



SOME UNDEFINED BOUNDARIES BETWEEN FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE ISRAELI ARAB SECTOR

*ASPECTE ALE EDUCAȚIEI FORMALE ȘI CELEI
NON-FORMALE ÎN SECTORUL ARAB DIN ISRAEL*

Hassan MANAL,
PhD student,
Tiraspol State University, Chisinau

Rezumat: *Sistemul educațional din Israel include atât educația formală, cât și cea non-formală, care este cea mai nouă abordare a învățării prin activități plăcute și motivante. Articolul de față prezintă o privire de ansamblu asupra educației non-formale în Israel și relevă acele probleme ce constituie un impediment în exploatarea sistemului de valori, tipice culturii arabe, prin intermediul educației non-formale.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *educație non-formală, educație formală, sectorul Arab, sistem de valori, abordare.*

The dispute about what is to be considered formal education or NFE draws the attention to the relationship between formal education which is much likely to be under the state direct control and NFE which is out of the state direct control. As the two systems work to serve the society under the umbrella of one state, a relationship, regardless of its nature, is supposed to exist between them.

Brennan tries to explore this relationship by referring to three different models of NFE to be discussed across developing nations as well as for any individual developing country: NFE as complement, supplement and alternative to formal education. Each of these three models has its own roots and purposes which directly relate to the policies and practices of formal education.

The following is an outline to these three models [2]:

(1) NFE as a complement: This model represents the role of NFE in providing educational services unfulfilled by the school system. It is deve-

loped to reach those whom formal education had not been able to deliver its services. The target groups include school left-outs and drop-outs, and adults who are found to be illiterate. The complementary nature of this type of NFE was required to perform functions which formal education was designed to fulfill, but had not been able totally to achieve because of the shortage of sufficient schools, teachers or resources, or because these tools are mal-distributed or used geographically or culturally throughout the nation.

(2) NFE as a supplement: This model is designed to provide educational services related to recent important stages in the development of the nation. It is a response to the issue of the changing role of the state and economy, including the private sector, and the acceptance of education as a commodity. This model, almost being driven by economic considerations, required as a quick reaction to educational, social and economic needs because formal education is slow in its response to these needs. The target

in this type of NFE is an industry or particular type of knowledge or skill, with links between the two categories.

(3) NFE as an alternative: This model seeks to recognize the area of indigenous education and establish a link between learning and culture to achieve social change. It emerged from the unwillingness or inability of the colonial state and its formal education to accept and recognize that there had been pre-existing educational structures in the society before the colonial period, and that some of these may have been acceptable, even preferable and more successful, than the formal education adopted from the western countries and tending to continue to serve a function of elite recruitment. The alternative model, especially after the emergence of the state as a central and superior authority in the contemporary societies, might have no chance to be fully implemented. In the Palestinian case, for instance, there were ample attempts to develop NFE approach as an alternative to formal education which was controlled by the Israeli occupation (the state). However, these attempts were ruined or did not last for a long time, so many NFE program send up as complement or supplement to formal education, although NFE as a whole was in opposition to formal education and the state. This analysis is not only confined to oppressive situations, but also includes the democratic liberal societies, because as the state provides freedom in such societies, both formal education and NFE together are likely to respond to most of the people's needs, and there is no need to rely only on NFE as an alternative.

Besides, although Brennan mentioned that his argument is based on developing countries, his models neglected the differences in the political rea-

lity in these countries and the diversity of the state role and its influence over NFE. To what extent, if any, do levels of democracy affects the implementation of these models? Here Brennan's models provide no answer. In other words, while the above models try to clarify the relationship between formal education and NFE, they ignored the relationship between NFE and the state which controls formal education and its relationship with NFE. Moreover, due to the huge variations between the developing countries, Brennan's conceptualization does not fit all contexts. For instance, although NFE in Palestine has tried to play these three different roles (complementary, supplementary and alternative) in different times over the occupation era, none of these models alone match adequately the PNFE under occupation which perpetuated its opposition to the Israeli occupation.

(4) There is a fourth model presented by Wilson which perceives NFE as **opposition to formal education**. This model covers situations like that existing where most of NFE was in direct dispute with formal education. However, the four models, mentioned above, are still unable to cover all NFE practices. For instance, they disagree with the situation in a country, such as Tanzania where the state committed itself to integrate the two systems, formal education and NFE, and devoted a sophisticated amount of its budget to NFE [8].

