

Critical Review

Crisis, Austerity and its Impact on Education in Europe and Greece

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Contextualization

This paper is a part of a doctoral thesis that was based on a research study conducted in October 2014. This study gave sixteen teachers through a series of qualitative interviews the opportunity to reflect on their experiences of the impact of the crisis on education, and the possibilities for the future. Specifically, it aimed to explore how teachers experience the socio-economic crisis in Greece and the new challenges that stem from it; to discuss the purpose of education and the role it should play in preparing young people for this social, cultural and economic transition; to learn more about how we can build on the strengths of the present education system in order to create a system better suited to the current major societal changes and the challenging circumstances. Throughout this study, I attempted to examine the consequences of the crisis at the time of the research, while also exploring the possibilities of a better world beyond the crisis. I also endeavored to send a positive message, by helping educators understand the issues of teaching and learning and the purpose of education, and by encouraging them to think of practical and hopeful strategies for shaping alternative and better futures.

Abstract: *This critical review identifies and reviews relevant literature and theoretical insights in the areas of social crisis and its relation to and impact on education. The critical review is organised into two parts. In the first part, it begins with the conceptualisation of crisis. It briefly discusses what the term 'crisis' suggests, and continues by considering a crisis as an opportunity for the opening of a 'policy window'. It then moves on to discuss the crisis of 2008 in more detail. In the second part, it focuses on the impact of the crisis of 2008 on education in Europe and mostly in Greece. Finally, it concludes with some thoughts on the role of education in the current historical, political and social era in which we live.*

Crisis

Conceptualisation of crisis

Crisis, as Gamble (2009, p. 38) states, is a social phenomenon, not a natural one and, as such, it is "socially constructed and highly political". The naming of a crisis, therefore, is a significant political act. Within the world of critical political economy, there are competing narratives of crisis involving different views (Clarke & Newman, 2012). The term 'crisis', by itself, suggests that there is a critical situation, a political emergency or a moment of danger, or that an impasse of some kind has been reached. This critical situation comprises more than just an economic or financial problem; it has multifaceted economic, political or social effects. In either case, extraordinary actions may be required to overcome it (Gamble, 2009, p. 65). Crises, according to Gamble (2009), are inherently political because they force economic and political leaders to think and act in new ways, to follow new visions and to form new narratives. They "create the conditions for new forms of politics" and for the "rebalancing of power" between and/or within states. Only through a painful and usually long process of reconstruction, both ideological and practical, can crises be resolved. Gamble argues that crises are different from crashes. Crashes can be extremely painful for those affected by them,

but they do not last and they have few long-term consequences. The system eventually picks itself up and proceeds, without consideration for the consequences, on its pre-crash route. The history of capitalism is dotted with many such crashes. Crises, by contrast, are rare. In the 100 years before the autumn of 2008, Gamble (2009) notes, there were only two: the Great Depression of the 1930s and the crisis of 'stagflation' in the 1970s.

Despite their rarity, crises are fundamental to capitalism and form an inherent part of the disciplinary processes of markets (De Angelis, 2007). Marx's extensive works illustrate that entering into crisis is part of the constituent life process of capital, in the same way that moments of breathing in and breathing out are both constituents of the act of breathing for living beings. De Angelis (2007, p. 39) labels crises as 'disequilibrium' crises, and suggests that we can understand them as part of the embedded regulatory function of capitalism in relation to social conflict. Another useful way of thinking about financial and political crises is to think of them as conjunctures (Hall & Massey, 2010). A conjuncture is a period during which the different social, political, economic and ideological contradictions that are at work in society come together to give it a specific and distinctive shape. As Hall and Massey (2010) explain, the flow of history is not evolutionary but moves from one conjuncture to another – and what drives it forward is usually a crisis. Crises have been part of the global financial landscape for hundreds of years, and they are likely to continue to be part of our future. Consequently, governments should try not to reduce the risk of recurrence but to limit the extent, severity and duration of the economic fallout (Marthinsen, 2010).

