SPECIAL ISSUE

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?
OR
THE SUSTAINABILITY OF EDUCATION INVESTMENT?

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Introduction to the Special Issue

Kenneth King

This special issue covers many different dimensions of education in its relations with sustainability. Some aspects are concerned with sustained economic development. Which is obviously not the same as sustainable economic growth. Others interrogate the sustainability of external aid and its close connections with key concepts like local ownership and with aid dependency. Others again look at the small-scale innovative project or programme, and wonder if it can be justified in its own terms, and not only if it succeeds in being scaled up. In other words, are some things not still eminently valuable even if they can’t be sustained in the short term by local resources?

This issue also marks a milestone, as there are now some 2000 individuals from aid agencies, research centres, universities, national governments, consultancies and from NGOs who have made a practice of checking items in NORRAG NEWS as members. It is interesting to note the breakdown. Just over a third of the membership are from teachers in tertiary education, but there are some 11% from national governments, 11% from aid agencies, 11% from consultancies, and 13% from NGOs. It is noteworthy that we are also reaching the next generation, as a further 11% are research students. For some interesting detail on this diverse membership, look further at the article on the NORRAG Survey which no less than 20% of the membership participated in.

As our membership has risen dramatically over these last two years, we have begun to consider the value of organising a number of NORRAG events at the country level. The first of these NORRAG Cluster meetings took place in Switzerland in April this year. This is an appropriate first location for such an innovation, seeing there are 130 members of NORRAG based in Switzerland, and since Michel Carton’s Institute (the former IUED) is located there, [now merged in a new institution focusing on development and international studies (IHEID)]. Switzerland is also appropriate as Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) has been supporting the secretariat for NORRAG in IUED/IHEID for many years. They have also been supporting NORRAG to be part of the secretariat along with the ILO and SDC for the organisation of the Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development. This Working Group has over the last 12 years produced an extremely valuable series of Working Papers called Debates in Skills Development (see www.norrag.org/wg). These are all freely accessible.

The second NORRAG Cluster meeting was held in Santiago on 19th May 2008, hosted by the Programme of Education Research of the University of Chile, and the third in Ghana in July 2008. In Europe the fourth cluster will be the meeting in The Netherlands in the autumn, organised by NUFFIC, The Hague.

Talking of freely accessible publications, it is worth noting that DFID, which is the principal sponsor of NORRAG NEWS, has available, free, a large number of copies of many of the 72 volumes in its popular Researching the Issues. These 72 volumes stretch
back to 1993, and the last of them, *Education Exclusion and Inclusion*, was published in September 2007. DFID will send these, at no cost, to those who would like to put in a goodly order. See the list of these DFID volumes since 2000 at the very end of this special issue.

This issue of *NORRAG NEWS* contains a number of valuable contributions from members of the network who responded to the outline of the issue earlier in the year. In due course, we shall be sending round the network a detailed outline of NN41, but we should say right now that it will be concerned with the *Politics of Partnership*. We don't have a firm title yet, but it will interrogate the challenge of the many different forms of partnership, including research partnerships, and research consortia, including those between the North and the South.

Members of NORRAG may wish to note that the topics of sustainability and of partnership are just two dimensions of the EADI General Conference to be held in Geneva at the end of June 2008 (see: [http://eadi.org/gc2008/](http://eadi.org/gc2008/)). This could be an interesting occasion to follow up some of the debates associated with this special issue of *NORRAG NEWS*.

We should of course acknowledge that NORRAG has been responsible for running one of the symposia at the Oxford UKFIET Conference since Oxcon began in 1991. Several of these pieces below began life in Oxford in September 2007. The next Oxford UKFIET Conference is on *Politics, Policies and Progress*, from 15-17 September 2009. We hope that again there will be a NORRAG symposium at this next conference. Please put this event in your diaries!

Kenneth King
Santiago, Chile
19\textsuperscript{th} May 2008.
EDITORIAL

THE MANY FACES OF SUSTAINABILITY
IN EDUCATION EXPANSION, INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Sustainability is a recent and very slippery concept, and in this Special Issue of NORRAG NEWS it is applied to a whole range of its possible meanings. But as often in NORRAG NEWS, we shall seek to imbue its present meanings with some sense of history, by reviewing the way that notions of sustainability, sustained commitments, and sustainable financing come increasingly to feature in the main policy papers on education.

Almost twenty years ago, at the World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien in March 1990, there was no use of the term ‘sustainability’, but interestingly enough in respect of one of our key concerns in the NN40, the notion that development agencies should get involved in extended commitment to supporting national and regional activities in Education for All (EFA) was already there. Just to underline the meaning of ‘sustained’, it is married with ‘long-term’!

Development agencies establish policies and plans for the 1990s, in line with their commitments to sustained, long-term support for national and regional actions and increase their financial and technical assistance to basic education accordingly. (WCEFA, 1990: Framework: 16 emphasis added)

But this ‘aid commitment’ needs to be set alongside the equally strong focus on the need for ‘the long-term commitment of governments and their national partners’ to reach the targets they have set for themselves. In other words, Jomtien is far from being about aid commitments only. It is about the sustained political commitment of national governments.

Also in 1990, there was another first: the Human Development Report 1990. This had an interesting section on what they termed ‘Sustained human development’. The report’s authors recognized that there was no single high road to success in sustained human development in their illustrative case studies in Korea, Malaysia, Botswana, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica:

Countries with progress in human development often started from very different initial conditions in 1960 and have at times followed quite different routes to sustain their success. (UNDP, HDR, 1990: 44)

Almost exactly a year later, in 1991, the World Bank’s very influential first policy paper on vocational and technical education and training came out, and again there was no mention of ‘sustainability’, but there was a recognition that the reforms needed in the
sphere of skills development would require both stability of national funding and what they termed ‘sustained institutional capacity for policy implementation’ (World Bank, 1991: 15-16). This latter is an intriguing concept, because, coming at a time when the World Bank was very interested in the notion of Capacity Building, it often meant capacity to implement World Bank-compatible policies (See NN 10, 1991 on Education Research Capacity). Be that as it may, the Bank’s 1991 paper also acknowledged a crucial second meaning of sustainability: and that was the notion that public sector training can be effective where there is sustained economic growth. In other words, where there is buoyant growth as today in India or China, it is possible, and indeed essential for the graduates of public training institutions to walk straight out of their classes into plentiful employment. On the other hand, where the ‘sustained economic growth’ is actually just a reflection of a change in commodity prices, it may indeed turn out to be ‘jobless growth’. Thus, the utilisation and allocation of skills in a dynamic, expanding economy are fundamentally different from macroeconomic situations in which there is no sustained growth, and where there is poor governance. In South Korea and China, there has been employment for TVET graduates of almost all institutions; while in a stagnant economy like Sri Lanka, there may only be jobs for some of the very best students. Clearly, the economy counts.

Once the Rio Conference on Environment and Development had taken place in 1992, there was a subsequent recognition of the consequences of education for sustainable development and vice versa. Thus, in the words of the Delors Report of 1996, ‘The notion of sustainability further complements that of human development’ (UNESCO, 1996: 78). The discourse was no longer just about ‘sustained long-term’ support as in Jomtien, but it included the term ‘sustainable’ and ‘sustainability’. This would be one of the differences between Jomtien and the World Education Forum (WEF), ten years later, in 2000, as we shall see in a moment.

Sustainability had been re-discovered at Rio, building on Stockholm and Bruntland, but soon the concept was no longer confined to the environment; indeed, it could be argued that environmental sustainability could not be pursued satisfactorily on its own. A good example of this was the influential OECD DAC report, *Shaping the 21st century: the contribution of development cooperation* (1996). OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the body that drew up the International Development Targets (IDTs) which in turn largely became the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) four years later. It illustrated this new multisectoral approach to sustainability as follows:

> It is now clear that **not only environmental, but also social, cultural and political sustainability of development efforts** are essential for the security and well-being of people and the functioning of the complex, interdependent global system now emerging (OECD DAC 1996:5 emphasis added)

Of course, it is known that the OECD translated this concern into an IDT which required that the present loss of environmental resources should be reversed at both global and national levels by 2015. What is much less well-known is that the document also specified that there were a series of ‘additional key elements’ such as the rule of law,
democratic accountability, protection of human rights which ‘sustainable development needs to integrate, not all of which lend themselves to indicators along the lines’ suggested in the IDTs. But OECD warned: ‘While not themselves the subject of suggested numerical indicators, we reaffirm our conviction that these qualitative aspects of development are essential to the attainment of the more measurable goals we have suggested’ OECD DAC, 1996: 11 emphasis in original). This crucial emphasis on multisectoral sustainability was lost in the desire for simple quantification whether in the IDTs or in the MDGs, because it could not be so easily translated into a numerical target. But we shall note it reappears in later documentation.

By the time of the World Education Forum (WEF) in Dakar, in 2000, education could be projected not just as a human right, but ‘as the key to sustainable development and peace and stability’ (WEF, 2000: 2). But beyond this very generalized ambition, there were much more specific uses of sustainable, for example in the demand for EFA to be delivered within ‘a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework’ (WEF, 2000: 10), and also in the emphasis on EFA plans being based on (national) sustainable financial frameworks. It is noteworthy that this discourse is not about aid being sustained, but is principally about the crucial need for country resources to be available – not just to reach EFA – but to sustain it. Equally with the concept of ownership: EFA has to be a country responsibility first and foremost, and hence there needs to be ‘real and sustained ownership’ of the EFA Goals. It is worth underlining this emphasis on ‘sustained political commitment’ at the national level, since this seems to be much less quoted than the mantra, from the same paragraph, about the availability of aid: ‘No countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources’ (WEF, 2000:16). In fact, there is more emphasis in the Dakar documentation on the crucial need for ‘sustained political commitment’ at the country level than at the donor level.

The last sustainability issue touched upon in Dakar is the crucially important one that the EFA project is not about reaching the EFA goals only but about sustaining the achievement of them. We have stressed that it is national political commitment that has to be sustained if the goals are to be reached. Only with that in place can aid also play a role, and that too must involve ‘longer-term and more predictable commitments’.

Once the IDT on environment had become an MDG on environment, in September 2000, the same year as Dakar, it is interesting to note that the wider political, social and cultural sustainability was not even mentioned. There was just the emphasis on reversing the loss of biodiversity and environmental resources, reducing by half those without secure access to safe drinking water; and ‘achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers’ – whatever that might mean or be measured.

By 2002, it was Rio +10; so was there the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. Naturally the WSSD Report reinforced the two Education MDGs (on Universal Primary Education and Gender Parity), and the Dakar EFA Goals, but why? The simple answer is that ‘Education is critical for promoting sustainable development’ (WSSD, 2002: 51). But there was little investigation of this assumed
relationship. What is worth remarking is that the WSSD does not restrict its interest in the
promotion of sustainable development to basic education, but includes research institutes
and universities. But this is not suggested only for their role in promoting sustainable
development, but also so that universities and research units could actually become more
sustainable in the poorer countries of the world, if there were additional resources to
sustain their infrastructures and programmes. It has to be said that the main education
message from the WSSD is deceptively simple: ‘Integrate sustainable development into
education systems at all levels of education in order to promote education as a key agent
for change’ (WSSD, 2002: 52). This is surely easier said than done. Which is perhaps
why the WSSD also recommended to the United Nations General Assembly ‘that it
consider adopting a decade of education for sustainable development, starting in 2005’
(WSSD, 2002: 53).

The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) was duly assigned to
UNESCO for the period of 2005 to 2014. And its scope was outlined through an
*International Implementation Plan [ISS]* (UNESCO, 2005). This laid out the main
objectives of the Decade, and the four major thrusts of the initiative: improving access to
quality basic education; re-orienting existing education programmes; developing public
understanding and awareness of sustainability; and providing training. But the ISS was
aware that education and sustainable development are not an obvious married couple:
‘Education is held to be central to sustainability. Indeed, education and sustainability are
inextricably linked, but the distinction between education as we know it and education for
sustainability is enigmatic for many’ (UNESCO, 2005: 27). The character of DESD is
further complicated by the recognition that there are three spheres of sustainable
development: environment, society and culture, and economy. There are then a whole
series of key or essential characteristics of ESD, which are so general as to provide little
guidance for nations, whether developed or developing. It is not much help to suggest the
following: ‘These essential characteristics of ESD can be implemented in myriad ways,
so that the resulting ESD programme reflects the unique environmental, social and
economic conditions of each locality’ (UNESCO, 2005: 31).

It should not perhaps be surprising given the sheer generality of what is encompassed in
ESD that it was not until April 2008, three years after the launch of the Decade in 2005,
that there was held the first meeting of the international advisory committee for the
Decade. This was preceded by a Panel Discussion in preparation for the World
Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, planned for 2009 in Bonn. At
the Panel, leading speakers reinforced the global ambitions for the Decade: ‘The
objective of the UN Decade is to anchor the concept of Education for Sustainable
Development in all education systems worldwide. ESD aims at moving people to adopt
behaviours and practices which enable all to live a full life without being deprived of
basic needs’ (UNESCO, 2008). It is interesting to note that despite the title of the Decade,
Education is not itself one of the Key Action Themes of the DESD. Hopefully the World
Conference in 2009 will sharpen up the currently rather vague ambitions and aspirations
of the Decade.

Compared to the generalities of DESD, the World Bank’s *Education Sector Strategy*
Update (ESSU) of that same year, 2005, is replete with very specific implications of education and sustainability. For one thing, there is an explicit concern with the emergence of aid dependency especially in the poorest countries of Africa with stagnating economies. Here the risk may be that sustained aid may produce ‘high aid dependency for a sustained period of time’ (World Bank, 2005: x). But the Bank’s new education policy consists of just two main end results – pursuit of the Education MDGs and education for knowledge economies – but these both require improvements to access, equity and quality, ‘along with more efficient and financially sustainable education systems’ (ibid. 4).

