

Social Inclusion- An interdisciplinary approach

Summary

Argument for analysing the dynamic of social inclusion in the manner of interdisciplinarity: society, as a whole, needs education to know whether the “social products” are good. We may discuss about a lot of social needs or problems. Solving those means the development and implementation of educational programs. Therefore, a program of education, which includes entrepreneurial skills, financial skills, civic behavior real proved, different prophylactic human actions in health, rational choice and so on, irrespective of its level, can be regarded as a social product. Its evaluation presumes that the “solution to the social problems” can be improved (by improving the running program, by the development if better programs, by discontinuing a particular program which proves to be dissatisfying and replacing it with better programs). Is education a “social product”? Can education establish a directly link between the requirements for knowledge, competencies and values within our present society? Are the educational programs properly oriented? The answer can start from the operationalization of the public good concept: the school – institution of the society represented a public or private supplier of education, while the education represented as public good. Its attributes are the very current theories: the client theory is seen as demand optimization. At the same time, the economic theory explains this concept as a relation between the optimization of education and the costs of the educational process. A sociological explanation refers to the response to the social demand for education, while in terms of management, education quality is seen as optimizing the organization and the process of education.

Structure of the paper:

1. Social inclusion- Access and maintaining on labour market

For a better understanding: Lifelong learning needs emphasising the *culture of insurance* which plays a role in the production and maintenance of the individual welfare. The chapter describes and analyses in dynamics the access to and maintenance on the labour market: the road from welfare to personal development through life-long education. The access to the labour market and the provision of incomes (social policies, in general, and description of the welfare production mechanisms, in particular), held a special position within the comparative economic and social analyses. The transnational comparison splays the role of explaining international experiences, trends and processes. The analysis of the social policies isn't limited to

comparative descriptions; rather it shows the outputs of comparing the alternatives, as possible combinations that can be taken as basic elements for the design of systems that generate individual welfare through functional mechanisms of social insurances. These analyses reveal the existence of a phenomenon (explanation: the low educational level is one of the main underlying factors of exclusion from the labour market) characterized by a generalized lack of incomes, by the decrease or even loss of the working capacity, by the replacement of the incomes from work with incomes from social support. This shows the necessity of an action, of a current which to lead gradually to the culture of ensuring the incomes. The steps taken, through education, to achieve welfare, represent the culture of provision. Within this context, at a higher level, is the maintenance on the labour market, which enables passing from the basic welfare to personal development through life-long education (explanation: a high and diverse¹ level of education is one of the main factors supporting the maintenance on the labour market).

2. Social economy: *culture of active participation* – this is a framework which discusses and develops new epistemological elements, analytical methods correlated and adapted to the Romanian context, which can support the promotion of solutions to develop this sector.

Social economy, although seems to be a concept rather strongly anchored in reality describes and analyses a rather new economic and social phenomenon, which started only a few decades ago. The concept of social economy didn't have the privilege of a substantial operationalization and analysis within the Romanian field literature, the conceptual dilemma still being subject of scientific research. The place of this field on the market, its employment as the third segment of the economy, is yet to be submitted to analyses. Furthermore, demonstrating that the social economy has ontological, epistemological and methodological bases, which is not far from reality, is an attempt to promote it towards the status of curriculum or, even, branch of a social science (?).

Thus, as element of novelty, the surveyed and presented studies reveal part of the characteristics of the social economy in Romania. The papers presents conceptual explanations about the social economy (explanation: there are economic activities that play an important role within the process of social inclusion of the vulnerable groups), as well as the defining features of the organisations active in this field and which are the specificity of the sector. These provide an overall image; through a normative and integrated approach, the social economy appears to

¹ In association with a system of life-long acquired competencies that make the person able to respond to the current needs of the society and labour market (entrepreneurship and community development, on the one hand, communities and multi- and inter-cultural working groups, on the other hand).

be developed with the purpose of establishing a balanced, alternative economic and social space for the socially-excluded disadvantaged groups. The solution to achieve balance between the demand and offer of social economy² derives from innovative forms of financing the activities of this sector and from the significance of the value added of the social enterprises and on the social investments. Within this context, the research and identification of an universal formula, widely applied to all the social economy organisations, would mean finding the perfect balance between the demand and offer of social economy, which would be at a large distance from the economic and social reality.

