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## HUMAN-CENTRED EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IUC-DUBOVNIK, 21-23 SEPTEMBER 2015

### ABSTRACT

Most concepts for economic development have degenerated to the narrow target of economic growth with ever augmenting real and financial capital accumulation. Also newer concepts of qualitative and “smart” growth do not justice to the growing importance of labour inputs and the increasing qualification needs. Especially, high financial capital accumulation is considered to define “iron laws” of the prevailing “economic machine” (Schumpeter) to which labour should adapt, neglecting that this constraints the human potential and its creativity. In contrast, socio-economic development has to become a largely open process, governed by an educationally empowered population.

To put human capabilities at the centre of economic development we can partly recur to the classical theory of labour value (Keynes), which later converted into the “human capital” approach. By this it has been proved that the main source of economic wealth is labour. But we have to be careful, because “human capital” belongs to the population, which renders just a service to production processes. “Human capital” is in the property of people and has to be considered as social capital, the further development of which depend primarily on human-centred education and not only by production-oriented education. Full development of human personalities is needed and socio-economic development depends on the strenght of the individual in the social context (Jacobs).

The same applies for a transition into a Socio-Ecological Market Economy (SEME). In face of existing ecological limits natural capital inputs have to be reduced – along with a reduction of financial and man-made capital – and this needs capital saving innovations, which depend on higher qualification and finally on the augmentation of social capital by human-centred education. Future production (ICT, robots) and the reduction of physical capital inputs are bound to a “scientification” and education and research gains in importance for economic development (Hoedl). However, scientification is not a target in itself and therefore it has to be linked to its implications for the individual and societal well-being.

There is an urgent need to change the basic perspective of economic development from the ever augmenting real and financial capital accumulation to a vigorous accumulation of human an social capital. It is not the lack of financial means to invest in human beings, but the lack of the political will. Education can be anchored in the classical concept of freedom and the development of human capabilities (Sen), which not only have relevance for production, but also for social and ecological changes and a peaceful democratic development. By this, economic development becomes an open process depending on the preferences and capabilities of the population and a human-centred education is the most important precondition for it.

## **PRESENTATION NOTES**

### ***Purpose of Education:***

- Development of individual personalities in the social context
- General learning objectives should refer to Classical Enlightenment enriched by modern theories
- Education has to be Life Long Learning from childhood to aged people
- Education should be human-centred and enhance human capabilities

### ***Education and the Future:***

- Education will be the most important strategy for regional and global development
- Present schools, including Universities will be just one institution, which have to open much further
- Education can be available by ICT, the commercialisation should be partly restricted
- Curricula should concentrate on new knowledge and delete obsolete knowledge

### ***Transdisciplinary Contextual Learning:***

- The existing educational systems are dominated by disciplines and institutional rigidities
- Education has to become project-oriented, transdisciplinary and focus on learning not teaching
- Contextual learning can be established in all curricula, both in social and natural sciences
- Early participation of students in cooperative research with private firms/government

### ***The Value of Values in Education:***

- Values in the present educational system are tacitly integrated and should be made explicit
- Values can be made explicit by discussing the individual and societal consequences of knowledge
- Curricula should contain a few phases for reflecting the implications of the knowledge acquired
- Instead of the actually dominant value of "employability" human-centred education is more effective