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### Fighting Corruption: Values Education and Social Pedagogy in Greece in the Middle of the Crisis

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THEORY

PRACTICE

RESEARCH

*This article aims to outline a framework for the development of school and social practices for combating corruption in Greece through values education. The proposal's particular contribution lies in the identification of a values education in Greece that would utilise and also strengthen the social pedagogical ethos. Our research proposal is mainly based on social pedagogical theory and methodology and on organised social pedagogical actions whose aim is to bring about improvement and change in social and educational mechanisms through intervention and especially through prevention.*

**Key words:** corruption, crisis, social pedagogy, values education, social pedagogical ethos

### Introduction

Our current concern about corruption in Greece stems from Transparency International's findings on the spread of corruption in Europe and OECD member countries. Transparency International is an international organisation that monitors states' progress in complying with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, which came into force in February 1999 and was established by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development<sup>1</sup> as part of its role in the coordination of international actions against bribery and corruption. Transparency International also publishes an annual report on perceptions of corruption around the world. Countries' rankings are listed in its Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)<sup>2</sup>, and the results for Greece, obtained after a nationwide survey on corruption in the country, are worth mentioning.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>

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There is no small amount of corruption in Greece. The ever-increasing number of tax evasion cases, the fake disability claims scandal, the Lagarde list case and the existing political and bureaucratic corruption have all kept the country in the international spotlight. Of course, Greece, which ranks 94<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries worldwide (2012) on the CPI, is not the only country with a high level of corruption; in Europe it is joined by other countries such as Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain (Bakouris, 2012).

The broad social framework, coupled with the fact that Greece ranks last among European countries in Transparency International's CPI, sparked our interest and led us to examine this phenomenon and explore ways of solving it<sup>3</sup>. We therefore present in this article a number of proposals on how to fight corruption through the formal education system and with the assistance of social pedagogy. It is our belief that social pedagogy is an important interdisciplinary field which, by uniting theory and practice, offers powerful and effective tools that can be implemented both in and out of school. Some of the fundamental principles of social pedagogy are social justice, social criticism, social reflection, social accountability, personal and social well-being and progress, and cultivating and promoting a strong value system, that is, a social pedagogical ethos, in schoolchildren, young adults and citizens in general (Mylonakou-Keke, 2013). We are obviously aware of the package of measures established to help EU countries to combat corruption<sup>4</sup>, but believe that these measures could be strengthened through pedagogical practices.

The current recorded and established state of corruption in which certain EU member states (such as Greece, Romania and Bulgaria) and non-EU European countries (such as Albania) find themselves calls into question the smooth functioning of institutions in these countries and in the European Union as a whole. This jeopardises the Union's image and the validity, effectiveness and functional cohesion of a number of operations targeting or going through the Union, ultimately casting doubt on whether the decisions taken are ever carried out. Furthermore, the anti-corruption measures proposed to date should have also focused on preventing rather than only stamping out corruption. Corruption not only weakens institutions, but as a rule also leads to a drop in GDP, less tax revenue and greater economic and social inequalities. Such consequences only serve to prolong, sustain and exacerbate periods of economic crisis. The Greek economic crisis, and especially the crisis that Greek society is currently experiencing, has therefore given us a dynamic opportunity to reduce and possibly even eradicate corruption in the country.

However, corruption does not seem to have a fixed conceptual framework that will enable a conclusive decision to be reached regarding its content (Banerjee, 1997; Fisman, 2001; Hunt, 2007; Olken, 2009). The established perception of corruption is, firstly, deficient and shows strong signs of pre-scientific arbitrariness and, secondly, serves powerful political and economic interests (Lazos, 2005).

It is therefore our conviction that to fight corruption, administrative and procedural reform at national level is not enough; major and widespread intervention is also required at the level where a national population's convictions, perceptions and views are initially shaped.

The Greek politician Evangelos Venizelos (foreword, in Dimopoulos, 2005) states that the phenomenon of corruption has various aspects and concerns and that every society has its own awareness of corruption. He also mentions that while many believe that corruption is primarily a penal, police and auditing matter, it is nevertheless also a complex social, ideological and political

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.transparency.gr> Transparency International Greece was established in 1996 for the primary purpose of informing Greek citizens and raising their awareness about the dangers of corruption in Greece and also promoting fundamental systemic changes that will lead to greater transparency in society.

<sup>4</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/news/justice/110606\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/news/justice/110606_en.htm), regarding a package of measures to help EU countries to fight corruption.

phenomenon. In other words, it is a phenomenon that affects the confidence, self-worth and competitiveness of a society; it is a profound societal and governmental problem that concerns not only the state's political bodies, but also the institutional facets of society, such as the judicial system, the media and universities, and should be offered as a course at university level.

