

Комуникация в международни институции и корпорации
Communication in International Institutions and Corporations

The Main Experiences of EU Education Poverty Alleviation Policies and Its Lessons for China

DOI 10.55206/JDRM5137

Wang Rui

South-West University, Bulgaria

E-mail: 37862821@qq.com

Abstract: Poverty is a thorny issue within countries and a common problem worldwide. Addressing, reducing, and even eliminating poverty presents a significant challenge for humanity. Escaping poverty is crucial to individual development and social progress, where education plays an irreplaceable role. Education plays a crucial role in the growth of individuals, the progress of society and the development of the country. This paper outlines the main experiences of the European Union's poverty alleviation policy in education and draws on its experience to provide insights for the formulation of China's poverty alleviation policy in education. The article analyses European Commission and European Union documents on poverty reduction and education. The methods of desk research and analysis and synthesis are used. The conclusions are based on an interpretation of concepts and programs, platforms and practices. The conclusions are based on the presentation of good practices and possible perspectives for the optimization of processes concerning education and poverty alleviation, which are socially relevant topics in our time.

Keywords: European Union, education, poverty alleviation policy, inspiration for China.

Introduction

Poverty has always been a common problem that needs urgent solutions in various social and economic forms. Poverty reduction and eradication are major issues of continuous concern and research worldwide. Since its establishment, the European Union has made anti-poverty one of its goals in policy formulation and implementation at the EU level to achieve overall integration of EU society. Education plays a crucial role in individual growth, societal development, and national progress. Despite having different political, economic, social systems, and cultural traditions, China and the European Union face many common problems and challenges in education development. This paper examines the European Union's poverty alleviation policy through education and summarizes its main experiences in this area. By drawing lessons from the EU's approach to

poverty alleviation through education, this paper provides insights for the development of China's poverty alleviation policy through education.

1. The main experience of the EU's poverty alleviation policy in education

By formulating a series of social policies, including educational policies, the European Union strengthens the economic, political and social development of the Union and its member States. The systematic and comprehensive poverty alleviation policy of the European Union enables more European citizens, especially those facing poverty and social exclusion, to receive education and training, so as to gradually achieve social integration, maximize economic and social benefits and enhance the cohesion of the European Union.

1.1. Unification of efficiency and fairness

The EU considers equity and efficiency in the reform and decision-making of the education system in order to maximize the rate of return of the education and training system. The European Union usually adopts OECD tests to ensure the efficiency of education and training systems. An equitable education system ensures that educational outcomes do not depend on socio-economic background and other factors such as gender, ethnic minority regions, disability and urban-rural disparities, and consider the special learning needs of individuals.

In the formulation of the policy of poverty alleviation through education, the European Union has found that some groups of the population are particularly vulnerable to poverty. These include mainly children, young people, single-parent families, people with immigrant backgrounds, ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma) and people with disabilities. In addition, gender differences are clearly visible, with women generally being at greater risk of poverty than men.

The European Union provides learning guidance for a large number of vulnerable groups. Prevention of early school-leaving, intervention and compensatory policies ensure the acquisition of basic skills at the basic education level to combat the risks of poverty and social exclusion. Establishing clear and diverse pathways through vocational education and training, thereby facilitating further learning and employment; improving vocational skills and lifelong learning to successfully adapt to technological change and a rapidly changing labor market; expanding access to higher education and successfully completing higher education, improve their overall quality. These coherent policy measures demonstrate the effectiveness of the input and output of the education and training system and ensure equitable access to education for all groups.

In conclusion, universal access to quality education is an essential component of personal, cultural, social and professional development in a knowledge-based society, and equal access to quality education is key to eradicating poverty, combating the social exclusion of vulnerable groups, changing gender stereo-

types and achieving sustained social cohesion. At the same time, education policy alone cannot solve the problem of education disadvantage. There is an interaction between personal, social, cultural and economic factors that also influence the education system. Therefore, the EU integrates education policy with social policy, employment policy, youth policy, family policy and other policies to ensure educational outcomes and promote educational equity.

1.2. Institutionalization of division of decision-making

EU policy-making is inseparable from the participation of various institutional subjects, which should be coordinated and mutually restricted under the legal framework in order to prevent the abuse of rights and the ambiguity of responsibilities. The progress of EU social policy and education policy is the result of comprehensive joint efforts at the level of the EU and of member states. Social policy and educational policy are full of contradictions and frustrations in terms of policy content, policy practice, policy concept and legal basis. Every breakthrough of EU policy is inseparable from the active coordination and efforts at the EU level, taking care of the interests of member states, strengthening the construction of social Europe and seeking the greatest degree of cooperation, which has always been one of the most important roles of EU institutions.

