

# Letter from the Director

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A few weeks ago we saw an interesting coincidence. In his speech before the American Congress, to present the “State of the Union,” President Barak Obama repeatedly referred to the issue of political education as crucial to maintaining the international dominance of the United States of America.

Among the topics discussed were scientific innovation, the result of research, technology, R & D as means indispensable for competitiveness and at the bottom of all, the need for investment in education when considering the current efforts in this area made by countries like India, China and other emerging powers.

At the same time, on another TV channel, a reporter questioned the chain Argentine journalist Andres Oppenheimer versed on the contents of his latest book “Stop the stories.” And with the friendly style that is his, Oppenheimer gave a look at the contents of his book on the experiences of countries that have proposed a priority to education on other variables, as a means of achieving development.

It was interesting to understand how Finland, today technological power in communications, Nokia, and agricultural country a few years ago and exporter of raw materials, as any Latin American country is among the most developed nations in competitiveness, democracy and the largest number of scientific researchers per capita. According to Oppenheimer’s statement “if there was a economic and social progress worldcup , the Finns would win.” But it happens that one day, not long ago, Finland was proposed to place education as a political priority, even over economic development. Just a tip: go to explore the teaching profession, is of the most difficult for any student, only 1 in 10 applicants gets into. Their studies are free and also receive a State’s scholarship. And once they graduate and rigorously evaluated, people who receive compensation in no way inferior to that of any senior executive of company and maintain a high social status. This high quality of teachers has not only led to extraordinary levels of education of young people in Finland, but reversed in innovation in the information age, in the knowledge economy and the mystery of the “Conceptual Age”.

Oppenheimer also spoke about the case of Singapore, where education is a national obsession and allowed to move from third to first world in 40 years. At that time Singapore had a high level of illiteracy. Today virtually all young people entering into some kind of institution and Singapore ranked first in the international TIMSS tests to assess the levels of science and mathematics test in which virtually no one dares to participate almost no Latin American country.

National University of Singapore is ranked number 30 among the world's best universities according to the Higher Education Supplement Times of London. And we know that no American university looks out there. UNAM of Mexico appears on the site 150 within the same catalog.

But something else in Singapore has imported the best universities in the world: there are the universities of Chicago, New York and joint degrees with other major universities are numerous.

Oppenheimer account that the rector of the University of Singapore said: "Singapore has no natural resources, so that we can not survive if we do not exploit our human potential." And today, Singapore hi-tech exports worth U.S. \$ 235,000 million.

Oppenheimer quoted the example of India, which is well evident "as the new global superpower", as is the case of Korea and China. The latter also opened its doors to foreign universities and the number of Chinese who come to study in advanced countries is enormous, as well as in Finland and Singapore, education has become an obsession.

The conclusion is clear: Latin America is light-years from advanced and emerging countries in education. Ours is somewhat less than mediocre, figuration is depressing in international exams and university rankings do not appear anywhere. While we do not take seriously the development and educational discipline, continuing the debate in countless contradictions.