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EVIDENCE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AS A
DETERMINING FACTOR IN PERSONAL AND SOCIAL
PROMOTION

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Abstract

Education, along with health and justice, are the basic pillars - because they affect the most precious and sensitive interests of citizens - of a democratic society, whose level of development is measured by the level of quality achieved in these three parameters. A cultured and educated country chooses its rulers more consciously, is more difficult to manage, and is more reflective in all its personal and group decisions. The real and profound social changes: integration, equity, peace, equitable distribution... will not come about suddenly, by legal imposition but by the progressive change in the mentality, in the sensitivity of each of the individuals who are part of that society and there is where education takes on its true protagonism: the formation of today's children, parents, educators... in the immediate future, is one of the greatest assets - even in the most pragmatic and utilitarian sense- that a society can procure. The objective of this research is to compile the abundant evidence that a wide range of national and international studies and institutions -INEE, WHO, UNESCO, OECD, PISA, PIRLS, UNICEF, Caritas, Save the Children... - support the decisive importance of education in general and of early childhood education in particular, in personal and social promotion and its exponential and propaedeutic value.

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Keywords: Access to education, literacy, social guarantee, teaching and training, quality of education.



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1. Introduction

Education, the training of today's children - adults and educators in the immediate future - is one of the greatest assets, even in the most pragmatic and utilitarian sense, that a society can provide. Therefore, education must be understood as an extremely profitable investment in the long term, and it is the most effective instrument for transforming the reality of individuals and societies.

Education, together with health and justice, are the basic pillars of a free and democratic society, the level of development of which is measured by the level of quality achieved in them. One of the main problems of countries with high democratic deficits - in addition, of course, to other political, social and economic factors - is precisely the low level of education of their citizens. Functional illiteracy, which implies the inaccessibility and unintelligibility of knowledge, information, new technologies... - as well as strict literacy - is the basis of all its ills. A person, a society, formed, are much more difficult to manipulate and subdue. In this idea, authors as representative as Mandela (2002), Matsuura (2002), Goodall (2003) and many others abound. Paraphrasing the words of Celaya (1955) "Education is a weapon loaded with the future".

On the other hand, as we will demonstrate, there is a strong correlation between the family status and educational level of the parents and the expectations and academic performance of the children who, in turn, will form families whose children will inevitably continue that chain; this is what has been called the intergenerational transmission of poverty (Flores, 2016), thus confirming the well-known San Mateo Effect.

The school plays a fundamental role in all this. The ultimate goal of education - not schooling - is the integral and balanced formation of individuals and, through them, the transformation of society. The true and profound social changes: respect, freedom, equity, peace... will not come suddenly, by legal imposition but by the progressive change in the mentality, in the sensibility of each one of the individuals who make up the societies.

2. Problem Statement

Despite UNESCO's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals, the Earth's biosphere has continued to deteriorate over the past two decades, poverty has spread and social inequalities have worsened.

These data are confirmed by numerous studies (Gil, Pablos, & Martínez, 2010; Chusseau & Hellier, 2011). The two countries agree that the education system not only fails to prevent inequalities and alleviate the impact of parental studies, but often acts as an intergenerational reproducer of educational inequalities, calling into question the equality of opportunity of education systems.

Agenda 2030 brings together the 17 sustainable development objectives (SDOs) into a single framework. OSD 4 focuses on the education priorities set out in the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All: "Ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all". At the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2015, representatives of the global education community signed the Incheon Declaration, making OSD 4 the

single, universal goal for education. A few months later, the Education 2030 Framework for Action was adopted by the world education community in Paris in November 2015.

3. Research Questions

Does education produce positive effects that can be seen at both the individual and social levels? Which ones, on which levels?

4. Purpose of the Study

The fundamental objective of this work is to compile all the evidence that has been gathered by the main national and international studies and organizations with the aim of demonstrating, beyond the a priori conviction repeated as a mantra, the verifiable benefits of education in all areas of life, both individually and socially, with the aim of providing a personal and institutional argument and stimulus to promote quality educational actions for oneself, for one's children or for the institutions to which this work reaches.

