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Civic Right to Education (February 13, 1970)

The German Education Council supported the general call for greater equality in education and greater openness in the education system – the primary goal being to make colleges and universities more accessible to students from all social strata. Efforts in this direction met with limited success, however.

The German Education Council's Structural Plan for the Education System, February 13, 1970

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1.4.3 Equal Opportunity

The right to education is fulfilled when equal opportunity education exists and when every adolescent is given the support that he needs to acquire the skills that will enable him to actually take advantage of this opportunity. Therefore, this structural plan aims to eliminate existing inequalities in [the realm of] educational opportunity to the greatest possible extent. The education system shall be given a constitution; this constitution will stipulate that no one shall be excluded from certain educational opportunities on the basis of irreversible decisions that they were forced to make, and that no one should be disadvantaged in any other way.

Equal opportunity should not be sought in the leveling of standards. The real challenge is to eliminate differences in educational opportunities among children early on, and then to provide diverse and differentiated opportunities later on, so that learners will receive support that is commensurate with their respective interests and capabilities, and so that they will be afforded appropriate opportunities for further education.

In some cases, equal opportunity will only be achieved through the granting of special opportunities.

The improvement of educational opportunities is being pursued primarily with an eye toward eliminating the disadvantages that stem from regional, social, and individual conditions. The improvement of educational opportunities requires structural and curricular adjustments, and in rural areas it often requires additional financial expenditures, since these areas do not always have the basic number of educational institutions needed to improve educational opportunities.

The population will also be called upon to contribute by accepting longer school commutes for children and by giving up local schools, when necessary.

Source: "Aus dem Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen des Deutschen Bildungsrates vom 13. Februar 1970" ["From the German Education Council's Structural Plan for the Education System, February 13, 1970"]; reprinted in Oskar Anweiler, et. al., ed., *Bildungspolitik in Deutschland 1945-1990. Ein historisch-vergleichender Quellenband* [*Educational Policy in Germany 1945-1990. An Historical-Comparative Sourcebook*]. Opladen, 1992, pp. 103-04.

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