(5) Kassam refers to a **fifth model** which is the **integrated model**. This new model has different base than all the former ones. Most of the previous models depend on an assumption that NFE lags behind formal education and just provides an inferior chance to those left behind by formal education only. Ranking NFE as a second after

formal education is not only noted in these models but also dominated the spirit of NFE literature as a whole [6].

The integrated model already has advocates and adopters. Many researchers (Coombs and Ahmed 1974, Fordham 1979, Evans 1981 and Ahmed 1983) argue that the integration between formal education and NFE education is the preferable situation which could enhance the efficiency of the education system and save resources [3], [4], [5]. This model was the strategy adopted by the UNESCO in its Second Medium-Term Plan from 1984 to 1989.

The integrated model does not give preference to either of the two systems. It views them as equivalents rather than rivals. The integrated model assumes that the relationship between formal education and NFE is much likely to be subject to a direct correlation rather than an inverse one. Fordham and Bockarie argue that an increase in formal education goes hand-in-hand with corresponding increase in NFE. Bockarie cites the developed countries as an example because in these countries NFE flourished and so does the extent of participation in formal education [1].

To justify this argument, it could be argued that expanding NFE provision is unlikely to reduce the need for formal education and vice versa. On the contrary, as such a promotion of NFE activities would activate the mental and manual capabilities of the beneficiaries and increase their awareness, this, in turn, will expand their demand and pressure over the state for formal education provision and access. Likewise, expanding formal education would open up economic opportunities, and accelerate social mobilization which, in turn, could create immense demand

for NFE programs. This discussion might put an end to the debate about the relationship between development and expanding of NFE activities. So far, as Bockarie stresses, there were two views regarding this issue: the first view argues that NFE serves the poor who have been deprived of formal education, which indicates that NFE is only for poor countries and would become less important with their development [1]. The second view argues that expansion of NFE depends on the resources available to providers and the public, thus a wider-range of NFE activities is needed and expected to be found in developed countries. Clearly, the above discussion and the practices of NFE give support to the second view.

As formal education is often under a state direct control, it could be argued that formal-NFE relationship depends, to a large extent, on the relationship between NFE and the state. If the latter is good the former is likely to be good as well and vice versa.

This point highlighted the importance of exploring NFE-state relationship. The next section will be devoted to this issue.

The essential difference between formal and non-formal education is probably that formal education programs impose predetermined objectives upon the learners while non-formal programs try to respond directly to the needs of the different client groups. Seen from this angle, formal education is largely supply driven while non-formal education is largely demand driven.

This has, at least, two important consequences for the planning of non-formal education which are the following:

- Any form of planning in this area will always be much more con-

cerned with need assessment than formal school planning.

- The essential planning function is to be kept close to the program level because of the continuous flexibility which is required to respond to the changing pattern of demand.

1. The role of central planning.

This being said, what is the role of central planning in relation to the rapid proliferation of non-formal education activities? Manifestly, the question is not to discuss (as has often been the case) if the State should intervene or not in NFE. The international comparative study shows how the State is already intervening as an important organizer of specific activities and program. Furthermore, the country case studies show how the State has a regulatory role more or less throughout the subsector.

2. Formulating policy. Policy formulation and planning is required in order to make the diversified educational field more transparent, to raise the issue of equality, to guarantee minimum standards of quality, to facilitate an efficient use of public resources and to match future demand and provision

3. Improving co-ordination. Any kind of central co-ordination, however limited, necessarily entails some loss of autonomy on the part of the organizations to be coordinated. The essential question is therefore how far the co-ordination can go without jeopardizing the great organizational flexibility of NFE activities, which is precisely what enables them to provide relevant and effective answers to specific, changing, training needs. Obviously, different views on the content and the necessary degree of co-ordination will depend on one's vision of social orga-

nization, the function of education within that organization, and the appropriate roles of the State and of private initiative. But, whatever the different positions taken in this respect, the case studies completed as part of this research project clearly bring out three questions of co-ordination which have to be considered.