At a more comprehensive level, however, the sustained pursuit of one of these end results – the Education MDGs – is seen to be critical to securing the other MDGs, including the MDG of environmental sustainability. Thus, as we said earlier, environmental sustainability cannot be pursued in isolation but rather in conjunction with other social sector and political commitments. But this end result –universal primary education- ‘is but a beginning step for survival in today’s complex, fast-globalizing world’. From the point of view of sustainable economic growth, higher levels of ‘education for knowledge economies’ needs to be brought into play: ‘Only by raising the capacities of its human capital can a country hope to increase productivity and attract the private investment needed to sustain growth in the medium term’ (World Bank, 2005: 20). The Bank has seized on the information and knowledge revolution, and sees that a country’s competitive international position is inseparable from its ‘capacity to produce, select, adapt, commercialize and use knowledge’. This knowledge revolution provides substantial opportunity for both poverty reduction and sustainable development (ibid. 26).

The Bank’s recognition that sustained momentum on EFA needs to be combined with a sectorwide approach to education, and with other multi-sectoral investments has become part of many other agency approaches to education and growth. Thus, DFID (2008), in its most recent Research strategy, 2008-2013, has revisited its concerns with poverty reduction and growth. This does not mean that DFID has abandoned its focus on poverty reduction, or on pro-poor growth, but its most current judgment is that growth is more important to poverty reduction than previously thought. ‘It is perhaps responsible for as much as 80% of poverty reduction’ (DFID, 2008: 21).

We end this short account where we began with a re-affirmation of the intimate connections between sustainable financing of education, political commitment to education, and sustained economic growth. Hopefully the new emphasis on growth will tease out not just the correlations between different levels of education and growth, but also what are the qualitative drivers of these effects. Two very recent studies by Keith Lewin and Erick Hanushek respectively will help to start us out on this trail. Here are their conclusions:

Expansion at the secondary level without attention to financial realities will jeopardize quality and achievement, generate disillusion with the costs and benefits, and miss opportunities to close the gap between SSA and other regions of the world in the knowledge and skills of the next generation. The sustainability of greater
access will depend on consistent economic growth. This is much more likely with the strategic development of secondary schooling than without it. (Lewin, 2008: 161)

Our evidence of a clear, strong relationship between cognitive skills and economic growth should encourage continued reform efforts. Improvements in mathematics performance called for by No Child Left Behind would matter, contrary to what critics sometimes suggest. Yet reformers should bear in mind that money alone will not yield the necessary improvements. Many expensive attempts around the world to improve schooling have failed to yield actual improvements in student achievement.

Economic growth flows only from reforms that bring actual improvements in cognitive skills. Identifying what works and how to implement it on a society-wide scale remains a challenge, not only for the U.S., but also for many nations across the globe. (Hanushek, 2008: 70)

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EDUCATION AND A GROWTH-BASED VISION OF DEVELOPMENT:
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH
Making Educational Development and Change Sustainable: 
Insights from Complexity Theory

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Keywords
Complexity theory, Educational Development, Sustainable Change

Summary
This article considers problems of development and change in education from the perspective of complexity theory. In doing so it introduces conceptual issues in complexity theory to educationalists who might be unfamiliar with the field.

In a recent issue of the *International Journal of Educational Research*, Lockheed and Cueto (2006: 97) make the point that “evidence emerging from developing and transition countries underscores the relationship between education quality and education equity”. They draw on studies that show that the poor quality of education for the children of the poor, minorities or those living in remote communities is often responsible for their lower school participation (Lewis & Lockheed, 2006; Winkler & Cueto, 2004). Yet, as they indicate, research on how best to improve these schools is sadly lacking. This paper offers some insights from complexity theory into how educational development and change might be made more sustainable. The argument is thus theoretical: while it is not an empirical paper reporting lessons from one or more case studies, perhaps the conceptualization of change in complexity theory might provide insights into what manner of interventions stands the most chance of being sustained.

Both educational quality and equity are increasingly cited as critical for international educational development. UNESCO, for example, has titled a recent *Education For All Global Monitoring Report, The Quality Imperative* (UNESCO, 2005). Inequalities in educational development in any society lie primarily, of course, in inequities that can probably be traced back to the big four: socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender, and space/region (the urban/rural divide, for example). Theories of change have thus sought the levers of history in economic structures, in human agency, and in combinations of these and other factors that include or exclude either or both. Complexity theory offers a theory of change that might be said to encompass all of these and more, and that might offer the most helpful insight yet into how educational development and change might be rendered sustainable.

Complexity theory’s notion of emergence implies that, given a significant degree, or critical mass, of complexity in a particular environment, new properties and behaviours emerge that are not contained in the essence of the constituent elements, or able to be predicted from knowledge of initial conditions. These concepts of emergent phenomena from a critical mass, associated with notions of lock-in, path dependence, and inertial momentum, contribute to an understanding of continuity and change that sheds light on
educational, institutional and system-wide change. In the complexity of the educational environment, the plethora of relevant constituent elements – agents and structures – includes teachers, students, parents and other community leaders, the state and its education departments, economic structures and business organisations, NGOs, agencies, and so on. Complexity theory suggests that intervention to differing but sufficient extents in each of these areas is what would probably be necessary to shift a prevailing ethos in education. In other words, change and sustainable development in education, at whatever level, are not so much a consequence of effecting change in one particular factor or variable, no matter how powerful the influence of that factor. It is more a case of generating momentum in a new direction by attention to as many factors as possible. Complexity theory thus indicates that what it might take to change a system’s inertial momentum from an ethos of failure to one of sustained development is massive and sustained intervention at every possible level until the desired change emerges from this new set of interactions among these new factors and sustains itself autocatalytically. And despite complexity theory’s relative inability to predict the direction or nature of change, we are, by implementing, at each constituent level, changes whose outcome we can predict with reasonable confidence, at least influencing change in the appropriate direction and thus stand a better chance of effecting the desired changes across the complex system as a whole.

References


Further Resources


**EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBAL ERA: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL GLOBALISATION**

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This book (see end-note) is the outcome of a DFID-funded research project directed by Andy Green and Angela Little from the Institute of Education, University of London. The book examines the role that education has played and can play in ‘successful’ engagements with the global economy. Its regional focus is East Asia and its country foci China, India, Kenya and Sri Lanka. It is based on secondary evidence drawn from the academic social science literature and from surveys and reports produced by governments, multi-and bi-lateral lateral agencies and NGOs.

A review of the general literature on globalisation, education and development, combined with our assessment of development of the East Asian tiger economies between 1960 and 1990 as ‘successful’ and of Sri Lanka’s decline into civil war since the early 1980s as a negative characteristic of ‘development’ leads us to a working definition of successful engagement with the global economy as: export-led economic growth with income equality and peace.

Our key task in relation to the East Asian tiger economies is to outline the common characteristics of their development trajectories and to assess the role of education in development relative to strategies and actions in other sectors. Although differentiated in significant ways these economies provide a distinctive regional pattern of growth with equality which has not been matched in any other region. Various factors help to explain this regional phenomenon, including most importantly, geo-political advantages, the fortuitous timing of initial industrialisation, and the role played by the developmental state. However, education and skills have also played key roles. Education has generally supported rapid economic growth through encouraging foreign investment, enabling technology transfer, promoting productivity and progressively upgrading the skills base as required for each successive economic shift to higher value-added areas of manufacturing and service industry. Education has also played a generally positive role in promoting relatively cohesive national identities.
Our key tasks in relation to each of our ‘developing’ countries are four-fold. The first is to identify the points in recent world history at which each country made a deliberate choice to forge a stronger integration between respective domestic economies and the global economy. The second is to provide an assessment in each country of progress towards the three goals of ‘successful engagement; i.e. export-led economic growth, income equality and peace. The third is to provide an assessment of the contributions made by education and education policies to each of these goals. The fourth is to analyse past policies for their impact on these goals and current and proposed policies for their likely impact in the future.

Our evidence suggests that education is an important factor in achieving what we call ‘successful’ forms of globalisation i.e. economic growth with equality and peace, but that it is not necessarily the main factor in each case. While economic and political policies have usually been the more important drivers of development, education has been a necessary, if not sufficient, component. There is no single ‘quick fix’ educational panacea for all dimensions of development for all countries at all times. With respect to the recent past and the present the importance of five policies appear to be common across our set of countries. The first is the achievement of high quality mass education which brings marginalised and rural populations within the mainstream of national development. The second is the planned expansion of secondary, technical and higher education that creates the skills needed for sustained economic growth. The third is the development of communication skills that facilitate international economic transactions. The fourth is the equitable expansion of education in order to enhance its contribution to social equality. The fifth is the awareness of the potential of both the official and hidden curriculum of educational institutions to promote positive – and perverse – contributions to national unity and social cohesion.

Sustainable Mozart: The Overlooked and Neglected Dimension of Culture in the Discourses on Sustainability

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Keywords
Culture, Sustainability Discourse

Summary
This article is a comment on the narrowing down of the concept of sustainability to economics, ecology and sometimes politics, leaving out dimensions that may enrich the socio-political discourse, such as art and culture.

The title “Sustainable Mozart” and some of the basic ideas have been taken from a series of workshops which were conducted during the Mozart year 2006 in Salzburg. It is an attempt to draw attention to the narrowing down of the concept of sustainability to economics, ecology and sometimes politics, leaving out dimensions that may enrich the socio-political discourse.

Art and culture could provide an essential contribution when it comes to perceiving change towards a sustainable livelihood and putting into question well trodden paths of consumption patterns and value systems. UNESCO’s Stockholm Action Plan of 1998 “The Power of Culture” claims that sustainable development and cultural diversity depend on each other. Art is a means to represent the state of a society, yet it also permits us to think ahead in view of a sustainable, more just future for mankind which takes heed of the natural boundaries. Art and culture provide an emotional approach to the abstract intellectual concept of sustainability and address more directly the reality and quality of life, thus permitting an emotional experience of sustainability. Through the visions of artists there may be different outlooks on present reality and on what a more life-worthy future might look like. In the Salzburg thesis the organisers of the workshops have outlined the possible alliances of art and social options of how art with its capacity to critically question and condense the hitherto unthought and unseen can confront society with alternative possibilities of individual and collective thinking and action towards a richer understanding of sustainability. Art and culture may also give some essential orientation in the worldwide spread of information, and thus serve as a key competence in an otherwise information-flooded knowledge society.

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Engendering Sustainable Development through a Synthesis of Struggles for Cultural Liberty

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“Culture is the Essence and Spirit of any Nation” – Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere

Since 1960, the year of African independence, the ‘post-colonial’ states in Africa have generally projected themselves as ‘developmental states’. However, with the possible exceptions of ten countries, their development initiatives have proved to be unsustainable. Interestingly, in the early 1990s, after nearly half a century of its developmentalist intervention in our post-colony, the ‘international community’ rediscovered the cultural factor in ‘African development’. Culture became increasingly recognized as an integral factor - ‘the missing link’ - in the sustainable progress of Africa. Nevertheless, this recognition hasn’t deterred the global development agenda from its persistent focus on economic and political prescriptions over and above our culture(s).

This economic-deterministic and technocratic neo-liberal agenda is being spearheaded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development World. In essence it is an outgrowth of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that severely retarded our social development in the so-called lost decade of the 1980s. The SAPs have attempted to rehabilitate themselves by metamorphosing into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that have culminated in a number of ‘nationally-owned’ policy/institutional reforms. In the case of my country, Tanzania, these highly donor-funded reforms fall under the framework of its National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP).

These initiatives centre on growth as the panacea for ‘pro-poor’ development. Employing Rostow’s Eurocentric discourse, policy pundits often attribute the lack of rapid growth in Africa to (African) ‘cultural constraints to development’. As a result, a number of policy recommendations call for a ‘change of mindset’ among Africans. However, these policy prescriptions fail to comprehend the dialectics of cultural resistance and cultural accommodation.

Cultural forms, as Ernest Wamba dia Wamba (1991) observes, are forms of consciousness. They have their internal logic. In a situation of domination, he further observes, they tend to be divided into cultural forms of accommodation and those of resistance. When domination prevails, he concludes, the paradigm of cultural transfer dominates the lifestyles. He is cautious enough to remind us that this transfer includes variants such as technological transfer. To that list we can be specific enough to add transfer of development doctrines and policy prescriptions.

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1 This policy brief is based on a paper entitled ‘Engendering Sustainable Development through Struggles for Cultural Liberty’ that was presented at the International Conference on African Culture and Development (ICACD) held in Kumasi, Ghana (21-26 April, 2008).
In doubly conscious post-colonial Africa there is a serious imbalance between the articulations of these two cultural forms. This was not so in the twilight of colonial Africa when nationalistic elites led the masses irrespective of their multicultural heritage to struggles for independence. Cultural transfer in this case of colonial domination involved using the ‘colonial master’s cultural tools’ such as education, religion, laws and language to struggle for collective self-determination. However, after independence the elites started to use these tools in the name of development to suppress sub/multicultural initiatives of the masses. As a result cultural forms articulated by ruling elites became primarily out of harmony with those articulated by the people.

Thus when ruling elites and their Euro-American donors-cum-development partners talk about our lack of ownership of the development agenda and a need to change our mindset they are ironically referring to the masses’ nagging counter-articulation of cultural accommodation and cultural resistance. In other words, the masses have their own cultural ways of accommodating and/or resisting certain elements of the development agenda vis-à-vis the state and its global allies. To them cultural transfer is not an issue as long as it suits their own development agendas.

