

# *Reflections on 'Management of Global Transitions'*

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Receiving the first number of a new scientific research journal is always an interesting moment. I look at the front page, and immediately I was caught by the words Global and International and had to look at the content. The journal proved to address issues that I find extremely important in the world of today and tomorrow, we see a growing internationalisation of companies and the products available in the shops, the education of young is no longer taking place in their home country, we travel an study all over the world, we are more and more living in a 'Global Village or City'. The Education and training of children and young people has to cope with this and here this journal comes in with its articles on recent international research.

Historically, the advancement of general education in a society has increased the standard of living (measured by the economical yardstick); this has led to theses like the one stated in the OECD report from 1993 quoted on page 73 of the journal:

Only a well-trained and highly adaptable labour force can provide the capacity to adjust to structural changes and seize new employment opportunities created by technological progress. Achieving this will in many cases entail a re-examination, perhaps

radical of the economic treatment of human resources and education.

Developments in the educational systems in countries like Denmark over the last fifty years have enabled a larger and larger proportion of the population to obtain full secondary education by adding two to four years of academic studies. This is fully in line with the basic ideas of the thesis.

Analysing the developments in the labour market in Europe over the recent years shows clearly that (as in all biological relateable issues) there is no guaranty that a thesis is correct (the truth, the one and only). At the same time as the educational systems developed and introduced more schooling, training and specialisation, globalisation made production and product development etc. leave the Western European countries for Eastern Europe and Far East. The reason for this was that mass production and labour intensive production are much more sensitive to labour costs than to a general high level of education in the labour force. The needed number of highly skilled labour is either locally obtainable or can be 'imported'.

We see that most of the textile work has left Europe, but also highly skilled work like computer programming is now being done in countries like India. The latest developments show

that companies are now moving their production activities from Eastern Europe to countries like Ukraine and China. Leaving Europe with its highly skilled labour force without work. In Denmark it is at present very difficult for the new graduates to get employment, and unemployment especially among the higher educated is growing.

With the former in mind, reading the paper by David Oldroyd 'Educational Leadership for Results or for Learning?' and David C. Dibbon's paper 'Creating a Culture of Innovation in Canadian Schools' puts emphasis on learning and education not as processes creating a labour force with certain fixed capacities able to manage and carry out certain jobs or processes, but as a process of giving students knowledge and abilities (skills development) to be innovative and learn throughout life. This will eventually also result in new inventions etc. Looking back in history to the early days of the introduction of technology in craft and agriculture it is interesting to see the ingenuity of the 'common' farmer or craftsman. Very interesting examples can be found in the development of different ways of utilising the power of water as source of energy for sawmills, metal working and flour grinding etc.

Living in the countryside of a Europe that is becoming more and more urbanised, and at the same time losing more and more of the basic production (manufacturing), makes it difficult to see what should be the right direction of education and de-

velopment in order to cope with the challenge. Let me suggest the following:

Back in the latter part of last century there was an attitude to the future that the introduction of computers and technology would solve all problems. Time has shown that it was not quite as simple as that. New technologies and methods etc. not only solve problems but give more new challenges and problems to solve. A decade ago a group of people participated in a series of educational conferences under the general heading of 'Children in the Information Age', discussing the impact and use of IT etc. in education and training. Unfortunately this work was interrupted (ended) by the changes in the political map of Europe taking place in the late eighties and beginning of the nineties. I clearly remember the feeling of direction and being on the right track we had at the last conference in Albena, Bulgaria discussing the development of 'High Level Learning Skills' in students as the target of all education from kindergarten to university. Reading through the papers of Volume one of the new International Research journal 'Managing Global Transitions,' as well as following the global trends, shows me that 'Learning to Learn and Innovate' must be the target of education, enabling the individual as well as possible to adjust to and creatively utilise the possibilities available at any time and place.

Once more, thank you for the initiative and best of luck for the future.