## **Corruption**

Corruption finds its way into the social, political or economic life of a country mainly in two different ways (Theobald, 1999). The first way is when personal gain is derived through the public sector (Caiden & Caiden, 1977), and the second when corruption is so entrenched in society that it becomes the rule rather than the exception (Williams, 1999). It is the first way that takes advantage of the bureaucratic structure and functions and the tight embrace of politics and state structures. Personal gain is thus derived from the public sector either through the complicity of bureaucrats or through the intervention of politicians (Moody-Stuart, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Rauch & Evans, 2000).

It has been noted that, when corruption is rooted in certain societies or political systems, it does not disappear when those societies or political systems evolve. As a rule, it assumes different forms that evolve in line with the changes occurring in the social and political fabric (Girling, 1997).

To fight corruption, one must be prepared to wage a fierce battle against the establishment, interest groups and the entrenched stances and perceptions of a society. Such a battle requires many institutions of social life to join forces as well as a wide range of multilevel practices (Pope, 1997). But what it mainly needs is the will to take action and the ability to make decisions that may lead to a severe breach with the established order, organised interests and the political system at its roots.

### ***Education: A tool to fight corruption***

Given that international organisations are responsible for shaping the international agenda for educational reform, in recent years education has made it onto the international agenda with policies, directives, proposals, trends and innovations, mainly aimed at a values education with multiple objectives (Gellet, 2010). It is education that, for the most part, shapes social and national ethics. It is education that is responsible for nurturing perceptions and stances that grow and are transferred and propagated in the social and national fabrics.

On 28 November, 2012, Transparency International Greece (TIG) held a conference titled 'The State and Corruption: Institutions – From Fall to Recovery', focusing on the promotion of targeted proposals to boost integrity in Greek societal institutions, as part of TIG's recent research concerning its National Integrity System Assessment. The judicial system, anti-corruption agencies, businesses and the public sector find themselves without any protection against corruption, which greatly affects their efficiency and productivity. It is thus vital that drastic solutions be found to establish transparency and maximise their productivity and efficiency.

We believe that educational institutions should be the starting point for the measurement and cure of corruption<sup>5</sup> and its cultivation as a negative moral value.

Based on the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Delors, 1996), the current economic development model does not attach enough

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<sup>5</sup> For corruption (definition, evolution, problems and significance, proposals, models and categories, vertical and horizontal corruption, the new corruption phenomenon), see also Lazos (2005).

importance to the human factor, which has resulted in a number of social consequences in spheres such as the economy, society and way of life. We therefore seek a development model capable of adapting and responding to local conditions. Each region's stakeholders will have to adapt to the new requirements and strive to create new activities that will converge towards the vision of a better future.

Education is therefore called upon to encourage and support the endogenous development process with a number of values that constitute a 'passport for life' with multiple benefits. Such a passport would help a person to gain a deeper understanding of themselves, their relationship with others and collective social life; it is a passport based on the self-awareness and accountability of all society's members.

We thus seek a new type of education — one that is flexible, adaptable, dynamic and consequently able to respond to local conditions, an education that will activate the potential of today's and tomorrow's men and women. This education will not do away with the education already existing at the local and national level; rather, it will incorporate new structures that will be called on to solve specific social problems.

Depending on the problem they are required to solve, the new structures will assemble values, such as: (a) material values (nutrition for all), (b) biological values (health for all), (c) intellectual and cognitive values (cultivation of a person's ability to control his development, culture), (d) legal values (justice), (e) moral values (global ethics, protection of the natural environment, respect for others), (f) social values (collectivity, contribution to social progress, gender equality, equal accountability by all members of a society), (g) personal or professional values (cooperation, initiative) and (h) values that determine quality of life (well-being).

The new values education structures will have to take into account not only the per capita income (economic values) and technological sector (intellectual values) indices, but also other social dimensions of the term 'development', such as personal development, idea development, initiative and the resolution of social problems in a manner that leads to a positive outcome for oneself and society (Delors, 1996, cited in Christodoulou, 2013).

It is a fact that humanity is entering a new era. The current UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, states that, although significant progress has been made, the programme linking education and development will be continued by all countries beyond 2015. A panel of 26 eminent persons from all spheres (civil society, private sector, government leaders) has already been appointed so that the preparations for the Beyond 2015 Development Agenda can be coordinated, with all countries jointly responsible for discussing new millennium development goals (MDGs)<sup>6</sup>.

