

PERSPECTIVES IN THE FRAME OF RESETTING EDUCATION

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Abstract: *With the global reset, we must understand that all economic sectors will regroup, rearrange and reposition in relation to the individual and its values. These include the education sector which, based on the principle of mobility and transparency, must be reconsidered in terms of approach and strategy, in order to meet the requirements of the labour market. The European markets, both education and labour market, in which the free movement of people, goods and services is upheld, change to adapt to global trends, while also putting pressure on markets such as those from Romania, to adapt together. Taking into account this framework, in this article we present some of the measures for the period 2025-2030 that are growing at European level, including digitalization, which is best known in our environment, but it comes with a number of measures that can leave education in Romania behind and increase the distance between the Romanian labour market and the European labour market. We argue in favour of keeping up with the European trends and changes, as these are and will continue to be important for future generations. In order for this to happen, we argue that it is needed to rethink and reinvent education, in line with these trends and changes, in order to align to the rest of the world and continue to be mobile in EU and beyond.*

Key words: *restructuring, digitization, ESCO, skills, learning outcomes.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nine months have passed since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic Romania. Given the situation generated globally and particularly in Europe during this period, there was no time or opportunity to analyse and implement solutions in several fields of activity, including the education sector. Based on a scientific documentation, corroborated with the experience of the authors, general directions will be presented to help with the adaptation of the educational sector to the times to come.

2. THE GLOBAL RESET – THE GREAT RESET

The World Economic Forum will host in January 2021 a five-day online summit, in which the central theme will be focused on the “The Great Reset”, see Fig. 1 [1], including some topics of interest related to the educational sector:

- *Online governance*, by implementing IT solutions to manage all or most aspects related to administrative issues and more. Among these elements is education, which will be increasingly transferred to the online medium, being considered a more successful format compared to the direct form of teaching.
- *Global governance*, by solving problems at the central global level, using different legal working

methods and through different global political or economic bodies. These problems will be fuelled by the situation caused by the pandemic generated by Covid-19, which has demonstrated and will continue to demonstrate that the problems and solutions are global, not local. Therefore, global governing, governing bodies or mechanisms will be needed.

- *The fourth industrial revolution*, focusing on digital technology, industry 4.0 and the space industry. These elements are expected to have a significant impact on education and also on the labour market in the period 2030-2050. These issues will be discussed in order to find viable educational solutions for the training of the necessary staff in the labour market.
- *Inclusion of the LGBT community in all areas of activity*, including education. The approaches of this element will be different depending on the expected result at national level, being a subject with a degree of sensitivity in some European countries. In the case of our country, there will be problems regarding the transparency of these issues, where these people will be included and whether there will be levers to avoid situations of discrimination against them.
- The last main element of interest is *the future of economic progress*, a topic that requires a more general approach, and it is important to include education in any approach to economic progress.

As Fig. 1 shows, the necessary reforms, from a decision-making global point of view, will be prepared and implemented gradually. These will be accelerated due to the situation generated at global level and also due

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Fig. 1. The Great Reset (World Economic Forum) [1].

to the inclusion of digitization elements in most aspects of these reforms. It is up to each country how quickly it will be able to adapt to them, some being quicker in their implementation due to an advanced degree of training in areas related to these reforms, and others needing more time than expected for implementation.

As a member of the European Union, should we constantly look at what our guardianship forum of which we are a part announces, are they preparing for these global steps, for this reset? We know that the European Recommendations, in the minds of many compatriots, are not mandatory to implement and from a legal point of view this is the case. But whoever does not implement them is left behind and as a result does not have access to European money, in fact these recommendations are the steps forward taken at European level, and those who do not subscribe to lose European money. We must learn this as well.

The Recommendations of interest for the education sector in 2020 are:

- according to New Skills Agenda 2016, 12 directions for the development of vocational training are established and it brings new micro-credit, digitalization and the future in terms of competences and skills, aspects that will be detailed later [2].
- young people and their jobs, how to get a job, how to become useful to society, how to have a better life [3].
- the connection with Covid -19 and the digitization or the internet [4].

To these, some aspects can be added that shapes the future, for example:

- online skills correspondence, which will be developed in ESCO [5].
- new fields of interest for education, new study programs or research [6].
- the development of lifelong learning is a necessity that does not exist in our country [7].
- the European Skills collection is a report that can help us in choosing new skills for our outdated programs [8].