According to the Treaties on the European Union, the decision-making body is regarded as the core institution of the European Union and has legitimacy. There are not only the European Council, which coordinates the overall situation, but also the European Commission, which implements the administration, as well as the European Parliament and the European Council, which jointly legislate and supervise. These institutions stick to their duties and do not interfere with each other, but also communicate and cooperate with each other sincerely, and work together to push the EU ship to sail. Moreover, the decision-making body would consult two advisory bodies representing different interests and non-governmental organizations when formulating policy documents. The European Economic and Social Committee and the European Regional Committee demonstrate EU policies and propose amendments accordingly, and each time they are published in the EU Official Journal. It enriches the content of policies, brings the voices of European citizens and the public to the highest level of decision-making, and promotes the democratic development of the EU.

In this institutional framework, each institution plays a unique and powerful role, and also accepts mutual supervision among institutions, which improves the efficiency of administrative operation at the EU level, supports the education and training systems of member states, and enlarges the international competitiveness and influence of EU education.

1.3. Process flexibility

From the formulation to the implementation of EU policy, the European Commission undertakes a greater responsibility from the EU level, and the real implementation still depends on the active cooperation and action of each member state.

Firstly, in the practice of EU education poverty alleviation policy, in order to achieve the overall goal of its 2020 strategy, the EU and its member states discussed together, not only dividing the overall goal into specific quantitative goals, rather than simply sloganeering propaganda, but also transforming each country's own quantitative goals. This reflects the EU's recognition of the differences in social and educational conditions among countries. If all countries adopt a unified overall goal, it will increase the burden on the less advanced and balanced EU countries.

Secondly, the policies of preschool education, secondary education, vocational education and higher education at the EU level are based on the investigation of the educational reality of various countries, and support and supplement the domestic policies of various countries under the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. That is to say, the education policy at the EU level is integrated with the policies of member states as a supporting policy, rather than being limited by the mandatory requirements of EU supranational rights, which is conducive to the flexible implementation of policies and avoids their conflict and mutual contradiction. Moreover, the various projects, plans and funds adopted by the European Union in various fields of education and the inclusive target of poverty alleviation through education have promoted the smooth development and implementation of the policy.

Thirdly, the EU introduces the soft method of open coordination. Under the guidance of the established goals, the EU and its member States work together to exchange policy information, choose the best practices and promote policy learning. Moreover, every year the European Commission conducts a detailed analysis of each member state's budget, macroeconomic and structural reform plans under the European Semester Mechanism, and then provides EU governments with country-specific recommendations for the next 12-18 months. EU cooperation with Member States has been strengthened through relatively flexible policy instruments, and the progress of EU countries in achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework has been monitored.

1.4. Scientific monitoring and evaluation

As a regional organization, the European Union has 27 member States after several expansions. There are great differences in the level of development among member countries, and the development of education is also uneven. The European Union generally adopts an evidence-based approach to education

policy-making. Through international comparison and country analysis, the monitoring of education and training promotes the identification of priorities in education policy and provides guiding information for national education reform. Monitoring relies on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative sources, including Eurostat data, survey data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development study, and data from the Eurydice Network analysis of national education systems. Timely and updated monitoring data are a reliable source of policy learning among the 27 EU Member States. The European Commission also has data reports on the education objectives in the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework, and publishes annual education monitoring reports. The EU has a mid-term evaluation of long-term planning, which includes the EU level, member states and non-governmental organizations, as well as the public in European countries, so that all parties can express their opinions on the effectiveness of policy implementation in the medium term, and promote the partial adjustment or continued implementation of the policy. The EU's data monitoring for the poor mainly relies on the EU's income and living conditions statistics in Eurostat, and publishes data interpretation reports after updating.