## Values education

As an innovative approach to education, values education has attracted various expressions of interest and criticism in a number of countries and for different reasons. Many countries, such as the USA, UK and Australia, have undertaken to include values education in their official curricula (Pring, 2010). Generally speaking, the spirit of the values education trend lies in the inference that, if education is linked to human development and development is conceptualised in terms of human well-being, then education has found its purpose. The confusion observed in the educational sphere is due to the fact that academia is called upon to determine the content of the terms and the relationships in the above inference (Pring, 2010). In the past decade, there has been increasing interest in the significance of values education in educational practice, which is evident from the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/beyond2015.shtml>

research and new policies on human values education (Palmer, 1999; Rauch, 2002; Lovat & Toomey, 2009). However, social pedagogy – with its holistic and interdisciplinary approach to well-being – has for many decades considered one of its primary goals to be the pursuit of personal and social development and well-being through education (Smith & Whyte, 2007; Eichsteller & Holthoff, 2011). ‘Given that well-being has many facets – ranging from physical well-being through mental, spiritual and emotional well-being to social well-being – the interdisciplinary aspect of social pedagogy ensures a multidimensional, holistic understanding of well-being from a medical, psychological, sociological, theological and philosophical perspective’ (Eichsteller & Holthoff, 2011, p. 39).

There is international recognition that this approach’s development in schools must be compatible with sustainability and its connection to civic values and civic education (Fien, 2001; Fien & Tilbury, 2002; Rauch, 2002; Henderson & Tilbury, 2004). Research conducted on the effectiveness of values education has shown that school programmes can bring about a significant change in schoolchildren’s attitudes and behaviours (Fien, 2001; Henderson & Tilbury, 2004; Lovat et al., 2009; Mylonakou-Keke, 2009; 2012). However, to make clear the political context within which education has taken a global turn towards values education, it is important that we establish how this need arose throughout the world<sup>7</sup>.

In this context, education is a matter that concerns everyone, given that it is morphing into a ‘global values education’. Values education is the most fitting term to describe the span of explicit or implicit activities that take into account development in a school environment and which aim towards a values-based life. Such activities focus on values such as respect and honesty and are geared towards helping pupils to develop a vocabulary based on ethical and positive behaviour, which is fundamental in the shaping of a personality that aims, above all, towards a universal dimension of human life (Hawkes, 2010).

Yet we are currently living in a different era, in which all boundaries are contested by international organisations and agendas. We are undoubtedly undergoing a context change with regard to what education is and what it should be (Arnot, 2009). There are thus not only the expected positive results to look forward to but also signs that the globally set education policy goals may be jeopardised.

Well-being must be examined from a theoretical perspective, given that it is a multidimensional term, and its content and components will have to be defined. Concepts such as well-being tend to evoke images of fulfilment, however without the accompanying experiences. In other words, well-being is not a theoretical concept but something that arises from experience. Thus, at the methodological level, we need to examine the reliability and validity of the different approaches concerning its functionality, where social theory could be particularly enlightening (Webb, 2010).

Well-being has the ability to inspire change in agendas, unlike other concepts with negative evaluations. Nevertheless, the theorisation of well-being, its development as a theory, should be subjected to theoretical and methodological checks to ascertain its influence on public order and its dynamic in a values education system.

There seems to be no end to the academic community’s preoccupation with ethical education and values in an ever-broadening educational environment. However, given the above status quo, one can see the necessity of proposing to connect values, for example, to sustainability and saving the planet (and indirectly individual life), and the necessity of fighting corruption, which in any case serves as a stumbling block to all forms and levels of sustainable development (Ehrlich & Francis, 1999; Svensson, 2005; Méndez et al., 2006). Values are not the outcome but the objective and

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<sup>7</sup> For values and education, see also Tillman, 2000; Tillman & Colomina, 2000; Tillman & Hsu, 2000; 2000a; Schmidt & Pailliotet, 2001; Engel & Martin, 2005; Nind et al., 2005; and Lovat, Toomey & Clement, 2009.

means of achieving fulfilment in life in terms of material values (standard of living, material needs, sustainable resources), which a person achieves only by cultivating high values. Therefore, academia's theoretical discussion on what the true dimension of ethical education and values in school is, what the objectives of values education are and with what appropriate means it will achieve them, is not invalidated.

Of course, if one were to refer to the literature, they would note that in the school context, values are incorporated and included (if not required) in the ideologies underpinning educational policies, and in the school subjects, learning objectives and subject matter. However, the question remains open and is particularly complex: Why is it that although values have as their statutory starting point a legal framework such as the Constitution, which describes the ideal of cultural education, the realisation of this ideal in order to achieve the desired outcome, that is, quality of life, cannot be linked to its endurance (in terms of materials and living conditions)?