- key competences in lifelong learning, which needs to be established and developed in our country to meet the requirements when it becomes a priority [9].
- the intercultural skills that need to be developed in any level in school, at this moment lacking [10].
- key competencies regarding the initial training, also general training for society, today they far behind market requirements [11].
- ESCO, a future portal in Europe for skills with high vocational training and qualifications [12].
- without quality assurance and recognition of the programs followed, at a European level, for qualified young people or workers it is not possible to go further [13].
- ensuring a high level of quality in higher education with the formation of the 24 European university consortia is becoming a reality. In the future, whoever is not there will remain at the national level [14].

In Europe, over just a few months, there has been a reset in terms of training, digitization, skills and a reference portal was created, thus showing us that the way to 2025 is not far.

If we understand global governance, then we will understand these recommendations, communications, CEDEFOP or UNESCO documents. If we understand global governance, then we will understand these recommendations, communications, CEDEFOP or UNESCO documents. People need to be aware of all of these issues.

To the extent that the interests of education overlap with the global ones, we want to address some topics of interest that are not yet frequently found in documents or in those drafted by the people who can decide *policies in education*.

These topics are the result of research of the mentioned documents and others over the years, and we can now present a trend for the next 5–10 years in education and training.

General education, as the authors proposed, should stop at the age of 16 and it is the task of each state to organize it as well and efficiently as possible. What is

important at this level is the acquisition of key competencies, as they are established by the relevant European recommendation [15].

This must not only deepen these skills, but must also make young people acquire them and become competent in applying such skills at qualification levels 2–3, according to the National Qualifications Framework – NQF.

This reset of general school education means other textbooks and other ways of teaching that leads to less material to learn but better learning; the ministry is responsible for this task.

This paper focuses on the latest developments with an emphasis on higher education and continuing professional education of adults. Next we will address The European Qualifications Framework (EQF), transversal competences, digitization, ESCO, Europass, Eures i.e. those that lead to the globalization of education and the recognition of results and through active employees.

3. THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – EQF

Those who do not know education at European level have wondered why a National Qualifications Framework is necessary to mapped / correlated with the European one. The answer is simple. When it is desired to create a recognized market for education among all EU members, at least norms, standards must be created at continental level, so that graduates from each state can compare their level of education with that of colleagues in other EU countries. Why was this problem raised, again it is simple: European states in their historical diversity had qualifications frameworks with different scales / levels from 5 levels to 10–12 levels in Ireland or Scotland. A standard scale had to be agreed upon for all to adhere to, to recognize each other. Romania has a National Qualifications Framework – NQF, perfectly mapped with the European Qualifications Framework, recognized and certified by the European EQF group.

This EQF set qualification levels according to some criteria for describing learning outcomes. Here is the first big difference between us, generally from all of the former Eastern bloc and from other EU countries: there are no defined learning outcomes in education; it is a continuous action to implement the guidelines on the drafting of learning outcomes, while universities, administration and authorities do not yet consider them.

The transition to learning outcomes in Romanian education is the first step in resetting education. When the pupil, the student, the adult, after finishing a course, a discipline, a module, will know something concrete to do, then we will talk about a different kind of education. Today we are still talking about memorizing, to say what the teacher said, to repeat after him, to do as he did.

This step of resetting brings with along other textbooks, written in a different manner, clear results for the student in the sense that he must know how to do or demonstrate with the acquired knowledge, another assessment procedure and clearly possibilities for the graduate to cope with life.

Teaching methods change, the student has to work and the teacher has to guide, to discuss with each one what he has done, this means student-centered education, to get to talk to each other and to get everyone to do their homework, not only the top students and move on.

One may almost say that this is the great reset of education.

A first major change in the definition of qualification levels occurred in 2017, when, after 9 years, the results, the qualification levels were defined by learning outcomes established on three criteria:

- knowledge,
- skills,
- competencies [16].

Then this approach changed, the results per qualification levels were redefined by:

- knowledge (cognitive and practical),
- skills,
- responsibility and autonomy [17].

This step was a sign of the change in the approach to education, the transition to skills, i.e. what a man has in him and is easier to grow and towards responsibility and autonomy.

In other words, a high level of education and qualification must lead to an increase in work and social responsibility, but also to an increase in individual decision-making autonomy.

Applying these principles in good faith and correctly in qualification levels and in textbooks, student curricula means 75% of the new education system we need to implement.

Today one may say that there is a formally established European NQF, but this stopped there, the rest remained unchanged. In other words, many are still missing and the most difficult thing will be to reshape the teacher's category to bring the teacher closer to the students as a colleague, mentor or partner.

4. TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

In ancient Rome one had the right to speak on a subject. Today someone is competent if he knows to solve problems that arise either at work or in everyday life. Competences are a result of formal, informal, non-formal learning, our native or acquired skills and abilities.

ESCO is the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations, that identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training. It systematically shows the relationships between the different concepts.

Europass is a European Union (Directorate General for Education and Culture) initiative to increase transparency of qualification and mobility of EU citizens.

The European network of employment services ('EURES'), established by Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council (1), is a cooperative network for exchanging information and facilitating interaction between jobseekers and employers. It provides free assistance to jobseekers who wish to move to another country and assists employers who wish to recruit workers from other countries.

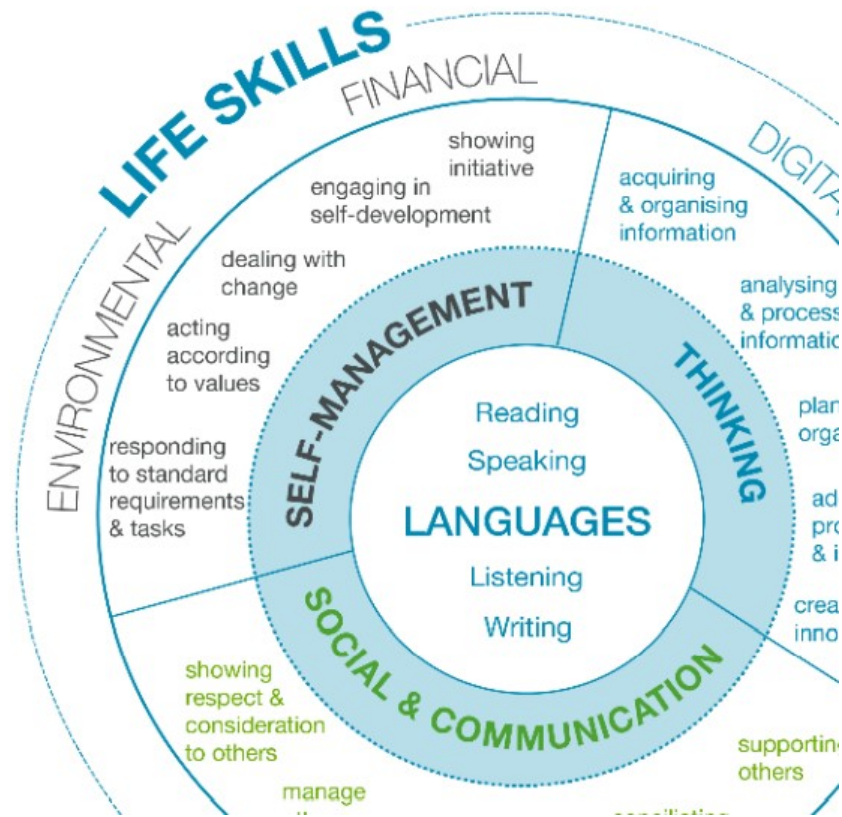


Fig. 2. A visualization of transversal skills and competences [18].

For this, it is important to see what competencies the graduates have. Today, the main aspects related to school refer mainly to key competencies, it is correct; these are set at European level [14] in the form below:

1. Literacy skills;
2. Multilingual skills;
3. Competences in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
4. Digital skills;
5. Personal, social and learning skills that helps you to learn;
6. Citizenship skills;
7. Entrepreneurial skills;

Competences of cultural awareness and expression.

Questions arise, such as: How many have read what they contain? How do they differ from those that were set before? How do we apply them? Where? And especially how do they differ on qualification levels?

Differentiating by levels of skills is missing in the education from Romania. What is the difference between language proficiency for level 2 qualification at gymnasium and level 6 university degree? All these competencies must be defined, detailed and the learning outcomes need to be established at skill levels.

When does one start teaching entrepreneurial skills and how do they differ in content and application from high school to master level? There is no such clear distinction to bring Romania among the countries with a developed education, one still refers to highly talented students, the peaks of education from the Olympiads in order to highlight that the objective has been reached.

Rethinking these key competencies by skill levels is another component of resetting education. It is linked to the first one: learning outcomes.

Recently CEDEFOP presented a model of transversal competences for the future (see Fig. 2), which is of interest for education.

Transversal competencies cross qualifications of the same level and do not depend on the specific field of education. They should find them in anyone, at various levels of development, in function of the level of qualification of studies. For example, a doctor, an economist or an engineer should have these transversal skills equally developed.

Their new structure shows a grouping into three sectors:

- digital and artistic or result of thinking,
- environmental and financial or self-management,
- health and civic or social and communication.