Indeed Africa has many examples of cultural transfer. Local industries, such as those for weaving and pottery, are full of innovations ‘borrowed’ from Euro-America. Even cultural groups, such as the Khoisan and Maasai that are stereotypically epitomized as cultural constraints to development, accommodate in as much as they resist. To them culture as resistance is a form of memory against effacement by cultural imperialism since, under such a threat, culture “is a way of fighting against extinction and obliteration” (Edward Said in Barsamian & Said 1993: 160).

It should be a constant reminder that the typical post-colonial African state was graced with a unique blessing of starting its career as a social/cultural movement which, due to its nationalistic nature, embraced various African sub-nationalities/subcultures. Hence it was, and I still believe it is still, uniquely poised to forge a national culture that has a place for all its subcultures to co-exist within what Bell hooks (1994) calls a culture of communalism and mutuality or/and use what Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1993) refers to as the wealth of our collective cultures expressed in the particularities of our languages and cultures to create a space for a hundred flowers to bloom.

This elusive ideal can relatively be achieved if culture is mainstreamed, as a fairly balanced synthesis of cultural resistance and cultural accommodation, into national policy processes and institutional frameworks that foster enabling environments for the citizenry’s pursuit of cultural liberty. Otherwise skewed cultural struggles within highly multicultural African nation-states will continue unabated at the expense of sustainable development not least because of statist imposition of a national culture that is based on unity in uniformity instead of unity in diversity.

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What are the Ground Rules for a Sustainable Donor Agency Intervention?

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Keywords
Community Participation, Informed Consent, Consensus Building

Summary
This paper discusses external agency support to improving the standard of education in Kenya. It discusses the sustainability of education and community members’ participation in school management decisions.

I have been working for community-based and participatory development projects in education, health and environment in marginalised areas in Kenya since 1995. This paper will discuss the sustainability of education and community members’ participation through my experiences in the projects as well as my observations on parallel projects by other stakeholders on the ground.

In the 1990s the Kenyan government limited its support for public primary schools to dispatching teachers. Parents and their communities became more responsible for not only the provision of teachers’ and pupils’ personal items required for schooling but also the development of classrooms and other school facilities. On the other hand, headteachers were evaluated by the education office according to the development of their school facilities as well as their pupils’ academic performance. Parents and the community members were indispensable resources for headteachers to have a good reputation and promotion. Thus, most head teachers heavily depended on their pupils’ parents for developing school facilities in the form of cash and labour contributions. Although some head teachers might have regarded parents as resources to exploit, the headteachers inevitably had to have a good dialogue and form a consensus with not only the parents’ representatives but also parents in general, or local community members, for the success of their school development projects. It was a great burden for community members to be responsible for financing the schools, but this situation had also created
opportunities for parents to participate in the management of their schools. They were able to discuss with the head teachers about the way their money was spent for school management.

The introduction of compulsory free primary education in Kenya in 2003 has influenced this relationship between head teachers and parents. Substantial funding was disbursed to all public primary schools in the country by directly remitting to each school’s bank account from the central government. The fund is claimed from the account with the signatures of the headteacher and the parents’ representatives. At the same time, the government restricted head teachers from collecting any money for school management from parents.

The Free Primary Education policy certainly removed the financial burden from community members, and it has had many good effects in the Kenyan education. However, this policy has also led to the reduction of the actual participation of community members in school management on the ground. A story of how the budget for the improvement of facilities is used illustrates the current situation.

The government fund disbursed to schools also includes some budget for facility improvement. I believe that the priority for spending the budget should be placed on the improvement of facilities for children, who study in crowded and poor resourced classrooms. However, there are some schools that utilised the fund for renovating and furnishing headteachers’ and teachers’ staff-rooms, and many classrooms remained untouched for years. The priority is placed on the improvement of facilities for teachers, not for pupils.

Although a democratic and participatory procedure for consensus building with parents on spending the fund was set by the government, parents may not make objection to the facility improvement plans made by head teachers. In many cases, many of them are not even informed of the existence of the fund available for certain purposes. The detailed information is circulated only amongst a limited number of people in the schools.

With the fund being a government fund, headteachers tended to be regarded as the sole custodian of the fund and many parents believed that they were freed from any burden for school management matters. This notion led to the reduction of opportunities for parents to participate in school management. Therefore, it might be unnecessary for some head teachers to have a dialogue and form a consensus with parents but only necessary to control a limited number of their representatives so that parents might not have any objection in formalising their spending plans. This situation also denies opportunities for parents to be informed and to discuss what kinds of improvement for their children’s education are possible by the fund, and to form a consensus. Thus, the parents miss the opportunity for the process to enhance their capabilities for sustaining and improving education for their children through this participation of school management.

The current political and social crisis in connection with general election in 2007 in Kenya indicates a possibility to reduce the influx of public funds to primary schools.
Then, parents may be regarded as the major resources in terms of cash and labour contribution for school development again. Under hardship, where both governmental and other resources are limited and less reliable, the participation of parents and the community in school management is a key element for sustaining primary education for their children.

If external agents are to support improving the education standard and attaining Education for All, it is important for the supporting project/programme to encompass the component of capability building for parents, which enables them to participate in school management equally, and to manage and utilise school resources effectively.

When parents paid their contribution to schools, it was easier for them to participate directly in school management. In reality, however, the influx of external, central government support reduced the level of parents’ participation due to the structure of the support. The external agents identify where problems occur and make efforts to establish the systems and rules to solve those problems, but in order to make the systems and rules function properly, another type of effort is required in the assistance. These efforts include the sensitivity of the external government agents to the dynamism of local power relations at the grassroots and to create some opportunities to overcome the power relations through ensuring places for discussion and informed consent amongst various stakeholders at the grassroots. Furthermore, in the process of this participation, it is also entirely possible to develop the capability of parents to oversee and control the quality of the education, in a local, fully sustainable manner.

How Long Should Donors Support those Countries who Cannot Currently Afford Education for All?

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Keywords
EFA, donor support, sustainability

Summary
This article examines the debates about the sustainability of EFA in countries that cannot afford EFA without donor assistance.

The Dakar goals are financially sustainable provided that national economies grow. Whether such growth is environmentally sustainable is a broader question that cannot be answered in a general way for education alone. It is probably also context-specific.
A somewhat more intriguing question is whether a national system of education as we know it, and which should be competitive in the global economy is financially and professionally sustainable in economies which only create a small surplus for the majority of the population. A comparison between the state of basic education in Sweden before the industrial revolution (which happened during the second half of the 19th century) will illustrate this. The Swedish “Dakar goals” were realized through adult education up to the end of the 19th century. It was only then that Sweden had a professional group of primary school teachers for all whose salaries were paid by the public sector. Up to that point, the resources came from “the land” i.e. it was the farmers in each village who financed school buildings and who engaged a person with some rudimentary qualifications to teach. Sometimes it was a soldier or church person with some book knowledge and ability to read and write. As for the rest, it was up to the head of the household to see to it that everybody on the farm could read.

In contrast, the situation in Africa after independence has been different. It has been taken as a given that basic education, including skills training, should be financed from public sources and have professionally-trained teachers. As a result, and with the help of donors, most African systems have expanded very fast, against a background of recurring economic problems and a fairly slow transition from the subsistence economy, at least for the majority of the population.

There are many good reasons for the global educational choices that have been made; international human rights standards, adherence to Jomtien and Dakar Action Plans and the Millennium Development Goals, the need to compete on the international market, expectations by the great majority for a better life after independence, the need to strengthen the national identity through education etc. etc. From this perspective it may not be far from the reality to describe the whole modernisation project in education in Africa as a “Fast Track Initiative”.

At the same time, it would be wrong to assume that all countries have to follow the same path, that there is one rate of expansion and one way to describe the correspondence between education, and economic-and-social development. The manpower approach in the 1960s was an expression of such an idea and we know that it did not work. The education system was always lagging behind the needs of the economy and manpower needs could not be predicted.

Today, the education systems in most countries are neither financially nor professionally sustainable in the short (20 year) term. The answer has been financial aid and technical assistance.

From a donor point of view, the dilemma, up to the introduction of Programme Based Approaches, has been to support innovative projects. These projects have been seen as sustainable when integrated into broader national reforms. In many cases this has not happened. Such projects have not survived without external support.
It is partly this experience that has driven the Paris Agenda for Aid Effectiveness. The donor perspective has shifted. The role of the donors is now seen to be to contribute, financially and professionally to the creation of national capacity within the field of education.

The implication is that reform processes, including sustainability considerations, are seen as a national political process. Donors enter and step out of this process as they deem fit or when countries decide that they do not want aid for education.

From a perspective of sustainability, it is difficult to see that there should be a natural cut-off point. As long as the systems expand and the countries count on foreign aid, there will be a need for additional resources. Also, the manpower situation in Africa is such that it is difficult to meet the needs for teachers, nurses and doctors within the foreseeable future.

The sustainability of the system can only be defined in relation to some agreed objectives and will be a context-specific answer to the question. It will be in terms of “the parties have agreed that when there is parity between boys and girls in primary education, the external funds will be diverted towards other needs.”

So the answer is that as long as the international aid system exists as it is today, there is no general way to answer the question. From a donor point of view, the question of sustainability only makes sense when defined at the level of individual projects.

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Increased Aid for Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Increased Risk of Aid Dependency?

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1960-1980: The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) grew from about 40% in 1960 to 80% in 1980, implying an enrollment growth of 230%. This impressive growth meant that enrollment in 1980 exceeded by 25% that implied by the 1961 “Addis Ababa target” of reaching Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 1980. However, the UPE target was not reached because the population of primary school age almost doubled during this period (only 20% had been foreseen).

1980-2000: This was a period of stagnation. The GER declined to a low of 72% in 1992, and only regained its 1980 level of 80% in the year 2000. The 70% enrollment growth achieved was just sufficient to keep pace with population growth.
1999–2005: In these years, strong growth has resumed. Primary enrollment grew by 36% during this six year period, and the GER increased from 80% to 97%.

2. Role of education financing in explaining past enrollment trends
SSA countries’ ability to finance education is a key factor explaining the above trends. Education budgets increased annually by only 2.3% during the period 1980-99, i.e., slightly below population growth. This reflects the economic crisis that hit SSA in the mid-1970s, resulting in a decline in GDP per capita by 36% during the 1970-1997 period\(^2\). To substitute for stagnant public budgets, many countries introduced school fees, a cost parents could ill afford. The result was a major “UPE setback”. The number of countries with a GER above 100% declined from 16 in 1980 (accounting for 50% of SSA’s school age population) to 7 in 1995 (7% of the population, most of which was in South Africa).

During the period 1999-2005, total education budgets in SSA increased by 9.2% annually, and school fees were abolished in many countries. The improved public financing is explained by a combination of factors:
- Resumption of economic growth (4.8% annual GDP growth during the 2000-2005 period as compared to 2.1% during the period 1980-1999);
- Increased share of GDP spent on education (from 3.7% in 1999 to 5.0% in 2005);
- Resumed growth in education aid (3.8% annually between 1999 and 2005) as compared to a marked decline in the 1990s.

3. Has the increase in aid led to increased aid dependency?
The international community’s follow-up to the Dakar 2000 Education for All (EFA) conference has focused on mobilizing increased aid to help countries reach the EFA goals. This focus is normal, given the sector’s severe past financial squeeze. Less attention has been given to issues related to the risks of aid dependency and to the sustainability of increased aid. However, these types of risks should be explored, not because more aid is not desirable, but because this may help both countries and their partners to better handle the risks, including by using aid more strategically to reduce, or “grow out of” future aid dependency, or in a way that limits the potential risks associated with such dependency. Risks may range from (real or perceived) external “interferences” in domestic policies\(^3\) to potential problems arising from depending on (often unpredictable) aid to finance teacher salaries. The following illustrates some issues related to aid dependency/sustainability:

(a) Share of aid in total education budgets. A World Bank study conducted in 2002 to prepare the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) estimated that to reach universal primary school completion by 2015, SSA countries would need increased aid equal to about 42% of their primary education budget in 2015; see Mingat \textit{et al} (2002). Other

\(^2\) See World Bank (2000), p. 8. All GDP and aid figures exclude South Africa which in 2005 accounted for 40% of SSA’s GDP, but only 6% of the population of school age and 5% of SSA’s aid for education.

\(^3\) E.g., “The Government of India refused the offer of substantial amount of aid for primary education until 1993 because of concerns that it would lose sovereignty over policy decisions. Even after that, aid was less than 2% of total expenditures on primary education”, UNESCO (2006), p. 98.
studies, e.g., UNESCO (2002), estimated that to reach EFA would require a much higher level of aid. Assuming that 50% of public education budgets are devoted to primary education (the FTI target), the World Bank estimate would imply 21% of the total education budget financed by aid in 2015. Aid levels already exceed this figure in some countries; see UNESCO (2006), p. 95.

The actual development of foreign and domestic funding during the period 1999-2005 (see above) means that the share of aid in total education funding declined from about 21% in 1999 to 15% in 1999. While rough, these estimates illustrate that measured in this way, the level of “dependency” depends crucially on the development of domestic funding. Statistically, the high budget growth during the 1999-2005 period is explained by the increase in GDP allocated to education (by about 55%), and by increased economic growth (by about 45%). While there is still some room in many countries for further increase in the share of GDP allocated to education, the dominant factor in the future development of aid dependency will be economic growth.