The socio-economic crisis with a policy window in its wake

As mentioned above, a period of deep economic crisis may provide an 'opportunity' for governments to introduce important changes and reforms to the existing status quo, as well as new policy proposals – progressive or regressive. As Hartley (2012, p. 23) explains, "crises bring into sharp focus the anomalies which had hitherto gone unnoticed; or even if they had been noticed, they were ignored". Gamble (2009) considers the dynamic of the crisis to be vital for change, and adds that crises may be seen as major turning points which can lead to new institutions, new alignments, new policies, new initiatives and new ideologies. Looking back over the history of crises, we see that such periods are frequently followed by major reforms. In England, for example, as a response to a period of severe economic crisis and mass unemployment, a series of neo-liberal governments between the years of 1976 and 1997 brought about the end of professional autonomy for teachers and schools, introduced choice and competition, marginalised local authorities and began to introduce new actors into education service delivery (Ball, 2008). This is not to say that these reforms would not have taken place were it not for this period of crisis; it is possible, and also quite probable, that certain reforms had been designed and scheduled before the outbreak of the crisis. However, even were that the case, the crisis played the central role of defining the timing and enabling their introduction – particularly by reducing the likelihood of opposition based upon defence of the status quo.

A complementary way of thinking about a crisis is to consider it as the opening of a 'policy window' (Kingdon, 1984). Policy windows are temporary opportunities, during which the possibility of adopting new policy or legislative proposals is greater than usual. Policy windows do not open frequently; when they do, it is usually for one of four reasons. The first reason for their occurrence is a change in the political debate resulting from a change in administration or a shift in the legislative balance or national mood. The second is that the emergence of new problems can attract the attention of government officials and people who are close to the issue. The third reason is that problems can become more pressing. Finally, an event such as a disaster may draw greater attention to an issue (ibid). Researchers have identified policy windows where events such as a change in government, the emergence of a new issue, or ongoing policy processes come together to create the opportunity for new policy development. The accepted wisdom is that crises serve as focusing events that generate policy windows in

their wake (Kingdon, 1984). Economic crises, for example, can open such policy windows by drawing attention to economic, political and social issues and mobilising political will; by changing the conditions of discursive possibility, things may be thought and said which might previously have seemed beyond sensible consideration. However, even if policy windows open, they may not result in effective policy development. The institutional setting in which such policies are developed also plays a key role. Although some policy reform may be introduced, policy makers must address the question of whether more fundamental changes would be required to fully redress the problems of the crisis (Kingdon, 1984). However, as policy windows open, so too do they eventually close. Kingdon (1984) gives four reasons as to why policy windows close: they close if participants fail to get notable results, if the crisis is only of short duration, if new personnel decide to close the issue, and if no available solution exists to solve the problem, causing the importance of the issue to fade as a result.

The crisis of 2008

The most recent global economic crisis began in 2008. As Gamble (2009) points out, we can judge this crisis as the product of deep flaws in the global governing philosophy that followed the crisis of the 1970s and underpinned the neo-liberal hegemony of the past 30 years. This crisis, due to the current globalised economy, influenced economies across the world; its impact since has been so strong that it has even superseded the Great Depression of the 1930s in terms of severity (ibid). Ball, Maquire and Goodson (2012) explain that, in autumn 2008, the financial system appeared to be on the point of collapse, threatening potentially huge disruption to the international economy, to public order and to political stability. In Europe today, the financial crisis has evolved into the eurozone crisis, a multi-year debt crisis that has taken place in several eurozone member states since the end of 2009. The countries hit by the crisis responded by borrowing under harsh terms (with the backing of the European Central Bank and the European Commission), and by turning to austerity, namely the economic policy of cutting the state's budget. After years of this crisis, it has become apparent that borrowing under such harsh terms was not a rational policy. The countries in crisis have been and are still repaying their creditors instead of supporting their economies and expediting recovery (George, 2010). Moreover, the developments of recent years have shown that accepting austerity measures as a route to growth is not a correct response in the aftermath of a financial crisis; such measures do not work in practice, as they rely on the poor to pay for the mistakes of the rich, and "rest upon the absence of a rather large fallacy of composition that is all too present in the modern world" (Blyth, 2013, p. 10). What Blyth means is that what is true for any one individual is not always true for the whole. Subsequently, cutting spending in a recession is exactly the opposite of what is needed, since one person's spending cut is another's drop in income, which only increases the need to cut spending further, creating a vicious downward spiral. As Blyth (2013) argues, austerity is a dangerous idea, which remains prevalent largely because of ideological and material reasons.

