for educational problems, adapted to the conditions, opportunities, traditions and structures peculiar to each country,

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

### **I. Aims of Educational Research**

#### *Introduction*

The objectives of education must be progressively more clearly defined, and its resources, its content and its methods of work constantly improved. This can only be done if educational research is organized and improved. Educational research is essential if education is to be founded upon scientific criteria, derived from theoretical,

historical and interdisciplinary studies, objective observation and experiment, and on the experience of educators.

1) The main aim of educational research is to discover the laws and principles of the educative process, in order to stimulate the evolution and progress of education.

2) To attain these aims, educational research serves to establish theoretical and scientific bases constituting short and long-term educational goals suitable for the country in question. Such goals should result from objective study of the existing human and material resources as well as the opportunities for improvement and more efficient development of these resources.

3) At the instructional level, the object of research is to improve the quality and the efficacy of instruction by continually bringing up to date syllabuses, methods, means and evaluation procedures at all levels, while taking into account at each stage the concepts to be learnt, the habits to be acquired and the pupils' ability to improve.

4) Educational research also aims at discovering means of improving:

*a)* the quality of out-of-school education, provided by the family, governmental and non-governmental youth organizations, boarding schools of all kinds, etc.,

*b)* the results of educational and vocational guidance methods used

*c)* the quality and standard of difficulty of the textbooks.

Research in comparative education can be extremely useful in all these fields.

5) It is essential to study the impact on the developing human being, of non-educational factors such as mass-media, general conditions of life, work and leisure occupations, as well as the consequences of the changing aspects of physical development on the young.

## **II. Organization of Educational Research and Nature of the Work**

6) Institutes of educational research and independent workers who are qualified and whose work falls within the general plan of research should have at their disposal adequate funds, provided by governmental authorities as well as by private foundations, to ensure that their work may be effectively carried out under optimal conditions and their results published.

7) The value of educational research depends on the reasoned choice of subjects to be studied, on the methods of work, on the conditions of objectivity and control under which it is carried out and on the scientific precision observed by those who undertake it.

8) The main fields in which educational research takes place depend upon its aims as a science. This implies knowledge of the relevant findings of psychology, sociology, physiology and economics, in addition to specific research studies on the methods and means of education, taking into account the needs and abilities of children, adolescents and adults and the needs and resources of society. Research into the laws and history of education is also pertinent to educational research but should be carried out in accordance with its own appropriate scientific methodology.

9) Educational research can take place in the laboratory, in the classrooms or in other social contexts. In all inquiries exact evaluation and/or theoretical explanation must be observed in order to distinguish true research from simple innovation.

10) As far as possible, research into general problems of education and instruction should, within a foreseeable future, be integrated into an overall plan designed to strengthen solidarity among research workers by clarifying their responsibilities.

11) The rational organization of educational research on a national level demands that plans covering several years and one-year plans be drawn up for each scientific institute and also that the plans of several scientific institutes collaborating in the study of the same problem be co-ordinated.

12) All research and experiment in education must be so conceived and pursued as to cause no kind of harm to the children, adolescents or adults whose behaviour is under study.

13) Since education in general and the relevant research increasingly overlap with subjects other than the science of education, it is often necessary to give these studies an interdisciplinary character. Furthermore, in view of the complex nature of educational phenomena, for the purpose of scientific study, research may be carried out with the help of physiologists, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and experts in other fields. The interdisciplinary nature of educational research is further stressed by the growing interest of scientists and scholars in other fields of education as a whole.

14) It is recommended that centres of educational research and

laboratories be set up in countries where they do not yet exist, so that educational research may be effectively organized. It is further recommended that co-operation be organized, improved and intensified between countries where such centres exist.

15) The activities of a laboratory of experimental educational research depend on certain material conditions. Educational research centres must also be provided with all the necessary material and equipment which are indispensable to their proper working: machines, documentation, etc. It is, however, useful to recall that a great deal of educational research can be carried out without expensive equipment.

16) For the work itself the active co-operation of the education authorities and of teachers is essential. In view of experiments carried out in certain countries, it is important to arouse in teachers at all levels and in all schools and extra-scholastic establishments a desire to take a direct and active part in educational research in particular by inviting them to put questions directly or indirectly to research centres.

17) If its results are to be applied educational research often calls for wider, more comprehensive and more far-reaching studies than would be undertaken by a teacher who is seeking to improve his methods. To this end, experimental schools in which the reforms will be studied by teams should be set up and carefully supervised.

18) Problems which are to be made the subject of research must be selected and evaluated with care, so that the original character of such research, its practicability and the possibility of using its implications are ensured.

### **III. Diffusion and Application of the Results**

19) Scientific research can be considered as completed when its conclusive results can be put into practice. The planning and organization of research should take account of the fact that it must, in principle, lead to results which can be applied.

20) Measures for ensuring the widest possible diffusion of the results of educational research and experimentation must be devised in each country. These include publications, lectures, exhibitions, demonstration lessons, retraining sessions for teachers, etc. Means must be found for ensuring that the results of such research are applied without delay.

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21) Whenever the volume of work justifies this, the service co-ordinating educational research should draw up a periodical inventory of the studies being carried out, publish it and distribute it, both nationally and internationally.

22) There are two main methods for the diffusion of results:

*a)* an article, monograph or book presenting the evidence as well as the conclusions in such a way that research workers in other countries may be able to assess the work done and determine in what circumstances the results can be applied in their own country;

*b)* articles and textbooks for administrators, teachers and other educationists, as well as parents, in which the research worker's specialized language is not used.

23) It is essential that educational research be carried out in close collaboration with the schools concerned.

24) Educational research constitutes a means to an end and not an end in itself. For this reason the results obtained should be expressed in the form of syllabuses, teaching methods and techniques and other relevant practical measures.