5. Research Methods

The research method we are going to use is what is known as a qualitative systematic review - halfway between narrative review and killer-analysis. Given the limited space available, we cannot dwell on its characterization, but there is abundant literature on the subject: Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein (2009), Botella and Gambara (2002), Cooper (2010), Cooper, Hedges and Valentine (2009), Marín Martínez, Sánchez Meca, Huedo, & Fernández (2007), Marín Martínez, Sánchez Meca, & López (2009), Petticrew and Roberts (2006) and Martín, Tobías and Seoane (2006).

This type of review greatly facilitates the drawing of reliable definitive conclusions. The two main characteristics of this method are: one, that it is based on the formulation of a specific question about which measurable evidence is sought, preferably of a quantitative nature, and the second, that it is selected for this purpose, those studies that have researched the issue and that are considered the most reliable according to certain criteria of methodological validity.

For our research we have selected all those studies and reports, national and international - twenty- according to current criteria, the solvency of the research institution and the contribution of evidence, mainly quantitative, on the research question:

Table 01. Selection of national and international reports and research

International research and reports
UNESCO. (2014). Informe del seguimiento de la educación para todos en el mundo
Save The Children. (2015). Iluminando el future
OECD. (2014). PISA in Focus – 2014/06
OECD. (2013). Education Indicators in Focus
OECD (2011) PISA In Focus 2011/1
MECD. (2013). Objetivos educativos europeos y españoles. Estrategia educación formación 2020. Informe español
Hakcman, J. (2017). 4 grandes beneficios de invertir en el desarrollo de la primera infancia

Eurostat. <i>Statistics Explained</i> . (2017).
National (spanish) research and reports
MECD. (2017). PIRLS. Estudio Internacional de Progreso en comprensión lectora. Informe Español
MECD-INEE. (2017) Panorama de la educación. Indicadores de la OCDE 2017. Informe español
MECD. (2017). Sistema Estatal de indicadores de la educación 2017
MECD. (2016). TIMSS 2015. Estudio Internacional de Tendencias en Matemáticas y Ciencias. IEA. Informe Español
MECD. (2016). PISA 2015. Programa para la Evaluación Internacional de los Alumnos. Informe español
MECD. (2015). Educáinee -BOLETÍN DE EDUCACIÓN- número 5
MECD-INEE & Gobierno de Navarra (Departamento de Educación) (2013). Boletín de Educación nº 11
MECD & FUNDACIÓN SECRETARIADO GITANO. (2013). El alumnado gitano en secundaria: un estudio comparado.
CAIXA CATALUNYA (2009). Informe de la inclusión social en España
Flores. (2016). La transmisión intergeneracional de la pobreza (TIP): factores, procesos y propuestas para la intervención. (Informe Foessa, Cáritas).
Hidalgo Hidalgo, M., & García Pérez, J. I. (2011). Impacto de la asistencia a educación infantil sobre los resultados académicos del estudiante en primaria.
Sintes, E. (Ed.). (2016). Ser estudiant universitari avui.

6. Findings

Evidence of the importance of education in all areas at the personal and social levels and evidence of the importance of education during the critical period -Child education-.

6.1. Evidence of the importance of education in all areas at the personal and social levels

- *Education reduces the intergenerational transmission of poverty*

At the international level (UNESCO, 2014): In Guatemala, each grade completed by women resulted in an increase in the number of years their children attended school. In Senegal, inheriting land or a house did not result in an increase in wealth; however, in rural areas, children of educated mothers were 27% more likely to find off-farm employment.

142 demographic and health surveys conducted in 56 countries between 1990 and 2009 showed that for each additional year of education a mother received, on average, 0.32 additional years of education for her child, an even greater benefit for girls.

In Spain, there are substantial differences in the educational performance of students depending on the type of work done by their parents. Children of parents - at least one of them - with more skilled occupations tend to perform better than other students (MECD, 2016a). The percentage of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion is proportional to the level of education attained by parents (Save the children, 2015, p. 33; MECD, 2016a, p. 61; MECD, 2016b, p. 89-92).