It is worth pointing out that the crisis that began in 2008 is not simply a financial crisis but a multiple and plural crisis. Beyond the concerns of finance, we should recognise that democracy is under siege and citizens are gradually being impoverished: "inequality within and between countries and citizens has reached unsustainable levels in both developed and developing countries, poverty is spreading and deepening, food and water scarcities are worsening, conflicts thrive in increasingly stressed societies, and catastrophic climate change — advancing much faster than experts predicted — looms over the whole" (George, 2010, p. 17). This quotation details only a sample of the innumerable relations between the components of this multiple crisis, yet the impacts of these remain largely in disguise. The financial sector, already completely separated from the real economy of real people, has moved even further away, and is once again creating bubbles which are guaranteed to eventually burst, one by one. When stock markets rose, we were told that the crisis was over – but "how can one even imagine fixing the economy when millions have less money in their pockets and have been hard-hit by the financial and job meltdown?" (George, 2010, p. 18). The extreme events of the

past several years should encourage us to carefully examine our own countries and to consider what would alter them for the better. There are both negative and positive possibilities. This multiple crisis can give rise to fear, but it can also be received positively, as an opening towards rational solutions, providing the foundation for an alternative scenario, for remedies and for hope (George, 2010). The combination of an alternative scenario and hope could ripen into reality if popular forces were to begin to organise into alliances with political weight and clear purpose (ibid).

The crisis of 2008 in Greece

When the global financial crash of 2008 struck, Greece was ill-prepared to deal with it. Years of profligacy, unrestrained spending and cheap lending, combined with the cost of hosting the expensive Olympic Games in 2004, as well as a persistent failure to implement financial reforms had weakened the country's economy. By the end of 2009, the Greek economy faced the highest budget deficit and government debt to GDP ratio in the European Union, which led to rising borrowing costs. This ultimately resulted in a severe economic crisis, one of the worst in the country's history (Romanias, 2009). The major sources of deficiency were identified as the serious structural weaknesses in the Greek public administration, economy, and society, which lead to bureaucracy, corruption, low quality of services, and high costs (Oikonomou & Tountas, 2011). The government, in order to avoid a downward spiral, requested and agreed to rescue packages from the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank. The conditionalities of these rescue packages involved severe austerity measures that aimed to reduce the deficit. As a result, the Greek government applied tough tax evasion regulations, raised the retirement age by two years, imposed public sector pay cuts, and closed schools and public hospitals (Vayanos, Meghir & Vettas, 2010). The draconian austerity measures adopted by the Parliament caused anger among the Greek population and led them to distrust of the political system and to show their dissatisfaction through public unrest. Street clashes and protests, as well as mass rallies took place with Greek people in central Athens to denounce politicians, bankers and tax dodgers. These protests sometimes became quite violent, fortified by the belief held by many Greeks that the crisis was being manipulated by foreign forces such as European central bankers and other financial speculators (Pappas, 2010). The savage measures, combined with severe budget cuts, led Greek workers nationwide to stage strikes, closing airports, government offices and schools (Pappas, 2010).

Greece's fiscal and economic problems left the country straining to pay its bills and struggling with high levels of unemployment, especially among young people (Malkoutzis, 2011), job insecurity, income reduction, poverty, and an increase in mental disorders (Ifanti, Argyriou, Kalofonou & Kalofonos, 2013). In 2012, with the economic downturn entering its fifth year, Greece faced an unemployment rate of over 21%, almost triple that of 2008, with over half of those aged 15-24 unable to find work in the country. In 2013, Greece entered the sixth consecutive year of economic contraction, with its economy shrinking by 20%. Unemployment reached a rate of over 26% for all job-seekers and of 60.4% for those aged 15-24 (ELSTAT, 2014). Today, many years into the crisis, Greece is still in social and political turmoil, and it is still struggling to handle its fiscal problems, deal with recession, and continue as a social welfare state (Oikonomou & Tountas, 2011). Greece is still facing new budgets cuts which further impoverish ordinary Greeks. Although economic indicators tend to present an improvement in Greece's economy, unemployment remains at very high levels (ELSTAT, 2014) and there are no signs of the situation improving for Greek families, individuals and businesses. It is evident that Greece has been affected more than any other European country by the financial crisis (Zambeta, 2014; Kentikelenis *et al*, 2011). Whereas other countries in Europe, such as France and Germany, now show signs of economic recovery, the crisis in Greece continues not only to evolve, but to grow deeper and deeper – a fact that has caused global concern owing to its side effects and the risks involved for both the eurozone and the global economic community. The depth of the socio-economic crisis can be seen in the large

number of Greek people that have abandoned the country and have emigrated, in search of better working and living conditions, to the USA, Australia and other parts of Europe (Pappas, 2010). It is also apparent from the extent of the impact felt by health services, both in specialist and in primary care. The depth of the political crisis can be clearly seen in the huge loss of support for the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the centre-right New Democracy (ND) party, and in the rise of political forces on the left (SYRIZA) and the emergence of the extreme-right Golden Dawn party (Traianou, 2013).

