

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE 5

STRENGTHENING OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION: NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND SUPRANATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Since the implementation of educational reforms in the 1990s, the teacher has begun to be considered, by educative discourses, the single most important element that determines the quality of education. At an international level, teachers take up a central place on the design of policies, as axes of change and educational improvement; above all, since reports from the OECD, the European Union, UNESCO and the Organization of Ibero-American States, among other international organizations, have been published. Trust in the teacher as a driving force for necessary changes has spread along diverse countries. As consequence, a process which aims to restore educators as key players of educational improvement has been brought about. That is why the following monograph, whose purpose is to be a starting point for debate and cogitation around the topic of the teaching issue from the analysis of supranational, international and even some national and comparative realities, is proposed. We hope to achieve our goal thanks to the relevant contributions the authors have sent. They have decided to share their broad knowledge with us; we thank them for this.

The first article, titled *Strengthening of professional teacher development: a glance from Latin America*, Denise Vaillant describes the situation of teachers in the Latin American region. An overview of the profession is presented, its problems analyzed, solutions for its development, and a series of concrete experiences which could be considered successful are provided, all of which could be inspiring for other national realities. The broad knowledge about the region and the involvement of the author in the design of policies of the countries being discussed, makes this article a source of great value for reflection and debate regarding the situation of teachers in the region being studied.

The next article, *Teachers' Basic Training: Comparative Study of the Educational Systems of China and Brazil*, by Eva Ramírez Carpeño and Valdemir Marim, poses a classical comparative study (in the truest sense of the word) between both countries. As the authors themselves state, Brazil and China are nowadays countries of great relevance when defining emerging trends on the international scene. Thus, this article intends to identify convergences and divergences between teacher basic training in Brazil and China. In particular, defining details of this first formative stage for teachers such as a comprehensive training model, study programs' curricular organization, selection process, certified level among others. The authors have a deep understanding of both countries and are specialists in basic teacher training policies of them.

The text *Teaching Competency Framework: Contribution to its Study from European Education Policy* by Lucía Sánchez-Tarazga, offers a description and reflects upon the importance of defining a framework of professional competencies for teachers. According to the author, a sound definition of this profile would be a most useful tool for strengthening the teaching profession. As consequence, the foundations of professional competencies in Europe are approached, as so are some keys to its design and a selection of frameworks of teaching competencies proposed from various international organizations. The author offers a theoretical synthesis of many hours of study in respects to this subject, an output of her doctoral thesis; this is an endorsement to the rigour and breadth of the contents of this article.

As follows, we offer you two articles in one titled *The Eurydice Network reads the Draft of the Book: White Paper on Non-University Teaching Function by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MECD in Spanish)*. It deals, therefore, with a double work centered on a national tier and, at the same time, with an analytical glance from European tendencies. The participant authors are José Luis Blanco López and Violeta Miguel Pérez in both articles, and Elena Vázquez Aguilar and Rocío Arias Bejarano in the first article; Ana Isabel Martín Ramos and María Teresa Álvarez Ordóñez in the second. We thank the Eurydice Network of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport for wanting to participate as institutional author in these two articles. These works allow a reading of the teaching profession from a dialogue between two main sources: *White Paper on Non-University Teaching Function* and the European tendencies expressed in different reports published by Eurydice. In the first article a dialogue occurs in regards to the following questions: a) teaching competencies; b) the attractiveness of the teaching profession; c) basic teaching training; d) access to the teaching profession. The second article deals with: a) teachers' continuous training; b) teachers' evaluation; c) work conditions; d) supplements and incentives.

In *Building and Training a Community of Global Teachers. The Case of the International Baccalaureate*, Maripé Menéndez explains to us, in the first place, the teachers' professional development that the International Baccalaureate (IB) implements for teachers in its projects. Moreover, she offers a reflection and a deep discussion about the consequences of this model, as well as the added value this generates in teachers themselves, the institutions, and above all, the improvement in students' learning. The internationalist approach of the International Baccalaureate, and the fact the author is at the same time IB Director for Spain and Portugal, lets us immerse ourselves in a deeper knowledge of this supranational organization, in like manner to the work fostered for its teachers.

The work *Conceptions of the OECD and the European Union about Teachers' Professional Development (DPD in Spanish)*, by Jesús Manso and Héctor Monarca offers a double afflux to the study of DPD. On one hand, of a supranational type given it studies organizations of this nature; on the other hand, of a comparative type since it compares between both institutions. The purpose of this article is to analyze the conceptions and implications which derive from the (written) discourses of the OECD and the EU in the subject of teachers. This line of work, already started by both these authors years ago, deepens with this article, which emphasizes the relevance that these discourses have for national policy as well as denounces the dangers which may be derived from them if processes of teachers' participation aren't promoted in the design and development of such policies.

Lastly, the article *The Teaching Profession in Ibero-America*, written by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI in Spanish), offers a description and follows with an analysis of one of the goals in the so called project "Goals 2021". Of the eleven general goals, one of them, associated with the strengthening of the teaching profession (and its concrete indicators), a comparative perspective of its development in diverse Ibero-American countries is offered. If in the first article of this issue a viewpoint from a researcher was offered, we close this number with this article, which poses itself in the viewpoint of a main international organization in the subject of Education in Ibero-America. We will like to thank, just as we did with the Eurydice Network, those public institutions of political nature who also decide to actively participate in academic debates; we're lucky to be able to count with the contribution from the OEI, to whom we are grateful for the time destined by the writers in its preparation.

The reflections which are included in this monograph allow us to bolster the important role of the teacher in the quality of Education, as well as the challenges to which the leading national governments, and also international and supranational organizations, are faced with. We hope reading these pages helps to generate a wider and deeper reflection regarding teachers and their important role, not only in the real development of policies, but also in their involvement as protagonists of them. We hope you have a motivating reading; enjoy

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