

Velbert International Conference Nov. 2/3, 2001

Questions about Autonomy and the Equality of Opportunity

1. How important is the goal of equal opportunity in the national educational system? How deeply is it rooted in politics and society? Has there been a change in the importance of that goal when schools were granted greater autonomy?
2. How many young people continue their education beyond compulsory school? How many qualify for the university? What is the percentage of young people who do not finish school but drop out before? How much do social background, educational standards of parents, ethnic origin or physical or mental handicaps influence that number? Did greater school autonomy make a difference in the last years?
3. What kinds of additional support programmes for children with difficult social background, from ethnic minorities and handicapped people do exist? Are there programmes for compensation? How are they organized? How do student assessment/school reports and final exams relate to the goal of equal opportunity?

Are there any pre-school programmes and primary school programmes to reduce inequality of opportunity? Are there any basic concepts to support individual abilities? How are they financed? Who is responsible? How have these concepts developed under the conditions of greater autonomy?

Which additional action is taken to improve the equality of opportunity for all children, concerning participation in higher education and final success in taking exams? Who gives the money? Who is responsible? How have these programmes developed under the conditions of greater autonomy?

4. What is the impact of school structure (integrated, not integrated) on the goal of equal opportunity? Does greater autonomy enhance integration and improve the conditions of equality of opportunity?
5. Has the success of support programmes been evaluated? Are there regular reports about the equality of opportunity being achieved in the system? Has research been done on the question whether the tendency of creating market conditions interferes with national educational goals? If so, what are the results?