(b) Some uses of aid create more “dependency” than others. For the same level of aid, the extent to which aid represents a “dependency risk” depends on what it finances. For example:

- Increased use of “budget support” means that the share of teacher salaries financed by aid has increased, and that an abrupt reduction in aid could interrupt regular payment of teachers. In turn, this could pose political risks for the government including strikes, which could affect negatively students as well as the impact of earlier aid. One way to lessen this risk would be to increase aid predictability. However, this would need to be weighed against other objectives such as making aid more “performance-based”. Another way could be to use aid to finance items where interruption of aid would cause less risk;

- Support for capacity building could impact on “dependency” in different ways, depending on the type of aid provided. For example, to the extent that long-term resident technical assistance (TA) common in earlier periods tended to substitute for rather than build national capacity, this type of aid tended to increase dependency. On the other hand, strategic use of TA and foreign training to build national capacity (as has been done in many East Asian countries) could lessen dependency and reduce the need for future aid.

(c) What is the comparable advantage of aid over domestic funding? This question should be given more attention in the aid debate to help allocate aid to purposes, levels of education and countries where it can have the greatest impact.

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4 Based on GDP figures from World Bank (2008), and figures on aid and on GDP devoted to education from UNESCO (2007). It is not clear how much of the reported aid is included in the reported GDP spent on education. If all aid is not included, then this would tend to underestimate total education spending and thus overestimate the share of aid in this total. Estimates for the 1981-83 period range from 7% to 13% depending on what is counted, see World Bank (1988), pp. 102-105

5 In 1981-83, TA constituted 58% of bilateral aid and 44% of total aid, see World Bank (1988), p. 105.

6 For examples, see Fredriksen and Tan (2008), pp. 18-20.
Even untied aid is not completely “fungible” with domestic funding since governments may be willing to procure certain types of inputs (policy advice, technical support, costly but essential equipment) only if aid is available. Over time, many factors have influenced the existing aid allocation; comparative advantage may not have been a prominent one, especially for tied aid. Also, the international and national context in which aid operates has changed considerably in recent years. In short, there is a need to re-examine the comparative effectiveness of current aid allocation and use. For example:

- Given the rapid increase in domestic funding and resumed progress towards UPE, even in a context where EFA remains the overarching priority, is the comparative advantage of aid really to finance teacher salaries and primary school construction (the latter is one of the few areas where populations can contribute in kind) rather than e.g., policy development and investments to help build capacity to produce the type of post-primary skills needed to sustain fast-growing economies? In the same vein: should more aid be used to stimulate more attention to literacy programmes (primarily for women) and early childhood development?
- Given the rapid changes in the international aid architecture, with greater use of budget support and declining technical competence of many aid agencies, how should aid priorities change to ensure that increased financial aid is accompanied by high-quality technical support? More broadly, there is a need to re-examine whether the overall impact of education aid could not be enhanced by giving more attention to supporting technical cooperation among countries through south-south cooperation and technical networks, and strengthening regional and global technical institutions;
- Many countries have been successful in resuming both economic growth and rapid progress towards UPE. These countries may now be less dependent on aid to maintain their progress towards EFA than some countries which still are far from EFA due to e.g., a low starting point, continued economic stagnation, and civil strife. Should more predictable long-term technical and financing aid be channeled to these “fragile” countries to help accelerate their progress towards EFA? If so, how would that affect the objective of “performance-based” aid?

In summary, the aid dependency and sustainability risks associated with increased education aid depend closely on whether the renewed economic growth in SSA can be sustained. In turn, this depends on many factors including whether countries can develop education and training systems that respond better to national economic and social development needs. Countries and aid agencies need to give more attention to how aid can be more strategically allocated and used to achieve this objective. In the end, the more aid can help promote national development, the lower is the risk of aid creating harmful dependency and not being sustainable.

References

Growth Based Development and the Sustainability of Educational Access: Prospects for Ghana

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Keywords
Ghana, Educational Access, Sustainability

Summary
This article examines the sustainability of educational access in Ghana. It argues that it is the patterns of differential impact in terms of the benefits of growth and demand for education which present the greatest challenges for sustainable development of educational access.

Ghana is often regarded as one of the post-structural adjustment success stories of sub-Saharan Africa, both in terms of economic reform and educational provision. Growth has been steady since the 1980s, educational expansion rapid and broadly sustained, and poverty reduction in absolute terms tangible. Moreover, Ghana is one of few sub-Saharan African countries in which the ‘Education for All’ targets may be in view by 2015. These stylized facts naturally belie considerable intra-national variation; and it is arguably the patterns of differential impact in terms of the benefits of growth and demand for education which present the greatest challenges for sustainable development of educational access.
Although sustained, growth in Ghana through the 1990s and thereafter has been to a large extent of the ‘jobless’ variety; characterized by a shift in the labour market away from relatively well paid public sector employment in favour of typically lower paying informal economic activity (Rolleston and Oketch 2008). In 1999, 13.8 per cent of the workforce was employed where the returns to education are highest - in the formal wage sector (GSS 2000); a figure barely distinguishable from the 13.7 per cent reported in Philip Foster’s seminal work of the 1960s. Moreover, studies of manufacturing industry find no general increase in productivity or technical efficiency over the period since 1991 (Rankin et al 2002). Despite potentially falling benefits, participation in education has grown substantially. Only Uganda had a higher ratio of school enrolment expansion to wage employment growth in the 1990s than Ghana’s figure of 16 to 1. Not coincidentally perhaps, both countries experienced a period of strengthening democracy, doubtless a partial motivator for national administrations to make and deliver on pledges with widely shared benefits, including UPE. Rapidly expanding supply met with well-documented difficulties in Uganda, most notably concerning quality with obvious implications for the sustainability of access gains. When the poorest groups in Ghana are considered, however, despite reductions in certain cost barriers, there is surprisingly little evidence of access expansion at all in the period since 1991.

Net primary school enrolment rates in the lowest standard of living quintile in Ghana were 73 per cent for boys and 70 per cent for girls in 1998/9 and 69 per cent and 70 per cent respectively in 2005/6. Net secondary enrolment rates were 28 per cent for boys and 22 per cent for girls in the lowest quintile in 1998/9 and 22 per cent and 21 per cent in 2005/6 (GSS 2007). Economic growth since 1991 has been arguably no longer pro-poor. The average consumption level of poor households was 36 per cent below the poverty line in 1991/2, 35 per cent below in 1998/9 and 34 per cent below in 2005/6. Indeed, decomposition of poverty trends shows that the benefits of growth for the poor have been reduced by countervailing redistributive effects acting in favour of the non-poor. A parallel may be drawn in terms of schooling - for the richest quintile, enrolment in secondary schooling has risen from 41 per cent for girls and 49 per cent for boys in 1991/2 to 62 per cent and 55 per cent respectively in 2005-6.

Economic growth is increasingly and justifiably acknowledged as central to poverty reduction, not least in DFID’s recently launched 2008-13 Research Strategy, where it appears as the foremost theme. Educational development both contributes to growth and results from it but at the same time is not neutral with regard to growth modalities and trajectories. Educational development which is pro-growth is likely to be that which acts in favour of employment, and enhances productivity, both of labour and the other factors of production, largely by creating skills (see Palmer et al 2007). Equally, growth which is relatively skilled-labour intensive is likely to enhance the value of and demand for education, completing a potentially virtuous circle. The extent to which growth promotes educational access, however, depends upon how the benefits of growth are distributed, particularly where the obstacles to enrolment lie on the demand-side. Among the poorest in Ghana at least, relative exclusion from the benefits of growth and education not only threaten the sustainability of progress towards and the achievement of EFA, but also risk
entrenching exclusion yet further as higher standard of living groups continue to make gains in terms of educational achievement, widening the gap and thereby ‘kicking away’ the educational ladder.

References


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**Education and Training in a Model of Endogenous Growth with Creative Wear-and-Tear**

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**Keywords**  

**Summary**  
What is the relationship between human capital and technology-driven sustainable growth? In particular, how does the rate at which firms adopt new technologies affect the level of education and training of a country’s workforce? The effect of faster technological change is to increase the importance of general skill accumulation through education and to (re-) train more people for shorter periods of time.

There is a strong consensus in both the academic and anecdotal literature that human capital is an important determinant of productivity at the individual and at the aggregate level. At the macroeconomic level, in particular, there is evidence that human capital investments on the aggregate productivity growth does not only have a positive impact in the short run, but also in the long run, through their contribution to technological
progress, particularly through the creation and adoption of new technologies and the improvement of existing production processes. In this sense, human capital becomes the crucial element for a technology-driven sustainable growth, in which new, superior, technologies continuously replace existing ones, but also require people to continuously learn how to efficiently operate them.

The role of human capital for a sustainable economic growth has been particularly emphasised in the Lisbon strategy of the European Union aiming to take advantage of the growth and employment opportunities offered by new technologies through increased and more efficient investment in knowledge and human skills.

However, human capital as such encompasses different types of investments in people. The main economic literature studying the determinants of aggregate productivity growth generally focuses on a single dimension of human capital, i.e. education. However, since the seminal contribution of Becker (1964), labour economists have acknowledged the existence of other types of human capital, in particular the accumulation of technology-specific skills through learning-by-doing (Arrow, 1962), experience and, more generally, on-the-job training (Mincer, 1962). There are two central questions in studying the relationship between technology and human capital: how does the rate at which firms adopt new technologies affect the level of education and training of a country’s workforce? And, if technological change turns existing knowledge obsolete and the new technologies foster general, rather than firm-specific skills, what would be the optimum level of education spending be in the face of a faster arrival of new technologies?

We try to answer these questions by developing an endogenous growth model that borrows elements from Romer (1990), Aghion and Howitt (1992) and Ramsey (1928), and that combines private households investment in education with private firms investment in workplace training in a context of costly technology adoption and Schumpeterian creative destruction. In our model set-up, each production activity is time-consuming. The total amount of time available can be spent for three purposes: the accumulation of human capital, the production of goods and the production of new technologies. The labour time available can be subdivided in turn into training activities necessary for adopting the newest technology, and current intermediate goods manufacturing activities.

The accumulation of general knowledge occurs within the educational system, where people spend their time either as pupils or as teachers. We assume that teachers earn a competitive wage covered by fees paid by private households who, by accumulating human capital, expect to earn higher future wages in the labour market through higher labour efficiency and trainability. Technological knowledge is produced through R&D and is embodied in new intermediate goods that are patented and sold to final good producers. In line with Schumpeterian R&D-based endogenous growth models, we assume that the rate at which new designs arrive onto the market is the result of the time spent in research activities and the amount of education acquired by R&D workers. However, new technologies do not fully replace old ones, but instead drive the latter
technologies gradually out of the market, as in a ‘wear-and-tear’ process of knowledge obsolescence and profit erosion.

Finally, knowledge is used at the plant level for the production of intermediate goods. However, the arrival of a new intermediate requires workers first to learn how to use it effectively, through a time-consuming on-the-job training activity that is entirely financed by the firm.

In our model, education pervades the entire economy and plays three different roles. First, from a consumers’ point of view, more education means higher future labour earnings due to the higher trainability and efficiency of individuals. Second, from an R&D point of view, more education means higher arrival rates of new technologies and thus faster technological change. Third, from the point of view of the firm, more education means lower training costs, and thus the possibility to adopt new technologies sooner in time, thus bringing revenues forward in time.

As part of a general equilibrium setting, we introduce both the households’ educational choices – that are driven by the possibility to reap higher future wage rates – and the level of education as a factor that determines the productivity of R&D workers as well as that of high-skilled production workers. As a result, we obtain a hump-shaped relationship between the rate of technical change and the level of education, since time spent in the education system cannot be utilized either for final good production or for new technology production. This means that, on the one hand, it is possible to derive an optimum amount of education that maximizes the rate of technological change, while on the other hand, too much time spent in acquiring – or teaching - skills at school reduces the time available for production activities, thereby reducing the time and financial resources available for the production of future innovations. Moreover, a faster rate of technological change has two effects. On the one hand, it increases aggregate productivity growth while leaving the optimum level of education unchanged. On the other hand, it decreases the duration of training, whereas the number of people in the training phase increases. So the effect of a rise in R&D labour productivity is to (re-) train more people for shorter periods of time.

Interestingly, when we include households education decisions in the analysis, we see that the optimum private level of the duration of education, which is driven by their wish to earn higher future wages, is strictly below the growth maximising duration of education: from a growth perspective, therefore, households tend to under-invest in education. Similar results emerge when we look at the general equilibrium relationship between education and training. In this case we find that the observational complementarity between the duration of education and training turns into a U-shaped relationship, indicating observational substitutability for low levels of education-time and complementarity for higher levels of education-time. This observational substitutability arises from a general equilibrium effect that pushes up wages as the rise in the time devoted to education raises the growth rate of the economy and hence the demand for production labour. This also reduces the optimum duration of training.
We also observe that when technological change speeds up, the human capital composition of the workforce changes in favour of general education. Because a higher rate of innovation increases the number of people being (re-) trained, the number of workers available for direct production decreases, since the number of R&D workers increases. Nonetheless, output grows faster than before.

With respect to households’ education decisions, we find that the privately optimal level of training is higher than its growth maximising level, suggesting that households do not invest enough to minimize firms’ training costs, thus forcing producers to provide more training than would be necessary for maximizing growth. A change in education fees may alter the level of education such that training costs are reduced by more than training fees are lowered for households.

In summary, we reproduce the stylised fact that general skills become a more important a source of growth relative to technology-specific skills in times of faster technological change. Our model also corroborates the mixed nature of the relationship between general and specific training by showing conditions under which they act as substitutes and the conditions under which they behave like complements.

Our model shows that in times of increasing technical change, the optimum ‘portfolio-mix’ between education and training changes in favour of the former, since that provides a relatively solid basis for the development of technology-specific skills that are prone to creative destruction. However, when we “endogenise” education costs, we see that private households’ decisions regarding education seem to leave growth opportunities and training cost reductions unexploited, suggesting that there is room for public policy intervention.