The educational level of the parents, especially the mother, is an important factor in dropping out of school. (INEE, State System of Education Indicators, 2016, p. 63; MECD, 201a, p. 119; MECD, 2017c, p. 57; MECD, 2016b, p. 84-88)

The expectations regarding the level of studies that students aspire to achieve show a strong positive correlation regarding the level of studies achieved by parents (MECD and Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2013, p. 159).

In Spain, 32.4% of the population aged 30 to 44 whose parents do not have a Tertiary Education degree obtains a degree at this level. However, this percentage reaches 72.8% when individuals have at least one parent with a tertiary degree. (SCM, 2017, p. 13).

43.4% of university students and 44.7% of master's students belong to a high social class; these percentages fall to 26.9% and 24.2% in the middle class and 29.6% and 31.1% in the lower class, respectively. Students of parents with high occupancy have a rate of 1.7 - at a level of 0 to 2 where 1 is equity - while students with mothers with low occupancy have a rate of 0.7. (Sintes, 2016, p.59).

Only 20% of young people whose parents do not have a university degree graduate from university compared to 80% of young people whose parents do have a university degree. The proportion of young people between 18 and 24 who do not study and do not have post-compulsory secondary education is 5 times higher in households where the father has primary education than in those where the father has higher education, and 11 times higher when the mother has primary education than in households where the woman has higher education.

- *Education and advancement of women*

At the international level (UNESCO, 2014): In Brazil, about 70% of fertility reduction during the 1960s and 1970s can be explained by improvements in schooling. In sub-Saharan Africa, the average birth rate among uneducated women is 6.7-5.8 for women with primary education and 3.9 for women with secondary education.

In India, young women who have completed at least secondary school are 30% more likely than uneducated women to have a choice about who their husbands will be.

In sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, about 2.9 million girls are married before age 15 - 1 in 8 -; if they had completed secondary school, the proportion of child marriages would have fallen by 64 per cent.

In these same areas, up to 3.4 million births occur before girls are 17 years old - 1 in 7. If they had reached secondary education, adolescent childbearing would decrease by 59 per cent. In Pakistan, only 30 per cent of uneducated women say they can decide on the number of children they have, while among women who have completed primary education the proportion rises to 52 per cent, and to 63 per cent among those who have completed lower secondary education.

In Sierra Leone, an additional year of schooling reduced women's tolerance of domestic violence from 36 per cent to 26 per cent.

In India, only about 4 per cent of candidates for state assembly elections were women, and the average number of votes women candidates receive is about 5 per cent. If the disparity between the two can be halved, it will be

In terms of literacy, the number of female candidates would increase by 21% and the proportion of votes received by women would increase by 17%.

In Spain, the differences in activity rates by gender are reduced as the level of training increases. (INEE, State System of Education Indicators, 2017a, p. 72 ff).

- *The higher the level of education, the higher the employability, the lower the seasonality and the higher the salary.*

At the international level: On average, one year of education translates into a 10% higher salary. In El Salvador, for example, only 5% of those who have not completed primary education

have an employment contract, compared to 47% of those who have completed it. In Uganda, those who have completed primary education earn 36 per cent more than those who do not have an education and those who have lower secondary education earn 56 per cent more. In Ethiopia, from 1994 to 2009, rural households where the head of household has completed primary education are 16% less likely to be in chronic poverty. In rural Vietnam, heads of households in lower secondary education were four years later, 24% more likely to be non-poor and 31% more likely to have completed upper secondary education. (UNESCO, 2014).

In Spain, people with tertiary education earn 53% more than those who have completed the second stage of Secondary Education and these 29% more than those who have completed the first stage of Secondary Education or lower (INEE, 2013, p. 38?? and INEE, State System of Education Indicators, 2016, p. 81 ff.