Others have different proposals. Buchkremer (2009), the founder of contemporary social pedagogy, believes that all those involved in pedagogy at practical or theoretical level ought to help people to evolve as autonomous beings and well-rounded personalities. They should also help to convince people, for social reasons, to employ good sense when interacting with others and voluntarily relinquish those resources that are vital to others. Buchkremer's proposal (2009) is that the current given sociability can be brought into play, that is, the good can be intensified if all of society's citizens learn this model and convey it to others. The political, social and educational spheres could serve as a comprehensive touchstone of what is good.

We know that a society's semantic field is its world theory and that this world theory is evidently a broad sphere of meanings (which are organised by a very specific classification and structural system). Thus, when a new idea such as values education emerges, humanity cannot process it at once (Lagopoulos, 2009; 2010).

### *The role of social pedagogy*

Social pedagogy is mainly described as social educational practice that penetrates and also transcends the temporal and spatial spheres of the formal education system (Petrie, 2001; Petrie et al., 2006; Jackson & Cameron, 2011). Social pedagogy by nature strives towards social intervention through pedagogic and educational practices. What chiefly differentiates it from other educational practices evolving from the formal/institutional educational system is its social perspective, which necessitates a critical stance towards existing social practices. For example, if in a society there are sharp social disparities and formal social structures such as the school system are unable to create the conditions for joint actions and support structures, then social pedagogy can develop the social dynamic required for such action. A necessary precondition is a critical stance towards concepts, situations, events and practices that are tacitly upheld or accepted by society and the institutions. In other words, social criticism as a concept and practice is part of the nature of social pedagogy (Hämäläinen, 2003; Paget et al., 2007; Smith & Whyte, 2007; Eichsteller & Holthoff, 2011). From this perspective, Social pedagogy acquires the characteristics of a movement, since it is linked to voluntarism, social work and social rights. Paterson (2000) very rightly notes that success or failure at school cannot be solely interpreted using educational terms but should also be linked to the children's economic and social conditions (Kyridis, 1996; Kyridis, 2003; Kyridis et al., 2011).

Social pedagogy's contribution at this level is connected to the central conceptual assimilation of its own self-determination: the social tool of formal education is creatively interwoven with the individuality of every social subject, where educational collectivity is grounded in a 'social individuality' that aims to contribute to the realisation of important social objectives (Cameron & Moss, 2011; Eriksson, 2011). In other words, social pedagogy is called upon to work together with the formal education system to establish attitudes, perceptions and convictions in a critical mass of

Greek youth that will protect said youth against corruption and its entrenchment in Greek society. Of course, this is a reversal of the role that social pedagogy has traditionally been called upon to play: usually progressing from the individual to the collective, this time it is required to move from the collective to the individual. It is thus called upon, through primarily collective action, to cultivate attitudes and perceptions that must take root in social units and will mitigate corruption in Greek society. What we are therefore looking for is the community identity of social pedagogy as defined by Lorenz (1994); in other words, 'social' refers to 'community', since it actually refers to 'education for the community'. Layard and Dunn (2009) similarly emphasise the dynamics of the 'social'. On this basis, three main fields of application can be identified (Hämäläinen, 2012):

1. Social pedagogy as pedagogy in which attention is paid to the societal conditions of education and human development;
2. Social pedagogy representing the idea of community-based education and highlighting the importance of community in education and human development; and
3. Social pedagogy as pedagogy contributing to welfare, focusing especially on the underprivileged, poor and oppressed, aiming to prevent social exclusion and advancing social inclusion.

Taking into account social pedagogy's three fields of application in conjunction with its key principles, its usefulness in the realisation of social objectives through social educational practices becomes apparent, particularly when these practices do not aim to improve the quality of life of specific social groups only, but of society as a whole. We believe that social pedagogy really shines in spheres that formal education, with its bureaucratic intolerances, cannot reach (such as vulnerable social groups), cannot be effective, cannot be flexible and cannot set more creative social goals, trapped as it is in its pedantic, stern and controlling duty.

Greek society is currently plagued by an unspeakable and inexorable economic crisis which has evolved into an equally significant social crisis. It is a comprehensive crisis, leaving no social institution untouched. We can in fact divide Greek institutions into two broad categories: those that led to the crisis (i.e. politics and the economy) and those that had to deal with the consequences of the crisis. Of course, the division of Greek social institutions into those that caused the crisis and those who bore the brunt of it may seem arbitrary and harsh. For example, education has begun to feel the consequences of the crisis (i.e. suspension of teachers, school guard lay-offs, merging and closing of schools and tertiary education institutions, and so on). On the other hand, is an education system that fails to establish basic moral values not responsible for the ensuing social crisis? We cannot argue that corruption has always been a dark yet dominant spot in Greece's social, political and economic life, yet no one ever took a serious interest in combating it – combating it not through suppressive measures, but as a mentality, as a social attitude.