a) Relationship between the school system and NFE. The first concerns the relationship between the dominant school system and the other educational segments. In view of their cent diversification of the educational activities, the functions of formal schooling, the content of what is being taught and the teaching methods have to be re-examined. This need is obvious when one considers the distribution of roles between school education and the area of out-of-school professional training where not only the potential participant but often the organizers are far from clear who should be organizing what. This particular problem is far from being settled in most countries, but a similar issue arises in other sub-sectors. What are the implications for the school system of the rapid expansion of informal learning patterns though modern communication media, of the increasing popularity of self-development activities? What lessons can be drawn from the experience in the para-formal education area for improving the organization of formal teaming? These questions are not new but they are bound to become (or remain) a central policy concern in most countries.

b) The necessity to facilitate a cumulative learning process. The second issue relates to the necessity to facilitate a cumulative learning process for the users of different school

and out-of-school training programs. This raises the challenge of creating mechanisms for the recognition of different training and life experiences. One of the factors which complicate a smooth construction of individually-tailored training itineraries is the fact that training acquired in one place, within the formal, non-formal or in-formal education sectors is frequently not recognized in the other sectors. Several countries have begun to introduce some form of a system of accreditation and equivalency of qualifications and certificates.

c) Improving co-ordination between organizing agencies. The third challenge is that of improving co-ordination between organizing agencies. As has been indicated before, many exchanges and subcontracting procedures already exist in practice mainly between agencies organizing training activities within the same area of education, e.g., professional training or training for personal development. However, it is far from sure that the existing co-ordination is the most efficient and the most beneficial for the users.

4. The nature of planning. Finally, the nature of some of the non-formal education programs raises questions about the nature of the planning itself. First, whilst the organization forms which the central planning mechanisms should take will depend upon the political and socioeconomic conditions of each country, it is clear that a 'technical' approach to the planning of NFE (designing and matching the supply of educational services to potential demand for them within the limit of available resources) only makes sense at all on a local level. Furthermore, in view of the intrinsic charac-

teristics of the wide variations observed in the forms of out-of-school education, it is essential that the wide range of organizers and users of NFE be closely involved in such an exercise.

The second novel problem for planners is the identification of learning needs. Assessing future demands for any form of education outside the formal school system raises serious difficulties. The traditional approaches towards planning have proven inadequate for this purpose. Even in the well-known sector of professional training it has become extremely difficult, because of the swiftness of the technical changes, to forecast the numbers of the people to be trained and the content of the qualification required. The problem of need assessment in the other areas relating to socio-cultural promotion and personal development education has hardly been considered. What is required here is a serious creative effort on behalf of the educational planning community to develop the necessary instruments (or to adapt and transfer them from other sectors) for assessing and forecasting needs.

Manifestly, some need assessment is presently taking place at program level, but we know very little about the way this is being done. On the other hand, need assessment at the central level does not require the same degree of precision, where the focus should be on trends and general orientations, which may well involve different assessment methods all together [7].

Many thinkers had approved the importance and significance of the non-formal education into the formal education, what help students to formulate a value system, touchiness to the society and its needs, encourage initiative and volunteering activities

and conducts, especially that high school students are teenagers who really need and require an alternative and special training and instructions for what they do have at their schools. Such complexes of informal education and non-formal education oblige social settings and milieu, such as youth groups, community centers, volunteering, councils and so on, that are different from the schools- where often the problem is rooted.

Nevertheless, according to the definition of the Israeli Ministry of Education and Sports, the Israeli educational system includes formal and non-formal education. The formal education on one hand includes: pre-primary education, primary education, post-primary education, post high school and academic education. On the other hand, the informal education includes activities among the community and the youth in the education domains and adult education. This is a simple and direct definition, but in fact when it comes to the implementation stage we face many problems especially in the Arab sector.

First and foremost, both the formal and non-formal education are truly lifelong processes whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment [2]. But with the non-formal education there is an important additional aspect, it is an organized system of educational activities outside the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity, that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives. Consequently, it is very problematic to draw a theo-