- *Health benefits*

At the international level: The reduction in the infant mortality rate resulting from the education of mothers - giving birth with the help of a midwife or skilled birth attendant - is 50%, while economic growth only reduces this rate by 10%.

Completing secondary school increases the likelihood of immunizing children against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough by 43 per cent. A single additional year of maternal schooling translates into a 14 per cent reduction in the pneumonia mortality rate, saving the lives of 170,000 children each year.

If all women had completed primary school, the maternal mortality ratio would have decreased by 66 per cent.

Eleven countries in sub-Saharan Africa found that children were 22% less likely to acquire malaria when their mothers were in primary school and 36% less likely to acquire malaria when they were in secondary school.

In Zimbabwe, in 2010, where 75 per cent of women aged 15 to 24 had completed lower secondary education, the HIV prevalence rate had declined from its peak of 29 per cent in 1997 to 14 per cent, falling four times faster than in Malawi and Zambia, where less than half of all young women had completed lower secondary education.

In the USA, in the 1950s, the most educated people smoked the most, but it was the group that changed its behaviour the fastest when information about the harms of tobacco use was reported. In 2000, this group was 10% less likely to smoke than those with fewer studies. The Global Adult Smoking Survey found that in Bangladesh, Egypt and the Philippines, those without secondary education were more than twice as likely to smoke as those with tertiary education.

Adults with higher levels of education report a lower incidence of depression than those with lower levels of education. The difference in Spain between those who have only the first stage of Secondary Education and those who reached Tertiary Education is more than triple (10% and 3%) (MEC, 2017, p. 40).

There is a positive link between education and life satisfaction. On average in OECD countries, 92% of adults with tertiary education were satisfied with their lives in 2015, compared to 83% of adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. (Gallup Worldwide survey in MEC, 2017, p.42).

Longitudinal studies show how educational attainment influences the adoption of healthier habits. Data from OECD countries collected by EU-SILC show that the average difference in the percentage of people with activity limitations by level of education - Lower Secondary Education versus Tertiary Education - is 12 percentage points in the 25-34 age group, 15 percentage points in the 35-44 age group, 18 percentage points in the 45-54 age group and 20 percentage points in the 55-64 age group. The steadily widening gap suggests that education may play a protective role against health problems as people age. MEC, 2017, P. 42).

- *Improvement of nutrition*

At the international level (UNESCO, 2014): In Bangladesh, when both parents had completed part of their secondary education, the diet was 10% more diversified than when neither parent was educated at all. In Indonesia, only 51 per cent of uneducated households, used iodized salt, compared with 95 per cent of households where the mother had completed lower secondary education. In 41 per cent of uneducated households, vitamin supplements were provided to children in the previous six months, compared to 61 per cent of households in which the mother had completed lower secondary education.

Data from Australia, Canada, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom show that education helps to reduce obesity levels. Giving advice on healthy eating and weight control tends to be more effective with educated people.

- *Education reduces inequalities between countries*

The higher the percentage of the adult population with secondary education, the lower the percentage of income inequality, according to the Gini coefficient. If Mexico had managed to increase its mathematics scores in PISA by 70 points to the OECD average, its annual per capita growth rate between 1990 and 2010 would have almost doubled, from 1.5% to 2.9%.

- *Educational level and concern for the environment*

In the 47 countries that participated in the 2005-2008 World Values Survey, the higher the level of education, the greater the likelihood that people will express concern for the environment. The International Social Survey Programme survey data showed that the proportion of people who disagreed with the idea that there was too much concern for the environment increased from 25 per cent of those without secondary education to 37 per cent of those with secondary education and 46 per cent of those with higher education (UNESCO, 2014).

- *Education and respect for diversity*

In Latin America, intolerance towards people of other ethnic groups is 47% lower among those who have completed secondary education than among those who only had primary education. In the Arab States, intolerance towards people of other faiths is 14 per cent lower among them. And in sub-Saharan Africa, for people infected with HIV (23%). In Central and Eastern Europe, there are 16% differences in tolerance towards immigrants.

