



Mreža centara za obrazovne politike
Network of Education Policy Centers

*NEPC Summer School
Linking educational research, policy and practice*

21st – 25th July, 2008

*Logarska dolina
Slovenia*

Amruševa 8
10 000 Zagreb
Croatia
tel. +385 1 4883550
fax.+385 1 4825910
e-mail: nepc@idi.hr
web site: www.edupolicy.net

Name of the bank:
Zagrebačka banka, Zagreb

IBAN: HR23600001102005106
SWIFT: ZABA HR 2X
Registration no. : 2340186

Background and Rationale

Prior to the transition the practice of education policy was based on experience with the regulations in place and the certainty of particular philosophic principles. There were few if any universities with degree programs in the field. There were no consulting firms or research institutes available. Methodologies had significant gaps. There was considerable local experience with pedagogy and curriculum, but little exposure to methods and theories employed in economics, sociology and political science. Government agencies had no tradition of public reporting on education progress and problems. And with a few exceptions, there was no regional experience in the international evaluation exercises common across OECD countries. In sum, there was little systematic information available on which to make judgments about education policy.

Much has changed in the interim. Many improvements have been put into place. It is common to participate in international studies of academic achievement. Projects of the EU, ETF, UNICEF, the World Bank, and many bilateral organizations have helped introduce new ideas and theories across the region; and there have been a flowering of education policy centers with dozens of new and innovative projects, and project evaluations. Nations in the region are in a significantly stronger position today than they ever have been with respect to understanding and implementing education policy.

Two remaining problems help drive this current effort to establish a summer school in education policy. While the principles of education policy have successfully entered the region, the global pace of change in education policy has been shifting even more rapidly. New economic and political debate, breakthroughs in methodology, new models and variables, new theories and evidence have taken issues of education policy into new arenas and these are not always well known in the region. While there has been progress in the university sector, structural rigidities have slowed the progress in the establishment of degree programs in education policy of international reputation. The combination of these two challenges implies that ministries of education, local research institutes and university scholars are in need of quick, focused injections of international education policy experience to keep abreast of the evidence and the argumentation so that they may understand issues of local importance.

Education policy has been the focus of previous summer institutes at the Central European University in Budapest. These have brought scholars and practitioners from North America and Europe and have introduced topics and evidence from those regions. This NEPC summer school is not intended to duplicate these previous efforts. The NEPC summer school is intended to differ in several ways:

- *Regional theories and evidence.* Instead of drawing on theories and evidence external to the region, the NEPC summer school will make maximum use of the local evidence which has become available during the transition; it will employ only expertise with an understanding of regional issues and problems.
- *Semi-permanent follow-up.* Depending on resource availability the summer school will allow for follow up and long term distance communications with questions and answers, list serves, multiple communications and the provision of just-in-time information so that when graduates have questions (as they inevitably will) following the summer school, responses to these question can be provided through the community of faculty and graduates.
- *Structure and focus.* Each NEPC workshops will focus on specific sub-topics. The topics will be selected carefully so as to be relevant and important to each participant. But there will only be few of them so that each may be provided in sufficient depth. Instead of being

‘a mile wide and an inch deep’, the NEPC summer school will be of sufficient depth to have impact.

Topics

- (i) Education Policy in Transition Countries
- (ii) Policies to Support Teacher and Curriculum Quality
- (iii) Education Policy and Social Cohesion
- (iv) Education Policy and Academic Achievement
- (v) Policies of Education Finance, Governance and Honesty in Administration

Day One: Education Policy in Transition Countries

- education under the party/state: a review of how we began
- what education policy means: strategy, structure and limits
- governmental changes and barriers to change: why receptivity to policy change differs
- strategies for affecting education policy: evidence-based public advocacy and characteristics of political influence

Day Two: Teacher and Curriculum Quality

- Teachers Professional Development – a systemic component of a Curriculum reform
- Curriculum modernity: current trends vs. classroom realities
- Teacher performance standards and standards of professional conduct
- Tracking and specialized training: teacher education, teacher training, teachers professional development
- Curriculum and teacher education policies: dilemmas, solutions

Day Three: Education and Social cohesion

- Languages of instruction
- Socialization
- Who should decide how history should be taught
- Citizenship
- Equity
- Public participation in the education process

Day Four: Academic Achievement

- PISA, TIMSS, IALS
- Examinations and standardized testing
- How to interpret evidence
- How to utilize evidence in the design of education policy

Day Five: Finance, Governance and Honest Administration

- Where education money comes from
- Who should make what kinds of decisions
- How to encourage private contributions, but avoid inequities and corruption
- The public’s right to know
- The role of private foundations ensuring sound policies and practice

Pedagogical Strategy

Readings will be divided into required and recommended. Participants will be expected to have read the required readings prior to the beginning of the summer school. This should help reduce the variance in comprehension and participation in the discussion.

Each topic will employ pedagogies specific to that topic and be planned by the faculty well ahead of time. It will include lectures, small group discussions, problems, cases and formalized questions.

Pre-seminar Activities

Selected participants would be asked to bring a policy or research paper to the seminar (in any language) which contains a discussion of one or more of the five selected themes and be prepared to analyze it on the last day of the seminar.

Evaluation and assessment of impact

There will be a written examination at the end of the seminar. Examination questions will cover all five topics, the lectures, discussions and background readings. The examinations will be essay in format. Participants will be assessed, but not graded, on the quality of their answers. The participant assessments will be sent to them within three weeks following the end of teaching. The assessments will remain anonymous, but will be a part of the permanent record of the seminar.

Follow-up activities.

The summer school will be designed to last as long as a year following the end of teaching. Each participant will be invited to use the faculty and the other participants as informal colleagues to answer questions and provide information on the education policy challenges which emerge. Participants will be encouraged to publish policy relevant analyses; seminar faculty would be available to advise them on how to do this. Excellent participants at the summer school of 2008 will be eligible to help plan the summer school of 2009. This opportunity will be used as an informal incentive to maximize participation in the follow-up activities.

Participants

A maximum of 30 participants will be invited to join the summer school. A maximum of five participants of the 30 may come from outside of the region. Regional participants will be selected by a committee of the faculty, the director of the NEPC network and the NEPC Board. Participants will be chosen on the quality of their application showing their understanding of the purposes of education policy and their potential for utilizing what they learn. Weight will be given to their seniority, policy-relevant experience, and experience with policy analyses. Participants must be English-speaking.