Our model also suggests that the sustainability of growth, as exemplified by the relative permanence of the trend in growth as opposed to technology induced movements/fluctuations around that trend, would be directly affected by the portfolio-mix of education and training, even though we have focussed on the steady state (i.e. the ‘trend’), rather than the corresponding transitional dynamics (‘fluctuations around the trend’) to keep the model as simple as possible. However, the idea of ‘growth-risk-diversification’ by means of a careful composition of human capital portfolios seems to be an interesting and useful future extension of the general education and training framework that the present model provides.

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Further resources


A former working paper version is available as MERIT-Infonomics research memorandum n. 2005/11 (http://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/wp.php).
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Sustainability of Economies and of Education Systems

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I. Current Problems

Growth of output and consumption whilst maintaining (nearly) full employment remains the major stated target of government policy everywhere in all rich countries. Yet, even by traditional criteria, the pattern of growth of the last 25 years has been a failure. It has been less than in the previous 25 years; it has been more sporadic, and at various times and places negative; it has failed to generate full employment; and it has led to increased poverty and inequality, within and among countries, and especially between North and South.

In addition, the traditional view of growth as desirable has been increasingly questioned especially on environmental grounds. The unsustainable use of resources and environmental damage may mean that the uncounted costs of growth outweigh any benefits. Moreover, the benefits are questionable given the failure of the ‘trickle down’ approach from the rich to the poor.

Essentially the main aim of policy should refocus on the extent to which different forms of activity actually generate benefits in terms of human welfare. There is no problem, in principle, in equating welfare with what citizens want for themselves and for their community, the problem is the belief that these preferences can be adequately expressed in ‘free’ markets (or in parliamentary elections). Individually and collectively, we need to be able to take a broader (and more long term) view than those mechanisms permit. Whilst this argument is applicable to both poor and rich countries, the problem arises among the rich rather than the poor, so that this note is concerned with economies in the over-serviced societies of the North rather than the South.

Many will share some or all of this critique of the current mess: environmental damage, alienating and precarious employment and obsessive over-consumption. But it is easy to criticise, and exhortations to somehow ‘do it differently’ are unlikely to be effective. In order to respond adequately to the interrelated problems of consumption, employment and the environment, the whole framework through which we evaluate progress has to be changed from a system dominated by monetary aggregates such as GNP to focus on welfare and equity.

1.1 The Failure of Growth Policies

1.1.1. The Environmental Problems

The concerns most in the public eye have varied, from dependence on non-renewable fossil fuels for energy in the 1970s to climate change, bio-diversity and other "global"
problems in the 1990s. But, whatever the specific concern, the perceived crisis has become more serious.

One sign of this is the development of an "establishment environmentalism" from 1987 (the Brundtland report) onwards, which seeks to preserve growth and profits while minimising environmental damage, or offloading it on those least able to complain and whose willingness to pay is least. Proposed technological solutions mitigate the immediate problem but do not alter the fundamental problem of depreciation of available resources for future generations.

1.1.2. Employment and Work

Whilst ecological costs are probably large they are not so large and so certain that we can ignore other costs and benefits of the output-driven agenda. Much of current production is ‘useless’ in terms of contributing to human welfare and, inasmuch as it is labour directed by someone else, inherently dissatisfying and often frustrating. Also paid employment is not, in general, an appropriate way to carry out many socially necessary functions (e.g. caring).

It needs to be remembered that the post World War II emphasis on full employment – with unemployment as something to be avoided - was a new invention. Indeed, in the first half of the century, at least until the 1930s (with its well-remembered recession), the emphasis was more on how new inventions and technologies would allow us to develop the leisured utopia. At the same time, for many theorists, work has been seen as alienating for a very long time. Now, not only do many people fear unemployment, but their current jobs may generate stress and sometimes may ruin their lives. Understanding how the emphasis has now come to be on ‘full employment’ (in inverted commas because it is never actually achieved) requires acrobatic logic of ‘Simpsonesque’ proportions.

1.1.3 Consumption and Welfare

For mainstream economists, consumers express their preferences by choosing freely what to buy. Presumably therefore – on that view - what they buy contributes to their welfare and observed market behaviour demonstrates that everyone prefers greater consumption, so that their welfare improves as a result. It is recognised that there are market failures – including various subsidies and taxation – but they are seen as rare and exceptional. However, there are serious grounds for arguing that increased consumption is, of itself, generating less consumer benefit or welfare. In particular, there are many types of goods and services where there can only ever be limited consumer benefit, however much is spent (these are called positional goods): an obvious example is houses in sought-after locations. There is much evidence that increased consumption does not improve welfare: from opinion surveys, from historical and cross-cultural studies, and from studies of how markets fail to reflect preference adequately.
1.1.4 ‘Joined Up’ Thinking

Of course, these kinds of issues have been raised by many authors (e.g. Dauncey 1983; Gorz 1994; Hirsch 1977; Sachs 1992); but our particular approach is to link the three problems of environmental damage, employment and over-consumption. That is the basis for the argument here. If ecological risks are negligible, perhaps we should continue on the present path, given it is politically easier. If (paid) work is so good for us, we should probably just look for more labour-intensive patterns of production. If ever greater consumption is essential to our well-being, then the ecological and employment costs may well be worth suffering, or at least we should focus our efforts on mitigating those costs.

This is a kind of ‘cost-benefit analysis’ of alternative development paths: the benefits are what currently counts as welfare; and the costs are ecological damage and unpleasant (largely employed) human labour. But not, of course, the official kind of Cost-Benefit Analysis with its (often imputed) monetary valuations, spurious precision and rule of thumb decision-making by technocrats, replacing democratic control. The whole framework of thinking about policy in terms of output growth is misguided; policies and trends need to be assessed according to their contribution to welfare measured in human terms.

1.1.5 Inequalities at Home and Abroad

Not only are these three problems inter-linked, their impact on the rich and poor in society tends to be cumulative. Those who suffer most pollution tend also to have the worst and/or insecure jobs and can barely meet their basic needs. And the sporadic economic growth that we have experienced has not ‘trickled down’ from the rich to the poor: instead, further liberalisation is generating greater income inequality with the poor finding themselves obliged to work as personal servants for the rich, travelling further in degraded public transport and having even less time for life outside work.

Moreover, a global approach to ecological problems is necessary if we are to understand and appreciate the limits that these place on expansion of economic activity. The fact that various ecological ills – for example deforestation or soil erosion - are experienced most often in poor countries, or at least the consequences are most serious there, is often blamed on the activities of people in those countries. In a further twist, since some of these ills may also have consequences for the rich countries this can be used to justify dictating policy to the poor countries concerned. Never mind that the real ecological disaster zones are the rich countries, nor that most of the damage stems from satisfying rich country customers.

This is also rather obvious and well documented (see for example Sachs 1993). Along with many others, we therefore reject the globalisation of ecological issues which consists

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7 And, why pay people if they are enjoying it so much?
in giving the rich the right to decide how the poor are to "solve" ecological problems. The solutions are addressed to the rich countries that are responsible for the problems in the first place. In other words we need to "think global, act local", in contrast with establishment environmentalists, whose motto seems to be exactly the opposite.

1.2 How Do We Move Forward

1.2.1 Will Current Approaches Work?

A variety of conventional possible solutions have been tried, which presume (usually implicitly rather than explicitly) ever-increasing consumption. Despite the emphasis on 'joined-up government', connections and contradictions are often ignored: a spectacular example is the UK government's strategy for sustainable development that both promotes continued output growth and argues for reduction in environmental damage.

The core problem is the ever-increasing consumption and output-oriented growth itself. Policies should be evaluated in terms of their contribution to welfare; how does production contribute to quality of life, without damaging the environment, paying specific attention to those currently at the 'bottom of the heap'. This does not mean fiscal tools (e.g. interest rates and money supply) for managing growth; it means a different path of development.

Also, unlike many proposals by environmentalists, this does not imply sacrifices to be made in the name of sustainability. On the contrary, the current ecological crisis is an opportunity to rethink what the costs and benefits of consumerism really are, and arguing that the costs far outweigh the benefits. There have been many movements that have rejected consumerism. The problem is that, often, the particular focus of those groups has been turned into new market opportunities. A new framework is needed to assess policy and to promote a shift from the current situation where individual employment is detrimental to individual welfare 'compensated' by over-consumption, and where both relative income and consumption have negative impacts through environmental damage on collective well-being; to a collective, eco-friendly and relaxed society where individual employment has neutral impact on welfare and individual consumption contributes to individual welfare, and where income equality and relationships together with neutral environmental impact contribute to collective well-being.

1.2.2 Back to Basics: Defining Welfare

The problem is what is meant by welfare. Welfare is inherently multi-dimensional and that - apart from the elimination of absolute poverty in terms of basic education, food, unnecessary risks to health, shelter and water, both in our countries and in those we have exploited for so long - the diversity of people’s circumstances, must be respected. Beyond those absolute minima, therefore, people have the right to decide for themselves what their welfare means, but we do not believe that either the market or the ballot box allows them to do that adequately. The former only allows for a very crude one-dimensional (monetary) expression of relative preference and is inequitable (because of
income inequality), whilst the latter is an alienating form of participation but also provides hardly any choice. At the same time, consumer tastes are not as idiosyncratic as economists often imply; there is a core of social concerns around which, surveys suggest, there is widespread agreement.

The implications of adopting such a welfare framework for current policies rather than privileging output orientation in a number of sectors are illustrated in our book (Carr-Hill and Lintott, 2002); they are substantial. In particular, a set of reductions in consumption of goods and services can be identified which (1) make little or no contribution to welfare and (2) whose production is labour intensive or (3) environmentally damaging. This list can be used to make some preliminary assessment of the impact of reducing consumption (without reducing welfare) upon current damaging levels of environmental emissions and jobs using the Environmental Input Output tables and the Annual Employment Survey. The overall conclusion was that there could be a fourfold cut in consumption and production with no reduction in useful output and therefore individual and collective welfare; and with considerably reduced environmental impact which would probably be sustainable.

2. Implications for Education Systems

Education has a large positional element, where it neither ‘educates for life’ nor trains for a specific job, but acts merely as a system of selection for jobs. It also has a large ideological component - including inculcating a work-and-consume ethic – which mainly makes it part of the ‘repair and maintenance’ of the system. Some early education has a child minding role, so that less would be required (from the formal economy) if adults - especially men, most of whom have managed to avoid the bulk of child care - had more (non-employed) time. Some other (currently formal) education might be better done informally (Illich, 1973).

There is a steady inflation of qualifications. Current policies and a variety of other pressures (such as the positional pressures associated with status discussed above) encourage that trend and mean that further qualifications - however irrelevant to living a satisfying life or indeed to performing the job for which they are sought - are in ever greater demand.

We do not envisage substantial cuts in primary or in most of secondary education, because they do perform important socialising functions. However there are many reasons to change what socialisation is done and how. There is a strong case to be made for altering the nature of learning, making it far less focused than it currently is on examinations. Less pressurised teaching for those examinations would reduce the amount of ‘cramming’ and the pressure on teachers including all the artificial paraphernalia of punitive inspection and formalised quality assurance, and allow time and space for more enjoyable learning. Indeed, at primary level, where the final welfare outcomes are capacity to communicate (through language and speech) and socialisation, the focus should be more on enjoyment than on learning (Carr-Hill, 1984)! At secondary level, some of the socialisation is more oriented towards disciplining for the job market
than for how people can live fulfilling and tolerant lives in company with others, and so can be eliminated.

At a tertiary level, one would want to move as quickly as possible to learning for its own sake, rather just than for qualifications, although exceptions for training for professional and technical skills would be made, and these may still require some form of examinations. On the whole, however, we believe that much of current resources expended on the tertiary system are dispensable; and, in the overall analysis, we suggested a cut of 50% of resources in education, i.e. a less radical cut than in overall consumption.

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We realise that these are Swiftian / utopian proposals; and, in the book, we make a number of practical suggestions of what can be done now along the lines of ‘Consumers (Students) of the World Relax; you have nothing to lose but your Retail Therapy (Qualification) Chains’.

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A growing demand for secondary and tertiary education ill-adapted to the possibilities of most countries today

[From the Pôle de Dakar, Education for All in Africa, Chapter 6: Financial Sustainability in the development of secondary and tertiary education. Ed]

The increasing number of pupils completing primary education today and their desire to continue education beyond this level1combine to place mechanical pressure on post-primary education that few African countries are sufficiently prepared for today. Indeed, most African countries experienced an upward trend in enrolments in secondary and
tertiary education, after primary completion, towards the end of the 1990's, but this was not accompanied by the construction of more classrooms and lecture halls and the recruitment of new teachers on the same scale at these levels of education. This has resulted in conditions deteriorating in these levels of education. In addition, the (quite legitimate) accent placed on attaining Universal Primary Education (UPE) has been accompanied in some African countries by poor anticipation of the consequences of the massification of primary schooling on post-primary levels in sectoral programming and/or in the implementation of educational strategies in some sub-Saharan countries.

Today, many arguments are put forward to justify, not only an expansion in universal education to nine or ten years, but also the access of more young people to tertiary education in Africa. Regarding universal education of nine or ten years, some of the arguments, related to the constitution of human capital and economic development, are similar to those expressed several years ago to justify the promotion of UPE insofar, as the social effects after six years of schooling are further enhanced and consolidated with ten years schooling (cf. chapter 7). At the same time, some observers consider that UPE could, in time, carry the seeds of its «own destruction», thus putting the development of the educational pyramid as a whole at risk if it were to turn out that many young people could not go beyond primary education. In addition, today's society, based on information and knowledge, requires each country to have a critical mass of qualified human resources in order to ensure its development. Indeed, tertiary education produces fundamental expertise for the key development sectors (health, education, governance, private sector development, research development).