Specifically, there are five indicators of preschool education: preschool places, specialized teachers (at least one with higher education qualifications, professional development of teachers), curriculum or educational guides, language support programs, and parental support (family learning guidance, parenting programs). [1] There are five indicators of basic skills: national standardized tests in literacy, mathematics, and science, a recent national report on basic skills achievement, external school assessments, beginning teachers addressing student underachievement, and additional support for schools with large enrollments of disadvantaged students. [2] There are six indicators of early school leavers: national data on registration of early school leavers, flexibility and permeability of educational pathways (provision of alternative education and training pathways, promotion of transitions, skills and/or qualifications within the education and training system), language support for students with different mother tongues, beginning teacher education and teacher professional development, Educational and vocational guidance at the compulsory school level, support for early school leavers to re-enter the education and training system (second education opportunities, educational and vocational guidance, youth protection). [3] There are three main indicators of vocational education: the first is the access, attractiveness and flexibility of vocational education, the second is the relevance of vocational skills development to the labor market, and the third is the relevance of education and training to the labor market. [4] There are five indicators of higher education: quantitative objectives related to the social dimension of higher education, socio-economic characteristics of students, informal and non-formal learning for ac-

creditation into higher education, higher education completion rates, and performance-based financing mechanisms. [5]

Among the 27 Member States with different education and training system structures, based on common benchmark objectives, the monitoring of specific indicators can dynamically present the differences within the EU and can promote mutual learning, coordination and cooperation between the EU and member States.

2. The Enlightenment of EU's Poverty Alleviation Policy on Education to China

2020 is the decisive stage for China to build a well-off society in an all-round way and achieve the goal of the twenty-first century. It is also the decisive stage for China to win the battle against poverty. Poverty alleviation through education is an important part of the national policy but with the arrival of 2020, the work on anti-poverty and poverty reduction is not over. By 2020, the problem of absolute poverty in rural areas was to be solved, and the problem of relative poverty will still run through the process of China's modernization. Therefore, combined with the current situation and process of poverty alleviation through education in China, this paper summarizes the experience of the European Union and provides lessons for China's poverty alleviation policy through education.

2.1. Adhering to a people-oriented approach and attaching importance to the development of education

The theory of social exclusion holds that poverty always means less opportunities and lack of abilities. Poverty inhibits the development of individuals and adversely affects their physical and mental health, educational attainment and well-being. A child who grows up in poverty and exclusion is at higher risk of becoming a marginalized adult and is more likely to fall into a vicious intergenerational cycle. Poor areas and poor people lack the quality of knowledge and skills, and the deep-seated reason for poverty is an insufficient investment in education, training and other factors.

There are regional and individual differences in the structure of human resources in China's poverty-stricken areas, but the emphasis on human resources has always been the top priority of national policy. Therefore, we should continue to adhere to the people-oriented policy concept, which also reflects the basic value orientation of education policy. Increasing the inclination of education in poverty-stricken areas includes not only quantitative investment, but also qualitative improvement.

From the policy documents of the European Union, we can find that the policies from preschool education to higher education have educational assistance measures for all kinds of poor groups, and they are coherent and systematic. Investment in education and training will pay long-term dividends for individual

well-being and overall economic prosperity. In the policy assistance, we should also pay attention to guiding the poor people to pay attention to education, although the effect of investment in education has a certain lag, but education has a sustainable and long-term role in anti-poverty struggle. Economic aid can only help reduce poverty in the short term, and it is easy to breed economic dependence and psychological laziness to get rid of poverty. Through investment in education, it will help the poor groups to no longer fall into or return to the poverty trap for a long time, and block the intergenerational transmission of poverty. China basically completed the elimination of absolute poverty by 2020, but relative poverty is still in the process of modernization. National modernization and educational modernization complement each other. Whether in urban or rural areas, poor groups need strong support from educational poverty alleviation policies to get rid of poverty completely.

2.2. Clarifying the leading role of the government

As a regional intergovernmental organization, the European Union is quite different from the traditional nation-state. Its operation mode is unique, which introduces open coordination methods in the fields of education and society, strengthens the cooperation between EU institutions and member States, and the main body of EU institutions has a greater say in the formulation and evaluation of poverty alleviation policies, but the implementation of poverty alleviation policies still depends on the specific implementation of member States. At present, the main body of poverty alleviation through education in China is still the government departments, including the central level, provincial departments and municipal and county levels. Therefore, the working mechanism of overall planning by the central government, overall responsibility by provinces and implementation by cities and counties has basically been formed for the assistance of poverty-stricken areas.