Crisis and education

Education in Europe in times of crisis

The crisis of 2008 shaped both the national and the global context within which educational change takes place. In a short period, the crisis affected the educational domain in both direct and indirect ways. This was unavoidable, as the educational system is not exempt from the consequences of the crisis; it is constrained and threatened by it. In Europe, the financial crisis of 2008 shaped the relationship between neo-liberalism and educational practice by accelerating the processes of marketisation and privatization. At the same time, it restricted educational resources and increased social inequalities especially for those already at higher risk of social exclusion (Arriazu & Solari, 2015). Institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the G7 used domestic debt in democratic countries to control the mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of neo-liberal economic policies (ibid). The 'troika' of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed structural reforms on the education systems of national states such as Greece, Portugal, Spain, France or Italy (Jones, 2013). A brief review of the results of these structural reforms for schools and teachers in some of these European states may subsequently be helpful in exploring the effects of the socio-economic crisis on the education system of Greece.

In France, for more than 20 years, education policy has been established in terms of its connection to objectives set by economic policy and the requirements of the labour market. Reforms at a school level have usually been formed and justified regarding their contribution to strategies for economic development, designed within the Lisbon framework. This was the case before the crisis of 2008 and remains the case today (Dreux, 2013). Education policy in France continues to coincide with the dogma of the European Commission, even though it produces no positive effects, and neo-liberal policies still flourish, even though their outcomes are negative. The crisis has served neither as an opportunity for a new round of reform in education policy, nor as a brake upon it (ibid). The main change since 2008 relates to the ideological environment of education, in the general ideological context of the period. As the economic crisis underscored a long-standing crisis of education, in which the conditions of both student life and teachers' work had been worsening, public opinion critiqued and contested neo-liberalism. However, even though neo-liberalism has been disgraced, judged as an aggravator of social problems and condemned by its failure to reach the very goals that were supposed to legitimise it, it continues to be put into practice, and remains strong enough to survive (Dreux, 2013). As Dreux (2013) argues, it may be an illusion to think that neo-liberalism will vanish from the scene, thanks to no more than the failure of the policies it has initiated. We must keep in mind that neo-liberalism is not simply an ideology, in the sense of a set of ideas that would disappear if its believers stopped believing in it. It is rather 'a technical-practical ensemble, which structures representations and collective imaginaries, and gives rise to particular kinds of conduct' (ibid, p. 36), and it also responds to very powerful economic interests that explain its persistence.

In Spain, according to Canadell (2013), the 'bewildered and terrified' populace is witnessing the destruction of public education.

Budget cuts mean financial constraints on the daily functioning of the schools, a freeze on new building, and increased class sizes. There are longer school hours

for teachers, successive reductions in pay and freezing of exams for teacher promotion. The excuse for all this is the famous 'crisis' and the alleged lack of public money, which prevents the State from fulfilling its obligation to its most vulnerable citizens: pupils, children and young people at a formative stage. (ibid, p. 39).

In Canadell's view (2013), the measures applied since the beginning of this crisis were totally useless in overcoming the crisis or mitigating the deficit, but were ideal for deconstructing all public services, forcing extortion on workers and the lower classes and increasing the rate of profit for capital. This strategy, she suggests, was not just about reducing public funding for health, education and social services; it served other objectives that were part of a neo-liberal doctrine that had been on the cards for some time, and for the implementation of which the crisis acted as a perfect excuse. Canadell goes so far as to say that, behind all the cuts, proposals and counterproposals, hides a discussion which is much deeper, much more ideological and much more fundamental for the future of education in general and for the future of Spanish society.

