

Editorial

“Higher education policies”

In the last decades of the twentieth century there was a growing interest in the research on the history of education and Mexico’s educational policies. In the opinion of specialists, the latter research has been clearly insufficient, since it often ignores the complex contextual frameworks in which the policies have attempted to be implemented. Since then this field of research has made become stronger, opening spaces in the national and regional debate for discussion of the phenomenon of higher education.

Scholars and thinkers who have written about higher education policies maintain that as long as such reforms – supposed to be program innovations – are implemented under the idea that they operate in a historical void, their scope will continue to be limited. They claim that there are multiple and distinct factors that must be considered when mapping new routes for education in Mexico and in the region, which is why it is necessary, in principle, to carry out diagnoses based on complex evaluations that observe what happens from a multi-factorial viewpoint.

There are, then, old and new problems that have not been sufficiently identified and, consequently, the research conducted on what happens to and what afflicts higher education, as an institution with a view to the construction of the nation-state itself but which also forms part of a global economic, political, social and cultural model, must start by pointing out critically the absences, the biases, or the fragmented views from which public policies directed towards this sphere are built.

Which model of a country is built from there? Which student is envisaged through the higher education policies proposed? What is the weight of the social, economic and cultural inequities that young Mexicans carry with them when they enter the higher education system? Where are the policies designed for a country with such enormous regional differences and how, then, do educational policies materialize in each context? What kind of higher education is being offered in reality? Is there a balance between the views of education as a social good and the demands of the labor market to which educational institutions often submit? How are historically excluded groups included in the design of higher education policies and in the very configuration of public and private universities, i.e., their admission standards, enrolment increases, curricula, costs, sources of funding and work schedules? We cannot refrain from asking the questions that we believe must be thought of when talking about higher education and its policies. It is due to our interest in elucidating possible answers, in setting up a debate on what

is now a source of national and regional concern, as well as the concern of thousands of young Mexicans and their families, that we have invited Doctors Nayeli Quevedo Huerta, Ducange Médor, and Beatriz Adriana Bustos Torres, to coordinate this issue of *Diálogos sobre educación* on higher education policies.

We thank the coordinators for their work and for having compiled an issue with articles that address different subjects and analytic approaches, accounting not only for concrete, particular phenomena, but also with outlooks on reality from a regional perspective that contributes to the understanding of the subject that has brought us together in issue 14 of *Diálogos sobre educación. Temas actuales en investigación educativa*. Finally, we hope readers of this issue will find these articles interesting, and that they will inspire further reflection and dialog.

Anayanci Fregoso Centeno