25) In the absence of experimental schools as such, experimental classes may be set up in ordinary schools to enable research results to be gradually introduced into teaching.

26) Lessons on educational research in progress should be introduced into the syllabuses of teacher training institutes as well as in those of establishments or courses for the further in-service training of teaching staffs.

27) Close collaboration between educational research centres and school authorities is essential for the successful diffusion and implementation of the results of scientific research.

### IV. Staff Dealing with Educational Research

28) *a)* It is desirable that in all countries taking into account local material conditions, traditions and priorities—care be taken to ensure that research workers receive the requisite specific training.

*b)* This training, of adequate duration, might take place either in a university or in an institute of education. It should include general theoretical studies (philosophy, history and theory of education, psychology, physiology of the nervous system, sociology, etc.)

and an introduction to scientific research methods (logistics, statistics, cybernetics).

*c)* The training of educational research workers should enable them to work at all levels and in all fields of education and in close contact with educational institutions and educationists in general.

29) Since the problems to which educational research is required to find solutions present the same complex characteristics as education itself educational research calls for team work so that the specialists whose help has been requested: i.e. philosophers, biologists, neuro-physiologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, economists, architects, statisticians, etc. can work in a spirit of mutual collaboration.

30) *a)* Educational research centres, whether they be autonomous or attached to educational institutes or universities, must be able to count on the necessary specialized staff as well as on a sufficient number of assistants and auxiliaries, all of them capable of working in teams.

*b)* Where no centre of research exists as yet, Ministries of Education should undertake to collect and put at the disposal of teachers all useful information produced by educational research centres in other countries.

31) The status of educational research workers will be similar to that of research workers in other sciences, this implies equivalent conditions of work, obligations and prerogatives, and also implies comparable basic training. Specific programmes for the training of educational research workers as such should be planned to follow undergraduate preparation in the appropriate fields.

32) Provision should be made for qualified individual teachers or groups of teachers to participate in studies which have been systematically organized by specialized educational research institutions. This Participation of working teachers in research is, moreover, an excellent means of providing further training for teachers and of making it increasingly possible for educational research to reach its ultimate aim—the improvement of education.

33) Teachers taking on special responsibilities in connexion with educational research and experimentation should be accorded special facilities, such as a reduced teaching load, and should be suitably remunerated for the work they do.

34) It is important that educational testing undertaken by teachers

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within their classes should be confined to specially qualified teachers who would receive technical advice on testing methods as well as on educational research. Tests to be carried out by these teachers will be included in a general plan of research and subjected to suitable supervision likely to establish their justification and value.

35) The significance which educational research is beginning to assume among teachers makes it desirable that educational staff, both at the administrative and inspectorial levels, should be given the opportunity to undertake theoretical and practical training in research methods. This would enable them to organize in their respective areas and under their responsibility limited educational experiments. Such experiments should form part of the total educational research plan and should be carefully designed and carried out as such.

36) In the course of their studies (beginning with the second or third year of study) prospective primary and secondary school teachers should be able to acquire, at their own level, a knowledge of the principles and techniques appropriate for educational research. This information should also be given to teachers taking refresher courses. This work should be carried out in such a way that the people concerned take an active part in the research work, understand the value of scientific investigation into education and are able to grasp its practical aspects.

### **V. International Collaboration**

37) Collaboration should be developed between both national and regional educational research institutions and international governmental and non-governmental institutions. The effect of this collaboration will be:

*a)* to intensify exchanges between educational research centres in particular by setting up an information service to ensure the systematic communication of inventories and results of research to international educational journals; *b)* to facilitate research in comparative education and its methods;

*c)* to help formulate correctly the problems which research workers are called upon to solve;

*d)* to help define subjects of research common to two or more countries (regional activity);



*e)* to avoid duplication;

*f)* to avoid dogmatism resulting from insufficient information.

38) Unesco and the IBE should combine their efforts to facilitate the co-ordination of work undertaken by educational research centres, in particular by organizing international and regional conferences and by ensuring the diffusion of information on educational research through journals, monographs, films and by the publication of a monograph concerning the methodology of educational research, etc. The national reports sent every year to the IBE for the annual Conference on Public Education should whenever possible contain an account of the most important research carried out during the past year.

39) It is essential that countries in the forefront in the field of educational research should take steps to aid developing countries in particular:

*a)* by providing qualified experts;

*b)* by helping them to set up national or regional research centres (under the terms of their technical assistance, for example);

*c)* by granting scholarships to their nationals who wish to undertake educational research;

*d)* by admitting some of the latter as trainees in their own research centres.

## **VI. Implementation of the Present Recommendation**

40) It is important that the text of this recommendation be given wide publicity by Ministries of Education, education authorities for the level most immediately concerned, universities and institutes of education, educational research and documentation centres, teaching federations, both national and international teachers' and parents' associations, etc.; the educational press, both official and private, should play a large part in making the recommendation known among the services concerned, the administrative and teaching staff and the general public.

41) Unesco regional centres are invited to facilitate on a priority basis and with the co-operation of the ministries concerned, the study of this recommendation at the regional level with a view to its adaptation to the needs and characteristics of each region.

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42) In countries where it seems necessary, Ministries of Education are invited to request the appropriate bodies to undertake certain activities, such as for example:

*a)* to examine the present recommendation and to compare it with the *de jure* and *de facto* situation in their respective countries;

*b)* to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the possible implementation of each of the clauses not yet in effect;

*c)* to adapt each clause, should its implementation be considered desirable to the requirements of the individual country;

*d)* to take practical as well as legal steps to ensure the implementation of this recommendation.

43) It is recommended not only that importance be attached to educational research by the Ministries of Education but also that Unesco should give it high priority in its various programmes of assistance to member countries.