Will post-primary education in Africa be able to respond positively to a large share of this potential demand as it has done so far? In other words, are these rates of expansion (especially in upper secondary and in tertiary education) appropriate (considering the already unsatisfactory conditions of education and of supervision of students in many countries), realistic as to the economy (considering the low job opportunities available in the productive sectors on the one hand, and national development priorities on the other hand), and financially sustainable and possible in real terms (considering the number of places to be created and of teaching staff to be recruited and trained) even if the financial resources were to be available? Such are the questions that this chapter tries to answer.

This chapter draws on earlier work carried out by the Pôle de Dakar with the intention of providing factual information based on the latest available data on rates of expansion in post-primary education and the financial consequences of same per country, in order to enlighten national policy decision-makers as to relevant choices to be made in programming development policies for their education system. The different questions will be broached in turn for general secondary education in the first part of this chapter and for tertiary education in the second part.

This valuable source on the sustainability of education in Africa was drawn to my attention by Norberto Bottani, formerly of CERI, OECD. [Ed.]
EDUCATION, SKILLS AND GROWTH: THE ENVIRONMENT AND RESEARCH CHALLENGES
Education, Skills, Sustainability and Growth: Complex Relations

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For many developing countries since the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in 1990, and more especially since the Dakar World Forum on Education in 2000, and the elaboration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) later that same year, there has been an international concern to assist their reaching the six Dakar Targets. While there has been some very thorough work on analysing progress towards these Dakar Goals (e.g. the Global Monitoring Reports on Education for All [EFA]), there has been much less attention to the sustainability of these externally-assisted achievements. Will countries which have been assisted to reach universal primary education be able to sustain this when development assistance is terminated? It is not therefore just a question of whether the world is ‘on track’ to reach the Dakar Goals, but whether individual countries have an economic and political environment that will continue to secure their achievement. Intimately connected to that challenge is an assessment of what is available after school to the millions of young people who have been persuaded to enter and complete basic education. What has happened to the labour market environment, and especially to the nature of work in the widespread urban and rural informal economy, during the years that countries have been encouraged to focus on the achievement of the Dakar Goals?

Equally, in the sphere of technical and vocational skills development (TVSD), there has been a recognition that this sector has come back on to the agenda of development partners as well as of many national governments, especially in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (NORRAG NEWS, 2007; King and Palmer, 2007). Arguably, however, there is a connection between the emphasis on EFA over the last 15 years, and the re-emergence of TVSD. Policy-makers in aid agencies and in national governments have been aware that the very success of EFA has been producing some of the largest cohorts of young school leavers ever recorded in some countries, and this has generated an intense debate about ‘Education for what?’ as well as on the role of skills provision as one response to the challenge. But, valuable though TVSD may be for school-leavers, it too is not a guarantee of work or of a job, whether in the formal or informal sectors. There is no automatic connection amongst school, skill and work.

Policy attention has begun to shift, therefore, to an examination of what are the enabling environments in which EFA and TVSD can lead sustainably to poverty reduction and growth (Palmer, 2008). If there is no change in the productivity of work in the informal sector, and if foreign direct investment remains miniscule for many developing countries, what will be the impact on families who have invested in the education and training of their children over this last decade and more? Will they sustain these investments for

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8 TVSD is an alternative to the more usual technical and vocational education and training (TVET). TVSD capture both the older sense of technical and vocational expertise, as well the newer and more general term, skills development.
their younger children if school and skill do not lead to improved economic outcomes for the older ones?

This note addresses the question of whether the last 18 years since Jomtien have witnessed an element of unsustainable financing of education and training. Has there been insufficient attention, in the focus on the six Dakar Goals, on the wider investments in agriculture, industry, and infrastructure that the Commission for Africa (2005) and the UN Millennium Project (2005) have argued are necessary accompaniments to the securing of the MDGs?

Evidence needs to be reviewed from a series of Asian countries, as well as from Africa. Particular attention needs to be paid to China for the lessons that can be learnt from what it terms 'development-oriented poverty reduction' in its own poorer Western provinces.

It may be useful initially, however, to explore and clarify whether the current UN discourse about education for sustainable development, or about TVET, or literacy, for sustainable development, has any connection with our concerns here about sustainable financing for education and training. That discourse then needs to be related conceptually to the discourse on aid dependency, with its intimate connection to sustainable national financing of education, training and other social goals. And that in turn leads straight back to the issue of continued economic growth at the country level. Which tends not to look at the character of this economic growth in terms of environmental sustainability. Thus, it is suggested, here, that there is a set of key discourses that need to be connected (and interrogated) if any sense is to be made of the pursuit, simultaneously of the MDGs on the one hand, raising the levels of aid for developing countries, on the other, but also reducing aid dependency, through maintaining or increasing national levels of economic growth. It appears that the general term, ‘sustainable development’, is a convenient envelope which actually can contain a series of frequently conflicting goals, and not least the pursuit of financial sustainability and environmental sustainability, at the same time.

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Growth, Development, EFA, and the MDGs

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For over half a century, economic growth has been the central feature of dominant views of development. Social progress has been seen as facilitated and constrained by the degree of a nation’s economic growth. There has been widespread recognition, even within the dominant neoliberal development paradigm, that economic growth has not been sufficient to achieve basic social goals. Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were the results of this recognition, the frustration with the slow pace of progress, and a commitment to move more rapidly in key sectors.

From the beginning of concerns with development, critics have pointed out the limits of the focus on economic growth. A key issue has been equity, but many other issues have been raised around the social and ethical meanings of development. Competing paradigms to a focus on economic growth-based development have emerged. The measurement and meaning of economic growth have been directly challenged by ideas of sustainable development. The meanings of sustainable development itself are contested, ranging from ones that require minimal adjustment to economic growth-based approaches to others that require a radical transformation of our global economy (Daly and Cobb, 1994).

Economic growth-based development has also been challenged from other directions. A human rights-based development approach has enjoyed significant popularity in the last few decades. One could even argue that EFA and the MDGs came to fruition as a result of the human rights movement, even though both EFA and the MDGs have been criticized for their neglect of a human rights framework (Klees and Thapliyal, 2007; Chan, 2006). Economic growth-based development has also been challenged by perspectives associated with the anti-globalization movement, or as movement proponents like to call it, the alter-globalization movement (Cavanagh and Mander, 2002). These perspectives raise fundamental questions about in whose interest growth operates and, by extension, about the extent to which EFA and the MDGs represent serious commitments to social progress.

The nature of EFA goals has been constrained (Torres, 2000). For example, before Jomtien, the World Bank told other participants in the EFA planning process that the focus had to be on primary education; adult education could not be included, or the Bank would withdraw its support. Nonetheless, at Jomtien, pressure by NGOs and others led to attention to adult education as part of EFA goals. In practice, however, the attention since then has almost exclusively been focused on attaining universal primary education (UPE) and, in the Dakar meeting revisions, and in the MDGs, UPE has become the centerpiece.9

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9 The original EFA goals talked of basic education, not primary education, but this too got narrowed.
The original EFA goals envisioned UPE by 2000. This has been postponed to 2015, in keeping with the MDGs. However, it is clear today to all analysts that under current efforts the goal will not be even close to being fulfilled in 2015 (nor will any of the other MDGs concerning poverty, health, gender equity, and the environment). According to a recent estimate, 67 countries will not reach UPE by 2015 (Glewwe and Zhao, 2006). Moreover, some worry that even some of the 30 countries projected to be on track to achieve UPE by 2015 will not do so. The projection is based on a maintained economic and political commitment by both rich and poor countries that may not be forthcoming. Add to this picture the fact that UPE goals and promises have been unsuccessfully made every decade since the 1960s.

So what is happening here? Hans Weiler (1984) called it compensatory legitimation; more colloquially, I see it as a form of good cop, bad cop. Shaky and poorly-performing economies, increasing poverty and inequality, widespread conflicts, and the equivalent of structural adjustment policies everywhere, all call into question the legitimacy of the social order – this is the bad cop. To compensate for this, our system of neoliberal globalization must introduce polices, for example, EFA and the MDGs, aimed at ameliorating some problematic conditions and thus restoring a degree of legitimacy – this is the good cop. This argument does not question the good intentions of the proponents of these policies but does question their effects. Simply having these policies may be sufficient compensatory legitimation; fulfilling them, judging by past experience, seems to be less important. This does not have to be so. We could achieve UPE and the rest of the MDGs in a very few years if we were willing to devote the kind of resources and attention that go into current priorities, like the Iraq War. **Sustainability is a policy choice.**

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Globalisation: An Impediment to Sustainable Educational Development in Sub-Saharan African Countries

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Presently, globalisation fails to address and rather deepens the social and economic disparities that exist between people, nations, regions and continents, creating many more losers than winners in the process. More specifically, in its current form, it is an obstacle to the development of a sustainable education sector in developing countries, particularly the sub-Saharan African nations whose economic resources—though by no means its natural ones—are significantly restricted. In order to understand how globalisation affects education it is necessary to outline the key aspects of globalisation, to acknowledge the forces that shape its processes and consequences, and to evaluate its results, not only in terms of economic growth and affluence, but also in terms of its positive and negative effects on society as a whole: what is also called distributive outcomes.

Globalisation, an intricate phenomenon that defies a simple definition, could be understood as a process which allows global exchange of goods, services and capital, but which brings substantial benefits to some while very few to others. Sustainable (educational) development enables countries or citizens to meet their fundamental (educational) needs and enjoy a good standard of living in a manner that will not jeopardise the essential (educational) needs and good quality life of future generations. However, the impact of globalisation on countries in sub-Saharan Africa has been otherwise. It is a complex phenomenon that has been made even more so by the effects of imperialism, neo-colonisation and neoliberalism, all of which have contributed to the dismantling of sovereignty and cooperative machinery. As a result, the market (along with other hegemonic powers in the case of sub-Saharan African countries) usurps states’ control of education and differentially transforms their economic and political authority. While developed countries seem to benefit immensely from this alteration, the developing ones emerge as the unfortunate ones experiencing imperialistic tendencies in their relations with the former. Abdi argues that globalisation in this sense evolves from colonialism, which demolished the appropriate indigenous systems of education in
Africa, and imposed an incongruous and inadequate western systems of education designed not to engender personal/human development, but serve as an instrument that maintains the scheme of colonialism. To him, globalisation represents “current imperialism”, a “benign colonialism” that continues to undermine the development of Africa and Africans and therefore, “not designed…to develop the African people, and its educational prescriptions are making the situation worse for African children and other learners…”

Most developing nations, particularly those in Africa, have a weak political and economic position in the geography of globalisation, and are unable to compete with the powerful nations of the industrialised world. In other words, they are made powerless before an overpowering force, although Dale would like to suggest otherwise. The social role of developing states in different sectors, such as education, should normally be geared towards mitigating social costs and protecting the marginalised or vulnerable masses, but it is often severely undermined. The neo-liberal macro-policies (including the current Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)) prescribed by the World Bank/IMF with the support of bilateral donors and Northern non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for a number of countries in Africa, demand that governments curtail their spending on higher education while enforcing cost-sharing. This has led to the commodification and privatization of education and the fact that it is no longer seen as a social benefit but an economic advantage, only from the point of view of profit that can be gained by investors in education. The result is a restriction of access of the poor to higher education, hence undermining poverty reduction, and a weakening of the role of tertiary institutions as mind trainers and knowledge generators for Africa’s development. The disinvestment of the state undermined not just educational opportunities, but also knowledge production in general, which has an impact on Africans being able to develop their own paradigms of development and social change. Unfortunately, the uncritical adoption of neo-liberal macroeconomic policies is a precondition for donor-recipient relations in most African countries. These policies under neoliberalisation, a process Harvey considers “hegemonic” and labels “creative destruction”, constitute a blatant and concrete example of the imperialistic elements in globalisation. Some critics have argued that the elements of participation and ownership, which have been claimed to be the bastion of the PRSPs, remain “technologies of control”, given that both in effect blur and depoliticise the power dynamics between rich-poor, winner-loser, lender-borrower and donor-recipient relations. As one writer puts it, the rhetoric of participation and ownership seems to be forging a nervous alliance between international financial institutions (IFIs), international donors and Western NGOs whose quest probably is to transform African nations “in their own self-image” with the aim of guaranteeing, “a stable consensus for liberal systems of economic and political management, and legitimating the increasingly intrusive supervision of African political communities by Northern actors”. Significantly, a World Development Movement study of the PRSPs of fifty countries revealed that seventy per cent of them included trade liberalisation measures, which weakened the economic freedom and growth of these countries. Regrettably, the egoism and corrupt activities of most African governments prevent them from operating from a moral and critical base in an attempt to perceptively analyse this situation in order to challenge it and make sound (educational) choices so as to protect the interests of ordinary citizens in their nation-
states. Tikly puts it succinctly: “the complicity of local elites in externally driven reform agendas; and, the weak capacity of the state to play a more proactive role in defining alternative strategies” represent some of the problems that need to be tackled.

Essentially, globalisation in its current condition represents a hindrance to the sustainable development of any sector in most African nations because it fails to promote social equity and economic growth, both of which are necessary preconditions for a sustainable development of the education sector. The ability to develop any sector of contemporary society effectively and in a sustainable manner depends largely on the amount and efficient management of resources available. However, globalisation, in its present form is mainly controlled by its powerful agents, and tends to sap the economic, political and intellectual energy of most sub-Saharan African countries. Nevertheless, this pessimism could be transformed if most leaders of sub-Saharan African nations would sit up and take notice, find ingenious ways of recasting and re-culturing the theory and praxis of African education, as well as identifying and firmly adapting aspects of the globalisation process that could work in their countries’ favour. Perhaps, it is not all doom and gloom after all!