Social economy is a system built in time, which presumes knowledge and, particularly, human resources able to assimilate knowledge and to apply it, through residual mechanisms, by the people performing economic activities within this system. Furthermore, there is a correlation between the social economy activities from the non-governmental sector and the development level of the community.

3. The financing of the programs and the absorption of funds³ are support mechanisms for social inclusion and professional insertion which have knowledge as common denominator. Thus, the investment in human resources at community level becomes imperative. It is the direction of development of (designing) educational programs which to include the study of social economy and socio-educational entrepreneurship. We may thus consider that this is the way of training specialists at community level. They contribute actively to the increase of adaptability both in terms of labour force and of the organisations (the increased labour market access contributes to unemployment prevention and to the prolongation of the active life, to the participation of women and immigrants on the labour market, to a higher social inclusion of the disadvantaged people, to the decrease of labour market discrimination).

In Romania, the operational programs financed from the ESF took into consideration the complexity of the economic and social aspects. Thus, their objectives were directed towards labour market requirements by providing the financial support for educational projects

² The demand, in close correlation with the professional insertion, is given by the need of the population/specific groups to benefit of the social economy activities. The offer (NGOs, protected workshops, cooperatives, mutual organisations-consumption, craftsmen, agriculture, mutual assistance) is presented from the perspective of the representatives of the social economy entities, focusing on professional insertion, goods and services provided by the social economy organisations.

³ Distinction between the international aid provided to the countries “in state of economic and social stress” and the specific policy of European convergence, in which the special funds are allocated to the states or regions in order to implement a common decision.

(professional training, university training and PhD training). In parallel, the financial support of ESF was used to ensure the mechanism of adapting the labour force to the changing economic conditions, enhancing the participation on the labour market and the substantial modernization of the public administration.

The various measures that were implemented through the projects financed by ESF supported the formation and acquisition of the managerial qualifications. Simultaneously, were encouraged the corporate responsibility to stimulate the employees, to raise employer and employee awareness towards the necessity of continuous professional formation. The programs aimed to improve the quality of the employment services, to develop the social economy, to improve labour market access and participation of the vulnerable groups, to promote equal opportunity and to improve and consolidate the functioning of the system of initial training and continuous formation.

4. Program evaluation refers to a methodological area which is close and, yet, distinct⁴ from the sociological research. Though it uses many of the sociological research methods evaluation is done using a specific theoretical setup, within a context of the intervention strategies and policies properly defined in terms of space, time and organisation.

In this part of the paper we presented the main contributions on the two directions approached by the published researches: a. *development and application of innovative methodologies in the research of this field and in the development of the evaluative research* (such as: evaluation of two training programs: a program for the pupils from the primary and medium education, a program of master studies and university evaluation based on quality indicators). Methodologically (explanation: fundamental for all “analytical contexts”), there is the trend of quantitative or qualitative evaluation of a phenomenon (person, thing, idea, project or program) relative to an indicator that can be implicit or explicit. This “evaluation” is expressed, ultimately, in qualitative evidences, which are thereafter compared with initially set criteria; and b. *evaluation as a whole, and the conceptual setup of the science of evaluation* as trend of quantitative or qualitative evaluation of a phenomenon against an indicator that can be implicit or explicit (for instance: evaluation of the social and economic programs).

⁴ As necessity for evaluation, we may mention the group of specialists with managerial, policy research and analysis competencies, which to allow determining the relations with numerous initiators of programs and with specialists from various areas.