In addition, in order to ensure the orderly and efficient operation of government departments, the government should be willing to accept supervision and evaluation in the implementation of the policy of poverty alleviation through education. From the perspective of the European Union, the responsibilities of various institutions are different, and the European Commission, as the executive body, is also subject to the supervision of the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and non-governmental organizations. The poverty alleviation work of China's service-oriented government can adopt both internal and external supervision modes: internal supervision includes mutual evaluation between the same level and higher and lower levels of departments, and can also introduce the assessment of cross-provincial departments at the same level, while external supervision includes the evaluation of third-party independent organizations and public groups. The purpose of supervision is not to hinder the development of poverty alleviation work and increase the task of poverty alleviation cadres, but to

prevent the absence of government functions in the work. Through normal supervision and evaluation, we will make poverty alleviation work open and transparent, share excellent poverty alleviation practices, find out loopholes and shortcomings, eliminate corruption in poverty alleviation, and improve the credibility of the government.

2.3. Improving the Policy System to Protect Vulnerable Groups

From the implementation of the first anti-poverty project to the ten-year strategic plan of the European Union, it is not only historic but also forward-looking. This means that in the formulation of educational policies, we should not only sum up the past successful experience as the basis of current policies, but also take the initiative to grasp the future development trend. China has accumulated early experience in poverty alleviation through education, and has issued a series of policy documents covering all stages from preschool education to higher education. Based on this, we should continue to implement the requirements of these documents to help students from disadvantaged economic or social backgrounds have equal access to school, guarantee their right to education, and receive and successfully complete all kinds of education at all levels.

Attention should also be paid to the protection of vulnerable groups in the process of policy formulation. There are ethnic minorities in all EU countries, mainly Roma. EU policy documents clearly emphasize the importance of education for ethnic minorities in order to achieve the goal of social integration. China is a multi-ethnic country, and the education situation in poor ethnic minority areas is not optimistic. The policies for ethnic minority students, such as enrollment policy, subsidy policy and compensation policy, should be inclined. The external conditions should improve the hardware infrastructure. Under the condition of guaranteeing basic compulsory education, ethnic minority students can receive vocational education and acquire basic labor skills. At the same time, it is necessary to help groups with special needs, such as the education of the disabled.

2.4. Optimize the allocation of resources and promote educational equity

Due to the natural environment, historical conditions and geographical location, China's current distribution of material resources, social resources and cultural resources is not balanced, which leads to differences in educational resources between regions, between urban and rural areas and between schools, especially in the central and western regions, remote areas and ethnic areas. In view of these areas, the development of education and the guarantee of educational equity depend not only on external assistance but also on self-support.

Firstly, in areas where educational resources are scarce, we should consolidate the educational foundation and make up for the shortcomings of education by means of allocation and transportation. The causes of poverty in different parts

of the country are different. Combining with the national standards, we can identify the specific causes of poverty and the objects of assistance. Through precise investment, special plans, resource sharing, counterpart assistance and East-West cooperation, we can enrich the educational resources in poverty-stricken areas and ensure the equality and fairness of educational opportunities. Only a certain foundation can guide the subsequent gradual development. In the process of receiving education, the specific allocation of resources can be diverse and innovative, with the aim of promoting fairness of the educational process. National and local public resources are precious and limited, so priority should be given to the shortage of educational elements in the deep poverty-stricken areas, and combined with other poverty alleviation and development methods and projects, so as to eliminate the persistent poverty factors and maximize the utilization and output of resources.

Secondly, poverty means lack of basic ability to participate effectively in society, insufficient food and clothing, lack of access to basic educational opportunities, lack of guarantee of the right to education, and exclusion from the life of social groups. The purpose of poverty alleviation through education is to enable poor areas and poor people to acquire the ability of self-development and self-poverty alleviation, which is an endogenous way of poverty alleviation. However, the social environment and natural conditions of poor areas and poor people are different, the educational foundation and conditions are relatively backward, and the fairness of educational results cannot be guaranteed.

Therefore, we cannot solve all the problems with one plan and one method. Poverty alleviation through education also chooses appropriate and different paths, which are targeted and operable. We should make poor areas and poor people feel the benefits and sense of acquisition brought by poverty alleviation through education, so that they become willing to accept education from their hearts and actively participate in poverty alleviation through education. Therefore, in order to get rid of poverty and move towards a well-off society as soon as possible, poor individuals should actively exert their subjective initiative, cherish and make full use of educational opportunities, and enhance their ability to get rid of poverty.

2.5. Unblocking information channels and promoting poverty alleviation practices

In the process of poverty alleviation through education, the EU has not only set up an official platform at the EU level for the exchange of policy information among member states, but it has also created relevant conferences with non-governmental organizations, inviting poor citizens to participate extensively in the discussion of poverty and social exclusion in the EU, and learning from each other's best practices.