Skills Development, Employment and Sustained Growth in Ghana: Sustainability Challenges [1]

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Keywords
Ghana, Skills Development, Employment, Sustained Growth, Sustainability Challenges

Summary
Against a backdrop of some two decades of sustained economic growth in Ghana, this article argues that there are a series of sustainability challenges related to technical and vocational skills development that need to be addressed.

Trade, rapid advances in science and technology, and intensified economic competition have shaped the demand for skills in countries worldwide. Ghana is no exception. Technical and vocational skills development (TVSD), delivered through public and private schools, vocational training institutes and informal apprenticeships, continues to be seen by the Government of Ghana as an important link to employment, and as a means to promote economic growth and reduce poverty in the country.
Since the mid-1980s Ghana has experienced sustained gross domestic product growth in the 4 to 5 % range and has seen large average reductions in poverty levels. Nonetheless, concerns exist as to whether skill deficits have or may become a constraint to Ghana’s sustained growth and capacity for reducing poverty.

The New Education Reform, which was launched in September 2007, includes TVSD components which, together, have the goal of making Ghana’s TVSD system more accessible, of better quality and more relevant to the needs to industry and sustained socio-economic development.

Against a backdrop of some two decades of sustained economic growth in Ghana, there are a series of sustainability challenges related to TVSD that need to be addressed:

- Promoting the sustainability of education-for-all achievements through expanding post-basic education and TVSD;
- Identifying sustainable financing mechanisms for an expansion of TVSD;
- Promoting and sustaining equitable access;
- Ensuring that expansion in quantity does not lead to a compromise on the achievement and sustainability of quality and relevance issues;
- Promoting the sustainability of TVSD expansion by widening opportunities for lifelong learning;
- Creating an enabling environment for skills utilization through sustainable employment growth.

The New Patriotic Party’s (NPP) first term of office (2001-2004) did not bring about the kind of visible ‘positive change’ that much of the population expected. Now, almost at the end of its second term, the NPP face significant pressure noticeably to improve living standards and to follow-through on job creation pledges or else risk losing the December 2008 elections. The effect such political pressure will have on addressing the policy challenges noted above is potentially a concern. The impact this pressure has already had on policy formation and implementation has perhaps already been seen in the highly politicized Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (2002-2005), the launching of the over-hyped and potentially unsustainable National Youth Employment Programme (in 2006) and the moves towards developing a New Apprenticeship Programme in 2008. These all appear to be manifestations of emerging populist policies.

Notes

Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Meeting the challenge of sustainable development

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The major challenge in the world today is to find ways of living and working sustainably, so that the reasonable needs and wants of people from all walks of life and in all countries can be satisfied without so over-exploiting the natural resources upon which all life depends that the ability of future generations to meet their need and wants is threatened.

Finding approaches to development that balance economic and social progress, address cultural differences, and respect ecological values and limits is the key to sustainable development. Moving towards this goal requires fundamental changes in human attitudes and behaviour – in our personal lives, in our community activities, and in our places of work. Successfully making these changes is critically dependent on education and training.

TVET takes on a complex and distinctive character with regard to sustainable development. This is because – both directly and indirectly – TVET produces and consumes resources, as well as affects attitudes towards sustainability held by future workers. The manner in which production and consumption are managed can either contribute to sustainability or to practices and conditions that are not sustainable. During education and training, the greater the exposure of trainees to sustainable concepts, practices and examples, the more likely it is that the desired workplace culture change will take place in the future.

As both a consumer and a producer of resources, or more accurately a sector involved in the transformation of resources, TVET has multiple concerns about sustainability. The over-exploitation of natural resources, ill-health and poverty can all threaten the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs and wants. The challenge for TVET is to re-orient and re-direct its curricula to imbue students and trainees with respect for the conservation and sustainable use of resources, social equity and appropriate development, along with competencies to practice sustainable tasks at the workplaces of today and tomorrow.

Similarly, in a labour market undergoing the transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age – involving considerable job shift, re-training, and dislocation of workers – the maintenance of currency in the labour market also assumes importance with regard to the sustainability of employment. In some advanced economies the proportion of workers with less than secondary school completion and those with diplomas has reversed during the past decade. The adult and continuing TVET provided to workers in jeopardy of job loss can result in sustainable employment that will also impact upon their children’s futures.

In addition, the growing significance of sustainability is having major impacts upon business and industry. Many companies are now not only reporting the results of their
economic achievements to their shareholders and community stakeholders, but also the impacts of their social and environmental record through a system known as “triple-bottom-line” reporting. Many new industries and employment opportunities are also being developed, e.g. in ecotourism, environmental monitoring, sustainable community development, eco-design, recycling, land rehabilitation, pollution control, waste water treatment and reuse, etc. All require skilled workers who have knowledge of – and commitment to – sustainability, as well as the requisite technical knowledge. This is creating new roles and courses in TVET.

These trends lead to questions about the curriculum changes needed to integrate sustainable development into TVET. Three potential strategies are:

To include sustainable development concepts in all courses for everyone (“TVET for All”)
To enhance focus upon sustainable development in occupationally relevant areas, e.g., water, auto repair, fabrication, carpentry, forestry, mining, ICTs, service sectors, etc
To indicate that new jobs will become available in sustainability industries

The inclusion of sustainable development in all courses can be built upon the traditional TVET practices in which skilled tradespeople taught apprentices to repair, re-use, and recycle materials and components at all levels in both developed and developing nations. Rural TVET has always operated upon these principles, especially in developing nations. Some TVET institutional practices and procedures require re-orientation to foster sustainability.

The inattention to sustainable development in some occupations is evident in the adoption of modular technology. Rather than repair components, it is easier to replace an entire module. This contributes to environmental degradation and the waste of resources and raises questions whether the price of “progress” is too high? In developing nations, where replacement components are either unavailable or too expensive, procurement and stocking of modular replacement parts may be well beyond budgetary limits. Further, the question of how to dispose of replaced modular components raises issues of potential environmental damage, on the one hand and suggests development of recycling potential, on the other hand.

The generation of jobs in new sustainability industries, such as re-cycling, needs to be stressed – and both legislative and curricular provision added to TVET to develop future employees in such industries. Many new industries and employment opportunities are also being developed, e.g. in ecotourism, environmental monitoring, sustainable community development, eco-design, recycling, land rehabilitation, pollution control, waste water treatment and reuse, recharging computer printer ink cartridges, etc.

Book Overview

Work, Learning and Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges is a collection of 37 chapters that illustrate the many ways in which Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can contribute to quality skills development for economically viable, environmentally sound and sustainable communities. As such, the book is the first that provides a comprehensive overview of the way countries, education systems and institutions have responded to the call for an integration of learning for work, citizenship and sustainability at the Second International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education which was held in Seoul in 1999. Discussions on the central theme of the Seoul Conference - lifelong learning and training for all, a bridge to the future” led to the conclusion that a new paradigm of both development and TVET was needed.

The chapters are organised in four sections. The first canvasses recent thinking about development and begins to ask questions about what the emphases on conservation, human rights, equality and justice, peace and democracy in current thinking about sustainable human development might mean for TVET. The chapters ask questions about the implications of major global trends for sustainable human resource development and about the approaches to development that would be followed ‘if the planet and its people really mattered’. The answers to these questions lead to a consideration of the contrasting discourses of ‘productivism’ and ‘ecologism’ possible within TVET.

The chapters in Section 2 examine how TVET is responding to such new thinking about development. These chapters trace the ways in which important new themes and issues have risen in prominence in discussions about the nature, purpose and scope of TVET. These include themes and issues such as sustainable development, sustainable livelihoods, social sustainability, gender, Education for All, basic education, cross-cultural understanding and intercultural education, entrepreneurship and rural development. These issues are placed within discussions about the changing history and purposes of technology as a focus in education.

Section 3 provides case studies of experiences in a wide range of countries where efforts are being made to reorient TVET for sustainable development. The countries include, alphabetically, Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, China, Germany, India, South Africa and the UK while the case studies provide examples of actions ranging form the levels of national policy and development assistance to curriculum development and review.

Section 4 continues the exploration of case studies begun in Section 3 but, instead of a national perspective, the chapters in Section 4 examine different ways in which the reorientation of TVET for sustainable development is being supported and enhanced. This includes examples of the development of principles of practice, support for school enterprises, the preparation of new curriculum resources, government-college covenants and innovative approaches to evaluation.
Donor Community Development Initiatives & The MDGs:
Past Imperfect – Future Conditional

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Summary: Ongoing publicity and hype surround the claimed increases in aid spending and measures aimed at addressing the Millennium Development Goals by the countries of the OECD. With reference to the often negative evaluation of past projects, the author questions what the reality is behind the rhetoric. More importantly, this note examines what conditions are likely to influence whether current and future initiatives in the area of sustainable education development will be any more successful.

Keywords: Aid projects; donor community policies; OECD; e-learning; donor recipient needs.

Not for one minute can anyone doubt the sentiment or rationale behind the MDG declaration. However when 2015 comes around, realistically, how will we know whether the goals have been achieved? Of course there will be a flurry of positive pronouncements by the leaders of the ‘big hitters’ countries of the OECD about the increased volume of aid given or pledged. But the inevitable reality is that a further target, likely to be 2025 (DI, 2007), will be adopted to continue the fight. Despite political posturing about the volume of aid, in real terms and as a percentage of the economies as a whole in countries such as the USA, France and the UK, in 2002 it was less than it was during the 1970s (German & Randel, 2002). In fact the decline in aid throughout the 1990s was so significant that as recently as 2005 it had only just reached the level that it was at a decade earlier (Hirvonen, 2005), so one should treat such pronouncements with caution. The hype surrounding the Gleneagles’ summit of G8 countries of that same year, made all the more visible by the laudable Geldof and Bono inspired ‘Live 8’ series of simultaneous international musical events, inevitably spawned a new wave of pledges and donor community initiatives. The history of events following such summits tells a less than positive story however. In 1992, the year of the ‘Earth Summit’ in Rio de Janiero, not surprisingly, the level of donor aid peaked, thereafter it declined by 12% (German & Randel, 2002).

One should not of course discount the donor activity that is taking place, particularly in the area of education, one of the cornerstones of sustainable development. But how effective have actual donor projects themselves been? Over recent years a particular target for aid projects has been in the area of ICT. Despite some successes, findings from a World Bank report on 17 such projects (2003), highlighted significant weaknesses. Although many of these were of a technical nature, some of which were also identified by Smith (2006), the underlying pattern of problems relating to many aid programmes and projects is more fundamental (OECD, 2003). As a result of a comprehensive review of recipients of aid through various projects in a range of countries, they found the most significant ‘burdens’ associated with the projects to be:
donor driven priorities and systems
difficulties with donor procedures
uncoordinated donor practices

Of more concern overall was the main finding which stated there was a ‘significant lack of national ownership’ (Ibid). The independent development and aid watchdog, ActionAid, is even more scathing. In its assessment of technical aid projects, which it claims account for between a quarter and a half of all aid it suggests: “…it has largely been ineffective, overpriced and based on an outdated model of development.” (ActionAid 2006: 40). For anyone who has had experience of working on aid projects such criticisms are depressingly familiar, if not always warranted. So what does the future hold? Has the donor community acted upon such reports, listened to the recipients’ views and adjusted their policies?

In the wake of Gleneagles, the OECD’s Paris Declaration (2005), and the launch of the UN’s Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005), it is reasonable to assume a more recipient-centred approach would have been adopted. Certainly some changes in approach have been detected. In the UK, DFID, principally through agencies such as The British Council and The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), launched a series of initiatives focusing on funding sustainable educational development projects. The Council’s ‘Developing Partnerships in Higher Education’ (DelPHE), and ‘England Africa Partnerships’ (EAP) are two such initiatives in which at least there appears to be a more substantive role in terms of recipients identifying and directing the focus of the project. The CSC, as part of their ongoing scholarship programmes, launched a new Distance Learning initiative which, rather than targeting individual scholars, aimed at funding ‘professional communities of learning’ in other words, cohorts of scholars who could develop as change agents. Other recent initiatives, co-ordinated by the UK’s Higher Education Academy (HEA) centre on providing ‘grants’ for research into sustainability issues and e-learning, amongst other things. Whilst the latter are primarily related to UK industry / education links, they are also open to international initiatives. Whilst the above initiatives appear positive in principle, after initial project funding there is little in the way of guarantees for further top-up funding. Although strategies for sustainability should be build into these projects, there will inevitably be a cost element if one wants to ensure effective and realistic sustainability or localisation.

So where does this leave the state of educational development projects? Is this current range of initiatives going to be any more effective in meeting the needs of the donor recipient countries? Until detailed evaluations of them have been carried out, it is difficult to say with any certainty. What is ominous is that despite previous declarations, independent aid monitoring organisations are still witnessing the same project weaknesses and demanding the same reforms in relation to: real consultation and ownership; untying of aid; demand-driven assistance; harmonising of aid; and, openness and transparency (ActionAid, 2007). It is clear that the need for aid for education for development is now more important than it has ever been before. The consequences of not meeting that need are dire. The question is: with the key international development
decision makers scheduled to meet again in 2008, in Geneva and Accra, can they afford to ignore such demands yet again?

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Economic Growth and Curriculum Reform in Southern Africa

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Keywords
Southern Africa, Curriculum Reform

Summary
This paper focuses on the adoption of learner-centred education as a major curriculum innovation to address political and economic goals in the 1990s in southern Africa. It argues that sustainability has been far from the centre of concern despite statements to the contrary within either national curricular or aid agency statements of policy intent.