In this context, if corruption is not dealt with today, with the ever-deepening crisis, then when is it likely to happen? The Greek state must take broad action to mainly prevent and secondarily stamp out corruption. And its most important action should be to cultivate attitudes, perceptions and convictions in the younger and subsequent generations (Greenwald et al., 1964; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Higgins & Sorrentino, 1990; Petty & Krosnick, 1995; Petty et al., 2009) that will prevent the phenomenon from occurring in any aspect of social life, thereby establishing a strong values system that will create a social pedagogical ethos with commensurate attitudes and behaviours (Mylonakou-Keke, 2013). Moreover, research has shown that when attitudes change, they become stronger, based on the dual process theories of persuasion (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999; Wilson et al., 2000; Rydell & McConnell, 2006) or the meta-cognitive model (MCM) (Gilbert et al., 1993).

The mass nature of the education system and the social pedagogical tools at its disposal can be used as a basis from which to cultivate attitudes and convictions that will devalue corruption in the eyes of the younger generations, so that it may be eradicated as a practice and as a negative social value. However, the education system has been built to create collectivities through primarily 'oppressive' actions and practices that yield results through the medium of evaluations and school rivalry.

Pupils thus often experience school activities and their results as the outcome of oppressive procedures, and it is doubtful whether such activities ultimately have a transformative potential. In other words, we need more holistic educational activities, such as those that social pedagogy proposes, which are gentler than those of the formal education system and more adaptable to the cognitive, meta-cognitive and social characteristics of young children and adolescents.

We believe that social pedagogy has all the capabilities that we seek, since, according to Petrie et al. (2009), the main principles of social pedagogy are:

- A focus on the overall development of the child or young person considered as a complete and whole individual;
- The pedagogue assumes they are in a close relationship with the child/young person and that the quality of that relationship is key. It needs to be open, honest and without coercion;
- Any relationship between a child/young person and a pedagogue needs to occupy the same 'life space' – even if both parties are also part of other 'social environments';
- The pedagogue should be a 'reflective practitioner' in all aspects of their craft – both theoretical and practical;
- Doing things with children/young people is very important. Creativity is a key dimension. The journey can capture the 'spirit of discovery';
- Developing the child/young person as a social being enhances their confidence in groups and relationships. It also fosters a sense of social responsibility and the capacity to care for others;
- Pedagogy accepts that children's rights are fundamental. These rights are more than a matter of law – they are a claim to a happy and fulfilled life;
- Social pedagogy requires close interdisciplinary work between professionals. It also requires close work with family, friends and the community.

Líšková (2013) defines the following main areas of social pedagogy: (a) examining the link between the bio-psychosocial phenomenon and social integration, (b) applying coping strategies and quality of life, (c) development in the education system (also see Kyriakou et al., 2013), (d) drawing attention to the self-development, self-knowledge and self-help processes, (e) respecting a person's needs and interests and helping them to understand their rights and duties and to accept society, while also being able to deal properly with external and internal conflicts and solve personal issues.

Thus, according to the above, an effective battle could be waged against corruption if we were to take advantage of the dynamics and characteristics of social pedagogy and especially its holistic approach to child development, the close relationship it fosters between pedagogues and children, its social dimension and its creative approach to the pedagogic act. Moreover, Cannan et al. (1992) have defined social pedagogy as 'a perspective including social action, which aims to promote human welfare through child-rearing and education practices; and to prevent or ease social problems by providing people with the means to manage their own lives, and make changes in their circumstances' (p. 73). Boddy et al. (2005), referring to the UK, believed that social pedagogy has a lot to offer to the reconstruction of the workforce, since it is able to support active political participation as well as human, political and social rights.

## **A proposal for the prevention of corruption in Greek society**

Following international organisations' proposal that values education be considered a tool for development, innovation and quality of life, we present our own proposal to combat corruption in the Greek political and economic spheres through educational and social pedagogy. Our proposal comprises three key stages that are described in detail below (Table I).

1. Broadscale research on the attitudes, perceptions and convictions of young children (10 – 13 years of age), adolescents (14 – 18 years of age) and young adults (19 – 22 years of age) regarding moral values and corruption. The research has the following goals: (a) The

development, by the research team, of research methods to investigate values (sociology, sociosemiotics, and so on) and (b) To conduct research at all educational levels in Greece, on ethics and moral values as elements of the social process and on corruption as a 'negative ethical principle' and a 'social practice'.

