

ISCHE 44

Budapest, Hungary

18-21 July 2023

Histories of Education and Reform: Traditions, Tensions and Transitions

Educational practice and theory have faced many challenges throughout history. Especially since the formation of nation-states and national school systems and the rise of professionalisation, education has struggled through a continuous demand for reform, in which expert groups, social and grassroots movements, teachers, educators and politicians have repeatedly called for changes to schooling, social policies, family life, parenting, etc. Examples are the *Lebensreform*, New Education and other reform movements of the early 20th century, all of which intended to bring about social change. These efforts to initiate change in education and society were historically diverse and differences can be traced locally, regionally, nationally and globally: between different communities, between economically developed countries and emerging nations in times of decolonisation, between the Western hemisphere and the so-called Global East/South. In addition, these educational reform movements were characterised by inherent tensions, which emerged between what were substantially beneficial concepts and utopias aimed at making the world a better place, and the translations, reappropriations, distortions, unintended side effects and shortcomings in their realisation.

The conference theme *Histories of Education and Reform* fosters reflection on the interconnections between philosophy, humanities, education and social sciences, and politics and policy studies, in order to shed light on the complex nature of education and educational reforms. The conference also aims to encourage a critical investigation of the values and ethical foundations of education and how they have underpinned various attempts to make distinctions between “good” and “new” education, to describe the ideal structure and content of education, and to identify conflicts amongst interest groups and intentions. Different faith organisations, public versus private institutions, and local and transnational agencies have viewed education as an experimental and legitimising field for their activities. So both in theory and in practice, education is characterised by the power of established traditions, by prevailing tensions and by the diversity of actors and the transitions for which they have advocated.

ISCHE 44 intends to trace the historical background of a world in crisis by addressing old and new questions about development and sustainability, identity and migration, the effects of pandemics, and war and peace education. Other issues concern climate change and its past and present impact in different parts of the world. Historians of education are invited to scrutinise notions of progress, freedom and economic growth, the relevance of community-based reform and action, controversial debates on ethical principles and values of education, the problem of political power and the way politics has utilised young generations to shape societies, among other issues. Following this thread, historians may present cases from the past to shed light on new directions for the coming decades.

Themes

The organisers welcome proposals on the following thematic strands:

1. *History of education and the study of reforms*: research trends and results; historical dichotomies between reform theories and pedagogical practices; realisation and utopia.
2. *Actors and/in reforms*: the State, social and grassroots movements, teachers' and students' movements, international organisations, churches, technologies, media.
3. *Politics, policies and reform*: religious reforms and education; reform movements; reforms in the education system; social and educational reforms; development, sustainability and environmental awareness.
4. *Circulation of reforms*: globalisation and change and reforms; transnational and national approaches and visions between East and West, South and North, centre and periphery; adaptation and reception, networks, innovation and its diffusion.
5. *Power, reform and counter-reform*: reforms, communities and individuals; acceleration, stability, decline and failure of reforms; shifts in governance and structure; directions and meanings of reforms; strategies and tactics.