Therefore, considering China's basic national conditions, first, at the national level, the Ministry of Education can set up a special education information platform to gather all the policy information of poverty alleviation through education and open the platform to all the public. The policy information on the platform should not only elaborate on the specific national and local education poverty alleviation policies, but also have an international poverty alleviation policy module, which should be used to learn the successful poverty alleviation experience of developed and developing countries, and to explore the outstanding performance of various international organizations in poverty alleviation. Local authorities can also make full use of modern media technology and Internet tools, such as various applications, according to local conditions, so that they are no longer limited to traditional paper-based media communication policies. Based on these platforms, from the central government to the local government, from policy makers to poor individuals, we can timely capture the information of poverty alleviation at home and abroad, understand the trend of policies at home and abroad, and promote the deepening development of poverty alleviation through education in China.

Secondly, both the state and local governments should support the holding of regular research conferences on poverty alleviation policies. Government officials, experts, scholars and representatives of poor groups at home and abroad are invited to make speeches and exchanges at the venue, and to interpret the policies from different perspectives, so as to exchange views and express suggestions on the problems existing in China's poverty reduction policies, and to closely link theory with practice without deviating from each other.

Thirdly, there is a voice of feedback in the process of anti-poverty, which makes the implementation of policies dynamic. Policies can not only stay in propaganda and discussion, the key to precise poverty alleviation through education is the word “precise”. The precise development of the poor people requires not only in-depth understanding of them and analysis of whether they are poor because of learning and education, but also the initiative of poor individuals to familiarize themselves with poverty alleviation policies, so as to enhance their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-improvement.

The smooth flow of information channels in the process of poverty alleviation not only enables the public to pay attention to and understand China's major policies and the process of poverty alleviation in real time, but also promotes the discussion and exchange of anti-poverty issues among regions, forms a good atmosphere for policy learning, promotes the process of anti-poverty practice, and will be more conducive to summarizing and disseminating China's poverty alleviation deeds worldwide.

Conclusions

Every country has its own unique way of poverty alleviation. In 2020, China was basically to realize modernization of education, and with the disappearance of absolute poverty, relative poverty will perhaps continue existing. Therefore, the poor should continue to invest in education, consolidate the achievements of poverty alleviation through education, and block the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Drawing lessons from the experience of the European Union and combining the with practice and existing policies of poverty alleviation through education in China, we should continue to adhere to the people-oriented policy value orientation in poverty alleviation policies, to form a joint force of government-led social participation and individual initiative in poverty alleviation, aiming at resource inclination, capital investment and quality improvement in poverty-stricken areas, and to attach importance to smooth information exchange.

Learning from the relevant policies of the European Union and combining the with the practice of poverty alleviation through education in China, not only enriches the theory of poverty alleviation through education in China from the perspective of social exclusion, but is also expected to promote the substantive progress and follow-up development of poverty alleviation by education in China. At the same time, as the largest developing country, China has made such achievements in the development of poverty reduction through education, which can also provide the world with China's path, experience and plan.

References and Notes

- [1] European Commission. (2018). *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe 2018*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 7.
- [2] European Commission. (2018). *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe 2018*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 13.
- [3] European Commission. (2018). *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe 2018*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 16.
- [4] *European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies* [EB/OL]. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5531_en.pdf. Retrieved on 11.10.2024.
- [5] European Commission. (2018). *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe 2018*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 22.

Bibliography

European Commission. (2018). *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe 2018*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies [EB/OL]. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5531_en.pdf. Retrieved on 11.10.2024.

Shimi, C., & Yuanmao, R. (2016). Historical changes and trends in EU education policy. *Higher Education Press*, 19–36. Retrieved on 3 April 2024.

Wang Rui is a PhD student at South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. Research interest and directions: *Educational Theory and Methods, Student Moral Education*. ORCID iD: 0009-0004-6534-8072. Web of Science Researcher ID: KXR-3812-2024.

Manuscript was submitted: 25.11.2024.

Double Blind Peer Reviews: from 26.11.2024 till 03.01.2025.

Accepted: 04.01.2025.

Брой 62 на сп. „Реторика и комуникации“ (януари 2025 г.) се издава с финансовата помощ на Фонд научни изследвания, договор № КП-06-НП6/48 от 04 декември 2024 г.

Issue 62 of the Rhetoric and Communications Journal (January 2025) is published with the financial support of the Scientific Research Fund, Contract No. KP-06-NP6/48 of December 04, 2024.