In our research, we will make use of the following tools, depending on the sample's characteristics: interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, attitude scales, content analyses on made-to-order texts. Curricula at all levels will also be examined to determine their general principles and the extent to which they are accomplished (lessons taught). One could say that, based on the above, this research effort resembles a targeted dialogue between education, society and the younger generation.

Given the new epistemological issues that this research raises regarding values education, we could also say that it aims to enable society to utilise and develop 'education values' between nations in the future, based on a common and possibly unified code of communication. Young people are clearly the vehicle of the new generation, of the new ideology. Every society undoubtedly relies on the new generation, since it is this generation that ensures its historical, cultural and biological continuity. The research on values education therefore obviously aims to create a point of contact (voiced concerns, proposals and changes) for social, community and national bodies, with benefits for all members of society. Values education research is a vital cultural practice.

The social semiotics of values education is a study of modern-day sociological thought and new meanings and lifestyles, since it records and analyses the dominant values and their relation to society. Culture, values, social differentiation, social identity and their relationship are only some of the issues pertaining to a society's development. We believe that values education will bolster the profile of learners and of society in general. The European objectives aim to achieve an understanding of current social trends and their impact on Europe's socio-economic development.

The research must thus add content to the value of social innovation as the driving force of development, social cohesion and participation, and its role in the tertiary sector. Technological progress and innovation have rendered the traditional methods by means of which the market, state and social (political) sectors respond to society's demands inadequate, enabling these sectors to impose limitations to the solution of social problems. Consequently, given the above concern, our aim is to make use of a critical mass of resources in order to enable cooperation, networking and mobility among researchers. Such an effort will involve communities, agencies and professionals in the research, whose purpose will be to support sustainable, inclusive development based on the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Innovation Union flagship.

2. The research results will be used to create educational actions whose purpose will be to establish moral values in the three rungs of the education system. The first stage will involve pilot educational actions and their evaluation. The feedback will be used to proceed to the second stage of the educational actions, which will be extended to a larger number of school units. A second evaluation cycle will be held and the research tools will then be used to determine if there were any changes in the attitudes and perceptions of the applicable populations.

The educational actions will take place at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels and also beyond the educational sphere, in communities and municipal districts, with special emphasis on family education. We all know that an educational action's effectiveness depends on its institutional background and creative inspiration. Generally speaking, school mechanisms do not seem to be ideal for socio-educational actions since they embody obligation, inelasticity and non-creativity. Nevertheless, it does not seem possible to exclude them from these actions. But these negative characteristics can be overcome through the parallel action of social pedagogy, which incorporates all the characteristics missing from schools.

3. We propose that a Centre for Research and Educational Applications in Values Education and Anti-Corruption Measures be established, with research and educational objectives and a focus on combating corruption through educational actions.

#### ***Communication method***

We propose that a platform be created to enable communication between all stakeholders at all stages of the educational action development project. The platform will serve two purposes: (a) it will facilitate communication between all stakeholders at every stage of the project so that all parties remain updated, and (b) it will meet educational needs, both in terms of educational actions and in terms of educator training and the exchange of good practices and views. The platform will be almost exclusively used for all educational actions not requiring educational personnel to be physically present and will have all the features of a functional and efficient distance learning platform, while also incorporating social networking tools (Panckhurst & Marsh, 2008, 2010; Weller, 2008).

More specifically, it will (a) enable the exchange of educational material, lesson plans, and so on; (b) be able to be used, depending on learners' capabilities and needs, for synchronous and asynchronous learning and the development of educational actions; and (c) incorporate social networking tools to provide the opportunity for views to be exchanged.