In Italy, the economic crisis of 2008 was the nadir of a long process of decline rather than a sudden and entirely unforeseen event, as it may have been experienced elsewhere. As Innes (2013) notes "at the centre of the Italian crisis we find precarity". Precarity is the term used to name "a generation which is locked into a state of always/already contingency, without a future and not much of a present when the lack of a system of universal welfare presents the alternatives of family dependency or underpaid and often illegal labor" (Innes, 2013, p. 77). Precarity also describes the economic and social insecurity of many workers and it has become symptomatic of an entire social order in decay (Standing, 2011). The impact of the socio-economic crisis of 2008 on education in Italy has been extensive. The troika imposed educational austerity as measures to be met with sacrifice and common endeavour (Innes, 2013). The policies of the current austerity paradigm have resulted in spending on education in Italy becoming the lowest in Europe – except for in Greece – and further cuts have since been announced. As a result, classes are bigger, there has been a reduction in welfare regarding meals and transport, and students suffer from shortages of materials, reduced class time, a reduced choice of texts, impoverished curricula, and a reduction in laboratory activities etc (ibid). At this current time, the aforementioned policies have not been seen to have had any positive effects; instead they seem to have caused negative outcomes. Problematic issues, such as the persistent historical lags between Italy and its comparators around indicators such as graduation rates and lack of social mobility, which have emerged over time in the Italy of neo-liberalism, have become worse, and inequality also has accelerated (Innes, 2013).

To conclude, in all the aforementioned countries, the impact of the crisis on education has been immense. The neo-liberal policies of enclosure applied since the beginning of this crisis, as well as the serious cuts to public social protection systems, adopted as a way of overcoming the economic and social crisis – what we now call 'austerity' – have generated tensions throughout the European population; public services have been reduced, the coverage of the social state has worsened, and levels of poverty, inequality, and social cohesion have been profoundly affected (De Angelis, 2007).

Education in Greece in times of crisis

The 'modernisation' of the Greek education system

With the entry of Greece into the European Union in 1981, along with a moderate shift in the direction of neo-liberalism, the discourse of 'modernisation' became linked with ideas about the marketisation of education and with efforts to make the Greek education system more 'effective' by introducing structures and forms of accountability similar to those in other Western countries (Traianou, 2013, p. 87). The 'modernisation' of Greek education and the implementation of neo-liberal education policies was extensively opposed and, subsequently, delayed. Greece is perhaps one of the few European countries that resisted compliance with

neo-liberal European Union policies. This resistance, it can be argued, was more likely a result, at least in part, of the political and educational clientelism, one of the core mechanisms through which governments have taken and retained power since the establishment of the modern Greek state in the 1830s (Bratsis, 2010), rather than of a commitment to a common goal for education (Traianou, 2013).

Unlike in many other countries, where the change in social policy was put on the political agenda by pressure groups belonging to the political right (Jones, 2003), the change in Greek social policy was associated with the adoption of a neo-liberal orientation by the socialist party. After the 1996 elections, the shift of PASOK's policies towards a neo-liberal direction was epitomised by their Government's clear support for the gradual privatisation of Greece's large public sector, and by its decision to enter the Economic and Monetary Union of Europe (Traianou, 2013). The electorate endorsed the 'neo-liberal turn' twice, once in 1996 and again in 2000. When New Democracy came into office after the 2004 general election, their Government not only retained some of the basic principles of PASOK's education policy, but also stressed even further the need to improve links between education and the market (Charamis & Kotsifakis, 2015). The neo-liberal agenda has thus been taking shape for some time in Greece. However, very little of it has yet been implemented in practice. One of the major obstacles to the success of neo-liberal educational reform in Greece has been the discontinuity brought about by frequent political changes. Within recent years, there has been a regular turnover of Ministers of Education and each one has tended to amend the work of his or her predecessors (Traianou, 2013).

Education reform in the years of the troika

The current economic and political situation in Greece has made its mark on every aspect of Greek society, and education is no exception to the rule. The education system, in a context of financial crisis, rapid socio-economic change, multiple political restructurings and uncertainty, and severe austerity measures has been affected, and more problems have been added to its chronic inefficiencies (Paraskevopoulos & Morgan, 2011).

