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**CFTE ACADEMIC AND
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**The Role of the
Government in Education**

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ARTICLE 5

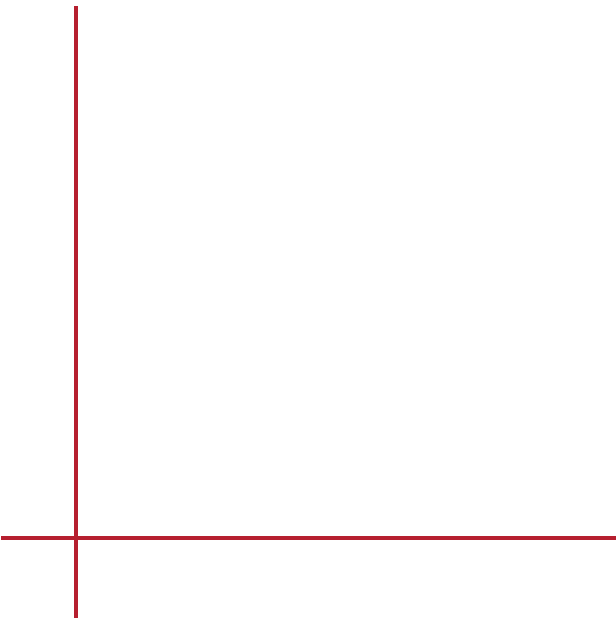


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The revolution of lifelong learning: A new framework for the State

By Agnès Alazard, Co-Founder of Maria Schools

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The last 20 years have emphasized the emergence of a global phenomenon: the Digital Age. This new era reshapes every sector of society, and the life-long education system makes no exception to that reality. The whole value chain of the sector has been redesigned. Governments used to be the cornerstones of production, distribution and funding of the knowledge economy during the Fordist Age. What is their role in the Digital Age?

At Maria Schools, we believe a new framework in the education value chain exists today: the role of government has shifted from being a global stakeholder to an investor and influencer in the life-long education system. At Maria Schools, we live at the forefront of this current revolution.

Maria Schools is the home of lifelong learning. We bridge the gap between the worlds of education and business by hosting learners that aspire to thrive in the Digital Age. We provide valuable knowledge to companies and people so they may adapt to this new paradigm by acquiring the tools, methods, competences and mindset required to succeed. We will cover why the government is becoming the key investor and yet not quite the powerful influencer it should be in the learning ecosystem, and how this new role interacts with Maria Schools' mission.

The State has lost its monopoly on the education of people

From a global overview, the value chain of the lifelong education system may be split between the production, distribution and funding of knowledge. In the Fordist Age, Education was mostly a topic for the youth. Education was taken care of by the government, who was the owner of knowledge through schools. The professional training sphere remained marginal. Employees enjoyed lifelong careers in the same company, therefore most of the training was led internally by organizations. People would grow in their role as the company grew. However today, with people changing companies and roles, skills development processes have transformed and are not only tied to a single organisation.

In the Digital Age, governments do not possess the power to produce and distribute knowledge adapted to the digital age. People need to be permanent learners. Therefore, they need to build their own "learning journey" to adapt constantly, learn from diverse sources of knowledge and experience to build up a successful career. Governments cannot provide such flexibility as their "one size fits all" model is outdated. The Internet, however, has become the largest knowledge distributor on the planet.

Entrepreneurs, experts, successful doers are the key learning producers: they are the ones that acquire the best practices, because their knowledge is constantly updated by empirical experiments. Does it mean the age of theoretical learning provided by academic lecturers is over? Yes. At least for business-related topics. If the government's role is not academic anymore, does it mean it has no role? Not as long as governments are willing to act as key players and investors of the global learning system.

The State remains a global influencer of the education system

A macro-analysis of the lifelong learning ecosystem reveals that governments play a similar role to a traditional investor. As MariaSchools is a French company, we will focus on the French government to illustrate our framework.

The French government acts as an investor by providing money and reputation to key actors: the learning organizations. Learning organizations are both schools such as Maria, and companies that internally create an incredible learning environment. These learning organizations "scale" the learning curve of people they incubate. They enable collaborators to acculturate the digital transformation by delivering tools and skill sets.

MariaSchools' goal is to become the key pillar of this revolution. Through our mission, we develop significant interactions with the French government.

Indeed, the French government provides :

a) Reputation to MariaSchools through certification processes, such as Datadock & Qualiopi

These selective certifications position Mariaschools as a high standard learning place for collaborators. These also create a great image for the organisation among other companies and facilitates Mariaschools current and future developments.

b) Money to all employees through the CPF ("Compte personnel de formation")

The CPF is a personal financial account that encompasses the training rights of each employee. Employees receive money in this account. They are able to use this cash in order to choose the training they need. Last but not least, the rights compiled on their CPF accumulate through their whole career, even if employees move from one company to another. This system incites employees to upskill their knowledge frequently. Eventually, the CPF leads a structural growth of the French lifelong education market, of which Maria is a key beneficiary.

c) A transparent database of qualified training to help their people navigate the Digital Age

The 2020 reform created the agency 'France Competences' to bring in more transparency to the whole professional training system. The rights each employee holds on his personal training account (the famous CPF in French) are translated from hours of work into money. The employee has access to a large list of potential trainings on the website of France Competences. The government aims at empowering employees and increasing their willingness to adapt themselves to the Entrepreneurial Age.

d) Financial support to the final beneficiaries of the learning ecosystem through its Covid-19 recovery plan

The French government has announced a €15 billion plan to support the professional training system. This amount is split into the retraining of collaborators, the training of the currently unemployed individuals and special dispositions for the youth.

Despite criticisms on the potential efficiency of such measures, the government still takes a strong position on supporting the learning ecosystem.

Any investor expects returns from his investments. As an investor in the lifelong education system, the State makes no exception to this fundamental law. However, the concept of "returns" for the State are slightly different than from a classic investment firm. 2 categories of returns are perceivable:

a) Financial returns:

This category of returns is classic from an investment standpoint. However its declination is specific in this present case.

The up-skilling and re-skilling of employees creates a better integration of the workforce to the socio-economic structure. A better integration of the workforce leads to a lower unemployment rate, increased State revenues through taxes and a more sustainable social security system.

b) Social and political returns:

This category of returns is fully specific to the education asset class.

A scalable and efficient lifelong education system provides learning, meaning and open mindedness to the whole population. These effects reduce conflicts within society, create trust between the elite and regular people and make the liberal democratic system more stable. No normative definition exists to establish an accurate quantitative measure of these social and political returns. Despite this major drawback from an investment standpoint, these returns are highly critical for the State.

MariaSchools' mission is to be the cornerstone of several schools that acculturate people to the Digital age. Our pedagogy is our uniqueness: we believe learning by doing is the best way to teach, and that incredible doers and entrepreneurs are the best teachers of our time.

Education is not anymore a matter of the youth, it is a both a necessity and a chance for everybody to be in full control of their career. Mental barriers considering the education of adults as a second-class topic unfortunately still persists, both among people and organizations. But evangelism is not the monopoly of field actors. We encourage the French government to take its part on this front, too. The current economic crisis accelerates the pace of history. We need strong and supportive public communication in favour of lifelong learning more than ever. The stakes for the society are too high to be ignored. We invite all governments to acknowledge education has entered a new paradigm and embrace a proactive investor role to empower their people through this new era.