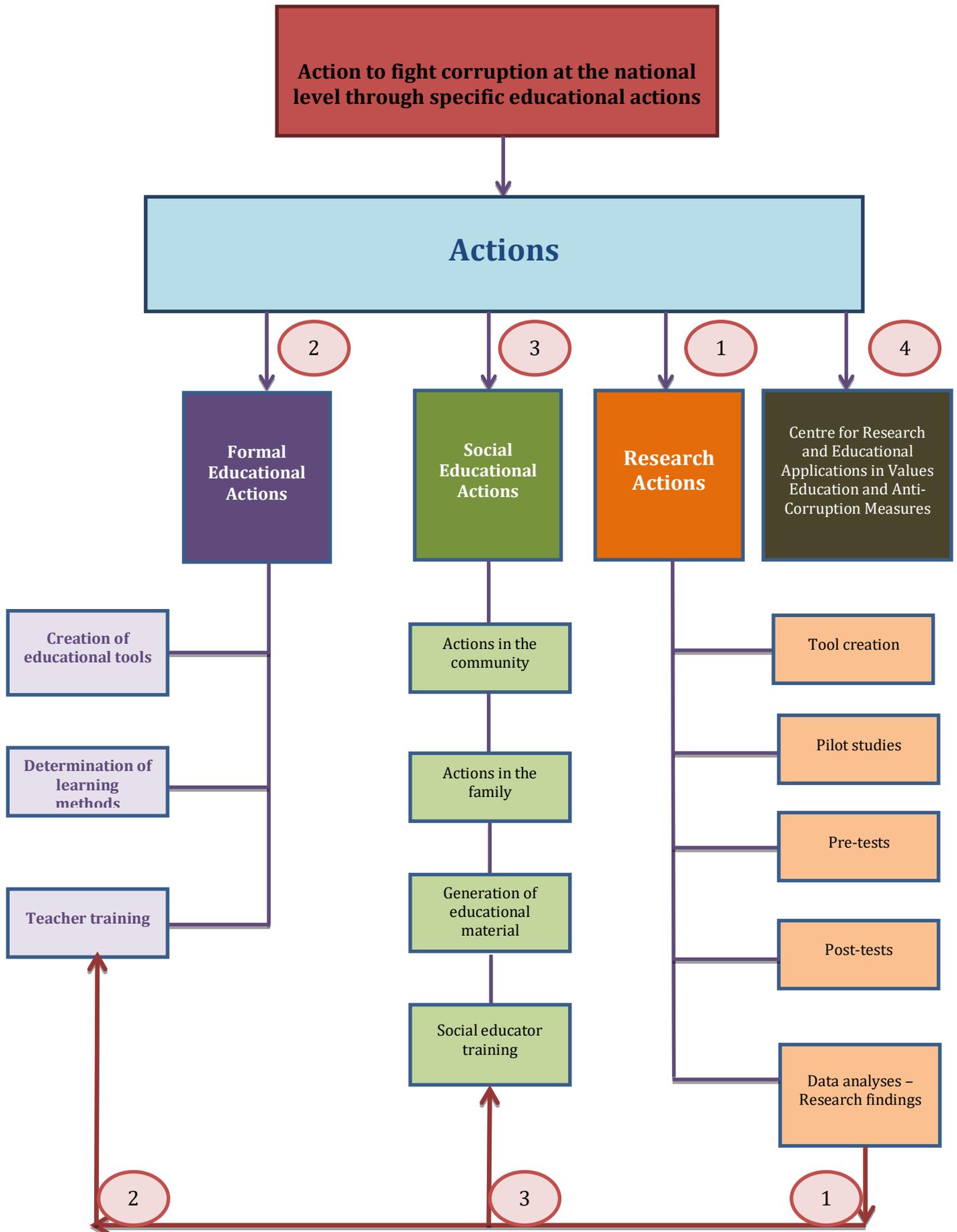


Figure I: Diagrammatic presentation of the 'Action to fight corruption at the national level through specific educational actions'.

## Final observations

These societal interventions may entail a wide range of conditions, opportunities, infrastructures and reforms. More specifically, based on the expected research results, interventions may lead to:

- (a) The reorganisation of time spent at school (as a direct intervention, since curricula are largely controlled by the state) and out of school (as an indirect intervention, since this is dependent on school hours);
- (b) Real dialogue between society and young people;
- (c) The productive use of young people's time to create the conditions for a more peaceful coexistence between young people and society as a result of the dialogue.
- (d) Improved education quality through the creation of new infrastructure and/or the transformation of existing infrastructure, with a positive impact on employment (new jobs). In other words, if the state institutions take note of the research results, then there will be a study that will lead to their implementation, which will have an impact on employment and the environment, since new jobs will be created to construct the necessary infrastructure.

Societies around the world face many common challenges, which have been exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis. Overcoming the crisis is not only a matter of economic innovation; it is first and foremost a matter of social innovation, so that it can be understood how and under what conditions social innovation can change existing structures, policies, institutions and behaviours. It is also a matter of finding and assessing those factors that are vital for social innovation, so that they may be scaled up and may have a sustainable social impact.

Examining verifiable hypotheses about the conditions under which social innovations can have a sustainable social impact and determining the critical factors for success at each stage of the cycle of social innovation is a challenge. It is necessary that we understand, also in social pedagogical terms, what the true role of social innovation is – when compared with technological innovation – as regards the transformation of society and sustainable systemic change, even in periods of economic crisis.