The expected risk of conflict is highest in countries with low levels of male education and a large youth population. In a country with a high population of 38 per cent of young adults, doubling the

proportion of young people with secondary education from 30 to 60 per cent would halve the risk of conflict. A study of 55 low- and middle-income countries over the period 1986-2003 found that if the level of educational inequality doubled, the likelihood of conflict more than doubled, from 3.8% to 9.5% (UNESCO, 2014).

- *Education and corruption*

Better educated citizens are more likely to confront corruption by filing complaints with government agencies, mainly because they have information on how to file such complaints and how to defend themselves. In 31 countries that participated in the World Justice Project's 2009-2011 survey, people with secondary education were one-sixth more likely to complain about poor government services than the average, and those with higher education were one-third more likely to complain. In Brazil, 53% of uneducated voters stated that they would support a corrupt politician who was competent compared to 25% of respondents with some level of education. (UNESCO, 2014)

6.2. Evidence of the importance of education during the critical period -Child education-

The most recent studies on early childhood education and care for children from low-income families and ethnic minorities, provided they meet certain conditions, contribute significantly to reducing their educational disadvantage (Leseman, 2010, p. 48). It is certainly emphasised that education must be of good quality in order to produce such benefits; otherwise, in addition to being practically useless, it generates frustration and expense, as is literally stated in UNESCO (2014): "the cost of children who currently receive poor quality primary education, that is, who attend school but do not learn, is \$129 billion per year".

Attendance at early childhood education is associated with improved academic performance later on, even in the socio-economic context, depending on the duration and quality of the IE (OECD, 2011, 2013, 2014; MEC, 2014), which coincides with Heckman's (2008) research: "high quality actions on children in their early childhood foster their capacities, which allows them to tackle inequality at its source. Early action also increases the productivity of the economy".

Twenty-one studies in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South and South-East Asia show the continuing positive effects on child development that are achieved when children's cognitive development is stimulated. Good early childhood care and education has even more positive effects on children from disadvantaged groups. In Argentina, students from poor backgrounds who had attended preschool in the past scored twice as high on the third grade tests as students from other backgrounds. In rural Bangladesh, children who participated in NGO-led educational projects performed better in oral expression, reading, writing and mathematics in the second grade of primary school than those who had not received pre-school education (UNESCO, 2014).

There is a strong positive correlation between family language stimulation in the early ages and reading comprehension in primary education (MECD, 2013). "A recent meta-analysis of Canada based on six longitudinal studies shows that the level of literacy proficiency at primary school entry is a better predictor than gender and socioeconomic status" (Duncan et al., 2007, p. 130, in MECD, 2013).

In Spain, students who attended Early Childhood Education performed better in mathematics than those who did not; the difference is significant in all Autonomous Communities. (OECD PISA in Focus 2014) (MEC, 2015, Education Bulletin 5).

7. Conclusion

In view of the evidence provided by the different national and international studies and research, it seems unquestionable that quality education produces unquestionable benefits at both personal and social levels in all areas:

In the area of health, it reduces infant mortality, improves healthy lifestyles, increases vaccination rates in children, reduces maternal mortality, reduces diseases such as malaria, reduces smoking, obesity and depression, improves eating habits and provides a better quality of life.

For women, it reduces gender differences, unwanted fertility, child marriage, early childbearing and domestic violence and encourages participation in public life.

At the economic level, at the individual level, it generates greater employability, higher wages and less seasonality; at the community level, it produces great economic benefits and reduces inequality between countries.

It stimulates awareness and respect for the environment, increases tolerance for differences, reduces conflict and provides an antidote to corruption.

On the other hand, a quality education in the first years of life contributes to future academic success - especially in the area of mathematics and language - and contributes, above all, to reducing social disadvantages at source.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, investment in education not only produces short-term benefits, but also improves future generations by breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion, so, as we said at the beginning, investing in education is one of the most intelligent actions, even in the most pragmatic and utilitarian sense, that we can take as individuals and as a society.

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