If we look at the new definition of learning outcomes we notice some similarities: thinking with knowledge, skills with health and civic, responsibility and autonomy with financial and self-management environment.

The requirement for these skills is very high and it is believed that they are ahead of the professional ones, at least at the beginning of one's career. How do we implement them? What learning outcomes do they have? How do you go about teaching them? In Romania, the system has no answers or concerns to these questions.

And these skills and their introduction into the education system at all levels are part of the reset of education.

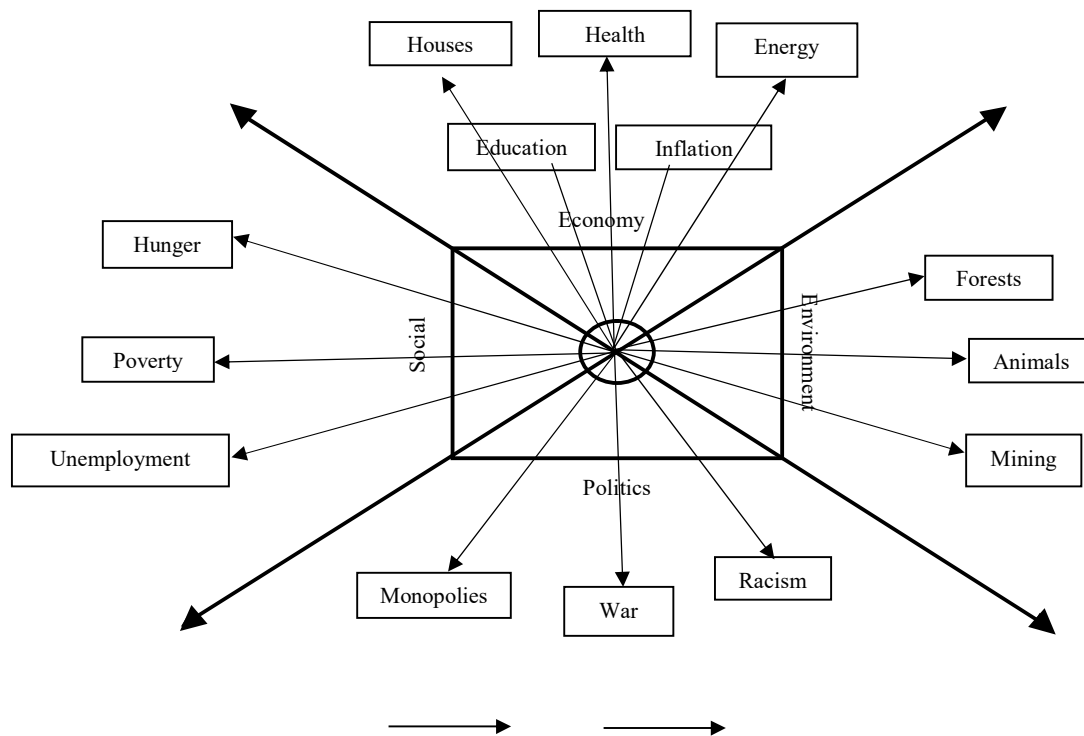


Fig. 3. Developing sectors.

Skills are now, in the new European context, the attribute of their establishment by the labour market, by employers; education, on the other hand, has the task of establishing learning outcomes, their assessment, subjects and the formation of training programs in school and higher education. In the training of adults, these competencies are established by the occupational standards, which also include the plans for the education and training of adults with the acquisition of competencies. The novelty is that learning outcomes and the establishment of credits and micro credits have started to be more and more used in the training of adults.

In addition to the key and transversal competencies, we say that there are also the professional ones, i.e. related to a field, sector of activity today. The interest for the future is in the development sectors. Figure 3 presents some sectors in the vision of the World Economic Forum.

It is observed that education, along with energy, smart construction, health, economy, forestry, agriculture and natural resources remain sectors of interest. This does not mean that the military industry will not develop further, or that the fight against hunger, poverty or unemployment will try to be treated globally. For all this, the skills of the 21st century will be needed.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This pandemic of that period has dramatically changed the face of the world, from the health crisis to the labour market crisis. Education is not an exception, the transition to digital environment and technology, although envisioned by the industry 4.0, caught a lot of

us by surprise and had to happen very suddenly and extensively.

Now, discussions are focused on resetting, from how individuals act to local, regional and global policies and strategies.

Romania needs to keep up fast with the European trends and changes, and it is all the more important for the future generations to rethink and reinvent education in order to align to the rest of the world and continue to be mobile in EU and beyond.

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