retical line between the two systems and shows how the non-formal education is different from formal education. This is an essential step in order to get to the maximum cooperation and division of functions between the two systems. The two systems should work together like rowing a boat with two captains on the opposite sides; if they work in opposite directions the boat will go in circles and never progress. But if they work in full coordination and according to a coordination policy with the same objectives the outcome will be effective. Moreover, the different attempts of classification between the two educational systems do not adequately match the reality and the practices of the non-formal education which have no commitment to these boundaries [7]. Accordingly, it is unpractical to consider them as two separated forms rather than interacting components. In practice formal education and non-formal education should be viewed predominantly by modes of learning. In other words, there are degrees of formality and non-formality on different dimensions. Some programs are pure non-formal, some are non-formal but mixed with formal elements, and some are formal but mixed with non-formal elements. Furthermore, non-formal characteristics of extracurricular activities are present when such activities are carried out in the formal type [1]. Similarly, the non-formal type displays formal characteristics when the trainees under this type receive certificates. In addition to what was mentioned so far, the imperfect and even unprofessional implementation of the non-formal policy in the Israeli Arab sector has many factors but we'll focus on three [4, p.78]:

1. The first is the Israeli State's biased attitude towards the Arab educational system. The Arabs in Israel don't have full authority and facilities to run their own educational system in a way that matches their values and norms. In fact, the non-formal education in the Arab sector emerged strongly under the Jewish policy as an instrument used to implement the Israeli policy of making the Arab better citizens. Therefore, there are no determined outcomes of this system. Due to the difference between the educational services and the Arab population the effectiveness of the non-formal educational system is insignificant. In other words, there are not enough efforts to build working plans that fit the Arab populations; these plans should be built after a long-term search on the needs of the Arabs. The reality is that the plans are built according to the Jewish society needs and then transferred to the Arab sector. The development of curriculum and materials for usage in Non-formal Education is the responsibility of the administrators of the Arab sector, but at the operational level the curriculum development outline and structure are designed in advance by the Ministry of Education in favour of the Jewish community.

The Arab non formal education system suffers from many problems and obstacles, such as: unqualified teacher in the non-formal contents, contents of curriculum are not suitable to the needs of local situation, a lack of appropriate teaching-learning materials, the educational management is not sufficient and a lack of promoting formal education continuously including family and society .

2. The second problem is that of Arab administrators who are responsible of the educational system. Unfor-

tunately there is a general attitude of exclusion of the non-formal education from the formal education. They are dealing with it as a separate, marginal and unimportant part of the formal system. They are also responsible for creating and expanding educational exclusion. They run the education system, distribute educational services, design and implement the curricula, set up the legislation, exercise the rules and provide the necessary resources. They also take decisions on behalf of the whole Arab population, articulate their minds and attitudes, direct them toward specific targets and influence their perceptions; all this without enough qualification, adequate data and awareness of the nature and need of this community. They simply work according to fixed plans that were already imposed on them.

3. The third important problem is the parents' involvement and attitude towards the non-formal education. Parental involvement is an integral part of the whole educational system; but, unfortunately there is a significant lack in the awareness of the importance of the non-formal education among the Arab community in general and among the parents in particular. In the parents' conception of the non-formal activities it is either a free babysitting time or external and additional activities. It was found that parents are not even aware of the fact that their influence is important on their children's education, and even if they are aware of this fact, they do not always have the time to go to scheduled activities. Parents' positive involvement with their children's schooling is related to many positive outcomes. To the parents, schooling is often limited to meaning indoor and formal education. They don't consider that learning needs to

continue outside of the classroom too and non-formal education provides this opportunity for continued growth of the child [1].

For days to come, formal and non-formal education shall go hand by hand in order to gain the maximum educational outcomes [7]. The best approach is to trace the roots of the exclusion between the two systems and control them. These roots are likely to be related to the unawareness of the importance of the non-formal education as a complementary, escorted and cooperative system. Moreover, without a planned action to deal with exclusion the yielded educational benefits by population will be insignificant and this cripples any attempt to provide balance in educational services. This, in turn, would cause educational and economical wastage and lead to social exclusion and conflict. In other words, the division between the two systems would hinder both the individuals' efforts to become well-

informed and acquire suitable skills, and the national efforts for sustainable development [3]. The struggle to enhance non formal education and against exclusion from formal education, is also, and at the same time, a struggle for development, justice, greater equality and recognition of the human dignity of all and of the claim of each to a responsible economic, social, and political role in society. Each system alone cannot accomplish the task of education for social mobilization and national development. Besides, parents are not always willing to participate in outdoor activities due to time restriction and a lack of knowledge on importance of the subject. Therefore, I believe that the environmental educators need programs to help get parents more involved with their children's environmental experience, because Non-formal education is a way for parents to continue their child's education outside the classroom.

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