In 2010, and according to Law 3833/2010 ("Protection of Greek economy – urgent measures for the treatment of fiscal crisis"), the government reduced the annual budget of all ministries, including the Ministry of Education, by 10%. From 2011 onwards, this resulted in the closure of more than 1000 schools, forcing teachers out of work, pushing students into overcrowded classrooms and requiring them to travel further to school (Education in crisis, 2014). It also created many other problems, including but not restricted to huge cuts in teachers' salaries, a reduction in the already limited resources of individual schools, and the abatement of intervention programmes for schools with large number of students from migrant families (Christodoulakis, Leventi, Matsaganis & Monastiriotes, 2011; Paraskevopoulos & Morgan, 2011). By 2013, educational spending had decreased by 33%. An additional 14% cut was implemented in the years that followed, and predictions for coming years, based on the troika's indicators, are even more inauspicious. If these predictions come true, there will be no funding available to cover basic costs such as heating educational facilities, restocking libraries, building new technology infrastructure and appointing teaching staff (Charamis & Kotsifakis, 2015).

From 2008 to the present day, the crisis has become the dominant component of the political rhetoric of reform in Greece. The government has enforced social spending cuts and has scheduled reforms, using the impact of the crisis as justification. In this context, the Greek education system is seen by some as central to solving the current socio-economic crisis. Anna Diamantopoulou (2011), Minister of Education (PASOK) in 2011, made this point clear:

The multifaceted and multi-layered crisis that we are experiencing can become the catalyst for change [to solve] our enduring problems. I am deeply convinced that the time has come. The Prime Minister [George Papandreou] has put education as the dominant priority of the national plan for the regeneration of the country. We change education, we change Greece.

Politicians in Greece, in their attempt to 'treat' the socio-economic crisis (and using the depth of the difficulties experienced by young people in the labour market as an excuse), have passed emergency measures and educational reforms that were 'delayed' for many years prior to the crisis because of both the political hesitation of the two main political parties and the resistance of students, teachers and academics. Most of these reforms were prompted by the troika and the OECD, and aimed to accelerate the rate of neo-liberal change (Traianou, 2013).

Since 2010, there have been changes in regulation and management, and rapid and extreme changes in the working conditions of teachers. Apart from the aforementioned reductions in teachers' salaries and the rise in the sizes of classes (which now contain up to thirty pupils), the government has 'frozen' the appointment of new teachers and closed a number of local primary and secondary education authorities in order to 'release' teachers and relocate them to schools where there is a perceived shortage of teaching staff (Traianou, 2013). It has also reduced the weekly teaching hours of subjects such as Modern Greek, and it has removed subjects such as Music and the Arts from the curriculum for students in the second and third years of *Gymnasium*. The overall aim of these changes was to create a 'reserve pool' of teachers who can be reallocated to other schools or to administrative posts.

The above changes have caused teachers, parents and students to feel anxiety and fear about the future. As Traianou (2013, p. 109) puts forward: 'the wave of reforms is endless, unpredictable and uncontrollable. The present is uncertain and the future unpredictable.' This is especially true today, as seen by the rise of new political parties: SYRIZA on the political left, and Golden Dawn on the far right.

Conclusion

This critical review has aimed to integrate relevant literature and theoretical insights in the area of socio-economic crisis and its relation to and impact on education in Europe and Greece. Through this critical review it has been argued that this crisis is not an accident along the path of progress of an economy that is fundamentally in good health (Hirtt, 2013, p. 116). This crisis is the symptom of a system that is profoundly 'sick'; it is a symptom – that is, the visible product – of the deep and turbulent contradictions of the capitalist economy (ibid). It has also been argued that a period of deep economic crisis may be seen as a major turning point which can lead to new institutions, new alignments, new policies, new initiatives and new ideologies (Gamble, 2009). Moreover, in this review it has been argued that the impact of the socio-economic crisis on education in Europe and Greece has been immense. Particularly in Greece, since the socio-economic crisis broke out, and since the implementation of the policies of the memorandum, there have been drastic cuts in the public sector and the entire education system. As a result, Greek schools have been hit hard by these cuts.

To conclude, I am of the opinion that in periods of great transition, threat and possibility, all of which affect the lives of young people, education systems, although devastated by the impact of the crisis, may have a very important role to play in addressing the structural, social and economic problems that led to the crisis: to develop robust and urgent responses, and prepare students to think more critically and creatively about the future. However, if we want education to have an active role in overcoming the crisis, we need to consider first the fundamental values of education, its aims, and its content in the current historical, political and social era in which we live.

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