Social pedagogy was linked to the pursuit of social change from the moment of its creation:

*Many modern-day researchers of social pedagogy emphasise that the pursuit of social change is a fundamental principle of social pedagogy. [...] Ronnby believes that social pedagogy should encourage people to change their situation and in the course of this process to develop and improve themselves. In his study on change, Fullan (2007) states that change is not an event, but rather a developmental process [...] The idea of changing and improving generally problematic situations in educational and social systems through organised collective action and cooperation, and the subsequent effort of drafting the corresponding educational and social policies, are inherent to social pedagogy. (Mylonakou-Keke, 2013, pp. 145-148)*

Our research proposal aims to bring about a change in the attitudes and perceptions that arise in the course of socioeconomic development. We aim to create awareness of the existence of traditional obstacles to development and innovation. We thus propose that there be cooperation between agencies from across the breadth of the social fabric as well as cooperation with other countries facing the same reliability problem in their public, social and political spheres. Social innovation is interwoven with the existence and maintenance of a set of rules and good practices stemming from the moral values that exist or should exist in a society.

We aim to explore the existence and, ultimately, the adoption of the moral values that are needed for social innovation to take hold and which will contribute towards sustainable economic and social development. Innovative networks will have to be promoted in which stakeholders will forge new paths towards social change as part of an interactive process. In other words, we put forward a series of questions, such as: (a) How can the networks be defined, developed, supported and maintained? (b) What role do each of the stakeholders play? (c) What role do the networks play in

the different political spheres and on a national level? And (d) how do these interactive processes work and which practices ensure their success (good practices)?

Of course, a knowledge base must be created that will support the formation and implementation of policies aiming to increase the sustainability of social innovation results. It is also vital that the traditional obstacles to development be overcome by changing the attitudes of the critical social mass comprising the ages that will determine the future of nation states and the EU.

Within this context, social pedagogy plays an important role, since it 'comprises the idea that education takes place primarily for the society or community rather than for the development of individual personalities (individual pedagogy) or for the intermediation of being implicated in cultural values and formations (cultural pedagogy)' (Hämäläinen, 2012, p. 99).

The development model that will be set in motion will not be burdened by corruption issues. In this way, by gaining a better understanding of the relationship between social innovation and behavioural change, between social innovation and the participatory process, and a better understanding of the role of diversity and gender equality, of skills and the ability to take initiatives for the development and implementation of social innovations, we will be able to incorporate the values in new educational frameworks that will shape tomorrow's citizen of the world.

Lorenz (1994) states, in reference to Friedrich Diesterweg's thinking, that 'one of his theories is that individual intentions are already directed (by their nature as human intentions) towards sociability, towards universal social goals. The other is that only democracy allows the individual will to form. Public life needs to correspond to and reflect what is pedagogically, psychologically necessary for the healthy growth of the individual. The conditions for good education are those of a sound democracy; pedagogical and political processes condition each other' (as cited in Kornbeck, 2002, p. 43).

Social pedagogy has much to offer towards the realisation of our vision both within and outside the school system. As history has shown us, formal school mechanisms are not enough for an educational policy to succeed. Creative and effective educational innovations are needed whose purpose is not to achieve sterile learning but to establish healthy attitudes, perceptions and convictions in society, communities and the state.

The views expressed by Blatchford et al. (2003) are of particular interest, given that they show the role that social pedagogy can play in the school environment, particularly in pupil group work: 'Group work can be expected to affect pupil on-task behaviour, quality of dialogue in groups (e.g., more giving and receiving help, more joint construction of ideas), more sustained interactions in groups, and more positive relations between pupils. It seems clear that we cannot teach children to behave in socially responsible ways – this is not something that can be learned by instruction, like learning to read or subtraction. Behaving in a constructive way in relation to others is best furthered by children being given opportunities to debate and recognise alternative points of view, and by being held responsible for their own behaviour' (p. 162). Moreover, the Social Pedagogic Research into Group-work (SPRinG) project is built around a social pedagogical approach which involves a framework with four key dimensions: (a) The classroom context: Preparing the classroom and the groups; (b) Interactions between children: Preparing and developing pupil skills; (c) The teacher's role: Preparing adults for working with groups; and (d) Tasks: Preparing the lessons and group work activities (Baines et al., 2003, as cited in Blatchford et al., 2003).

Similar views on the applications of social pedagogy in the school environment have been expressed by Kyriakou (2009), Swinson (2010) and Ucar (2013). In fact, Kyriakou, also highlighting Otto's views, states that social pedagogy has, from its very beginning, been based on efforts to find solutions to significant social problems through education.

For this reason, we have employed social pedagogy in our research proposal to fight corruption in the Greek political and economic sphere, at a time when the economic crisis in Greece has reached

enormous proportions. More specifically, our proposal is based on social pedagogical theoretical and methodological thinking and on the consequent organised social pedagogical actions aiming to improve and change social and educational mechanisms, not only through intervention, but also primarily through prevention.

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- <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/beyond2015.shtml>

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