Research on sustainable development in education focuses more often on the messages that education and the curriculum might carry about sustainable development than about how national economies might grow and develop in order that national educational ambitions might be more sustainable (King, 2007: 97). Both national governments and donor agencies are rhetorically more concerned with educational reform as vehicles for economic and political change than with the actual financial conditions and measures necessary to ensure their sustainability. These issues are explored in this paper which focuses on the adoption of learner-centred education as a major curriculum innovation to address political and economic goals in the 1990s in southern Africa (Tabulawa, 1997; 2003; Jansen, 2004; Harley and Wedekind, 2004). It focuses specifically on the reasons on the one hand for the ready acceptance of the ideas and on the other for learner-centred education not taking root. Sustainability has been far from the centre of concern despite statements to the contrary within either national curricular or aid agency statements of policy intent.

In contemporary contexts of enhanced international competitiveness, national educational performance has become increasingly important. How teachers teach and learners learn has become more important than what they learn. Replacing rote, call-and-response forms of learning with more ‘modern,’ learner-centred styles has become an item of interest linked to the achievement of EFA and Millennium Development Goals where access and quality are conjoined. The achievement of quality education is seen as critical to the success of increased access, and often includes the notion of learner-centred education.

Promotion of learner-centred education has a long history in African education, but research seems to point to little success. Even though the ideas have spread in different ways, there is little evidence in practice of changed modes of teaching and learning. In the 1990s, southern African countries such as Namibia and South Africa adopted what
are in essence learner-centred approaches to curriculum. Adoption of learner-centred ideas in southern Africa was conditioned by prior histories of alternative education and expectations of what education could achieve. The idea and practice of Education with Production (EwP) spread in the 1970s as a form of international cooperation to ensure sustainable national economic development. It embodied educational ideas sympathetic to the adoption of learner-centred education.

Learner-centred and outcomes-based education in the 1990s found local favour because they were not entirely new ideas, and were ambiguous enough to be seen as key vehicles for achieving not so much educational, as broader economic, social and political goals. This goal they shared with EwP, although with less of the attention to growth and sustainability than Education with Production had incorporated. This paper argues that implementation of learner-centred education as a national initiative faltered in the 1990s not only because it was a neo-liberal imposition or clashed with local African ways of teaching and learning, but also because it was expected on the one hand to achieve economic and other ideals which it could not do and on the other was implemented in contexts where capacities and requirements for its realization varied enormously.

In other words, learner-centred education is unsustainable without major financial assistance to provide the conditions necessary for successful learning and teaching in all classrooms in the region. If, as has been pointed out by many writers, learner-centred education is more likely to be achieved in classrooms where children and teachers have the necessary social, cultural and economic capital, then it means that its achievement in all classrooms requires massive economic support not only to change conditions in schools, but also the social and economic conditions in which communities live. This, in turn, is not achievable by donor support alone.

External international pressures and financial support have played a significant role in the introduction of learner-centred education in southern Africa since the 1970s, although the purposes, players, conditions, modalities and successes have differed over time and place. Most recently, curriculum change has also been mandated by loan conditionalities, albeit in broad terms as part of quality reforms. Regional entrepreneurs have also played a role in ensuring the spread of the ideas. Almost without exception, there is little concern with the local economic conditions necessary for sustainability of these apparently improved methods of teaching and learning. Both national governments and donors appear locked in a discourse of how educational and curriculum change, focused on learner-centred education, can change political and economic conditions without any real, complementary concern with the continuing cost of the interventions, and increasing the real economic capacity of countries and not only national governments to sustain them.

References


NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: EASTERN, WESTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA
Universalising Primary Education in Kenya:  
Is it Beneficial and Sustainable?

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Keywords  
UPE, Kenya

Summary  
In Kenya the introduction of free primary education in 2003 led to dramatic increases in primary enrolment and much of this expansion is to be financed through external development assistance. This article examines whether this is an achievement or a crisis and argues that there is little concern about becoming aid-dependent and about sustainable development.

Universal Primary Education (UPE) is an international development goal which all countries are expected to achieve by the year 2015. In Kenya, reintroduction of free primary education in 2003 dramatically increased the number of children attending school. However, how much benefit will each child get? The quality of education appears to have deteriorated and the educational background of primary school completion has already contributed little to becoming employed. Article I of the World Declaration on Education for All clearly states that “Every person—child, youth and adult—shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs”, focusing on value, significance, and effects of education for individuals. Although everybody recognises the importance of quality of education in policy, few ever paid serious attention to it as an urgent problem on the ground or took measures to restrain the rapid quantitative expansion.

1. Realities of Free Primary Education

Before and after implementation of free primary education in January 2003, the number of primary school pupils all over Kenya increased by 18%; from 6,063,000 pupils in 2002 to 7,160,000 pupils in 2003. Is this an achievement or a crisis? It is schools that suffer because they did not intentionally increase the number of children attending school? For example, the following problems have arisen:
1) A rapid increase in the number of pupils makes teaching and learning difficult;
2) Some parents became reluctant to support school activities, because education is free; and
3) Grants from the government are not distributed when schools need funds, nor is the amount sufficient.

The situation of free education seems fair in terms of access to educational opportunities. Comparison of the quality of available education, however, reveals that not all children
are guaranteed the same standard of education. Marked disparities are apparent in the quality of education among public schools: there are unequal situations in which available education depends on the parents’ economic situation. To enrol in a school which can guarantee the quality of education, will require additional expenditures.

It is difficult to implement challenges for UPE continuously, including free education, using only the Kenyan government’s own resources. They intend to depend mainly on aid from external agencies termed ‘development partners’. The rhetoric of ‘partnerships’ rather than ‘self-help efforts’ may have been widely accepted. Increasing the number of children attending schools has become the main target; apparently, little consideration is given to deprived children, who should be benefited, and to schools accepting new children. There is little concern either about becoming aid-dependent or about sustainable development.

2. Connection of Primary Education to Secondary Education

The actually pursued educational goals differ from ‘education’ conceptualised in terms of ‘basic learning needs’ or ‘children’s rights’. Rather, primary schools are committed to learning for transition to secondary school, and more specifically, how to score highly in the primary school leaving examination. Consequently, schooling influenced by such an examination system automatically comes to resemble preparatory schools for scoring highly on tests. The current policy to raise the transition rates to secondary education may accelerate the so-called Diploma Disease and foster the possibility of further increasing unemployed people with high educational background.

Secondary schooling is not free. School enrolment rates in secondary education therefore decline according to a direct relation to family income. Children know well that educational opportunities are easily closed without funds and this reality discourages them. Improvement in transition rates from primary school to secondary school is a crucial issue for the government. They have set a target of achieving a transition rate of 70% from primary to secondary school. But the actual “transition rate” to secondary education is as low as 45% even if an “admission rate” is 60% (2005/06). That is, 25% of those who gained admission were obliged to decline enrolment.

Parents or relatives often bear the burden of tuition fees for secondary education. Consequently, they often expect that children should be in regular work to earn cash. Even in the rural areas there is enthusiastic aspiration for secondary school particularly among Standard 8 pupils, but many of them cannot proceed to secondary school, and consequently they stop learning at the primary school stage and often stay in the community.

3. Roles of Primary Schools in the Community

What are the roles of primary education? Although primary schools as a social safety net and nursery might not be well accepted, the roles cannot be ignored from the standpoint of the parents in the rural community. Attending school serves a role as a social safety net
to protect children, even if teachers are prone to be absent and cannot improve learning
effects. Even if teachers are strict, schools are a place to guarantee life as a child, where
children are set free from domestic labours to spend time with friends. With no other
social welfare facilities, such roles ought to be required.

It is a reality that most primary school graduates return to the community and spend the
rest of their lives there. More attention must be devoted to how primary schools might
better serve the needs of children and parents. They could be a driving force for changing
communities and improving residents’ lives. Previously, we have devoted attention to the
quantitative expansion of primary education for the nation. Now might be the time to
discuss the qualitative importance of primary education for personal growth and for the
rural community. We would be better to take a much greater interest not only in the
‘quantitative growth of education’ but also in the development of communities based on
the ‘qualitative growth of individuals’ through primary schooling. Such emphasis must
surely engender sustainable educational development.

National policies and practices for education, skills and sustainable growth:
The Kenyan case

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National policies are indeed the road maps of practices in education in any country. However, the degree to which they succeed will depend on certain variables; environment, resources, political, economic capacity and the implementation process.

The Kenyan case:
Kenyan education has been guided by policy guidelines since independence. Policy documents have been in the form of commissions, presidential working parties, committees and development plans to guide education practice. To enhance clarification we shall also provide connection to international trends which the government has consulted, e.g. international conventions such as those of UNICEF, and the development partners (Oduol 2006).

Policy is a government statement of interest to carry out an activity. In this case the government spells out the policy and the period for that policy. The nature of policy also provides standardization, uniformity and gives confidence to the service provider. At the same time, policy, when published, assures the client of unbiased service through standardization and uniformity.
In Kenya, since independence, education was always predominantly a government responsibility which provided most resources required as per policy. However, over the years resources have dwindled and the needs have been exponential. The challenge has been the growth in public schools to keep up with population increase but the resources have not improved significantly. Government response had been to create and introduce policy measures such as cost sharing so that education could still be provided albeit with many challenges for poorer families.

Growth in both primary and secondary schools has stretched the government’s capacity to provide education services. Resource provisions have entailed teachers, school buildings and checking of school fees and levies to manageable levels. The cost sharing policy relieved the government but pressure persists because demand for teachers continues due to increase in student enrolment, while checked by natural teacher attrition. The Free Primary Education (FPE) is a case in point that was implemented by the current government when it came to power in 2003. The growth in primary school enrolment demanded an expanded teaching force, new classrooms and building of more schools or other approaches to provide learning. The Arid and Semi Arid regions that are sparsely populated present new paradigms beyond current practice to provide access, parity and inclusive education to a nomadic population. The challenges to government therefore, given the above scenario are enormous as questions of sustainability become ever more pointed.

There are issues also related to the genesis of the policy in place. Is the policy needs-based or is it externally inspired and generated? If external, how grounded or domesticated is it, if it is to achieve the necessary support for growth and sustainability. Many Third World economies have continued to struggle with the result that development partners have often supplemented local economies to meet policy implementation. However, there have been controversies over the external support that sometimes comes with strings. When not fulfilled the support may be withheld, which may undo other successes in substantive areas of the economy.

There are complications related to policy matters observed by Oduol who argued that evidence-based approach to policy is not always practiced. Evidence may fail to address the needs of the policy maker, or it may be too close to concerns of the opposing political side. On one hand the policy interpreters may fail to capture the spirit and relevance of current policy. While on the other there may be a failure to achieve a critical mass among policy makers to effectively determine or establish relationships in policy.

In Kenya education has served several functions, among which are; to unify the country and create nationhood (single curriculum, single instructional language); provide basic skills at basic education; to create purpose and determination among citizens and to be developmental and incremental (provide equity, access, efficiency and gender parity)

Education practices are affected by policy guidelines. Perhaps the biggest challenge here is the lack of connection between desired education practices as espoused in policy and the actual education practices on the ground. Disconnect between the two dichotomies,
brings into fore the state of skills that the schools are supposed to engender. The latest and most dramatic public policy is the Free Primary Education (FPE), which came at the time when education in Kenya had become too expensive for ordinary citizens. In particular, both primary and secondary schools regardless of being private or public were beset by ever-rising school fees. The 2003 FPE initiative brought relief but it has had challenges. Initially, the initiative brought back to school many students that had either dropped out of school or never started school because of high fee levies. Today we have an 84-year-old man who decided to start school because he never had a chance in his youth. He is one of a few octogenarians braving the morning chill to get to school by 8 am. There are others in their teens or young adults, still others, married women opting to relegate child and house minding in exchange of school uniform and homework. Free Primary Education initiative has indeed created a lot of excitement and interest.

The government put out a roll out strategy to address the FPE initiative in the Kenya Education Sector Strategic Plan 2003-2007 whose goals are:

- Attainment of Education For All by 2015
- Universal Primary Education by 2005
- Transition rate from primary to secondary of 70% by 2007
- Reduced disparity in participation
- Increased quality and relevance to National Development needs and aspirations
- Improved access.

The challenges however remain especially in the areas of sustainability, parity, access, and equity as well as full implementation of the initiative.

That Free Primary Education is actually compulsory was evidenced by one man in 2007, who had to spend time in jail for not adhering to this rule and another violently losing his child to the authorities who yanked the child away from the herd of cattle and sheep the only livelihood of the poor blind pastoralist father. The poor ailing man had sent other children to school but had designated this one to stay home as his father’s eyes and minder. Because the incidence was nationally televised the event depicted an old forlorn man left destitute. This brings to fore the need for policies to be interconnected and supportive to enhance chances of success. Here the sustainability of the policy was very different from the sustainability of the individual family.

Following the National Conference on Education in November 2003, the Sessional Paper No.1 2005 was developed to guide the government. This Sessional paper looked at the history of the policy documents that have guided education since independence in 1963 to date. Among the policies were, the Ominde Report of 1964 that ‘recognized education as a basic human right and a powerful tool for human resource and national development. While the Kamunge Report of 1988 ‘focused on improving education financing, quality and relevance. In this Sessional Paper No1 2005 the government is emphatic on certain issues and states that ‘it will take affirmative action to compensate for historical and emerging inequalities and disparities in all areas in …nation building. This is a very powerful statement that implies major changes in practice if the political will for success is to prevail. Unfortunately, current practice is still far from reflecting the policy
intentions and there are other policies in operation that seem to negate the same spirit of equity creation.
Policies have therefore a long tradition in guiding the government to implement its intentions. But policy making is different from policy implementation; and policy implementation is very different from policy sustainability.

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Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Sustainable Development and Education

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Keywords
Indigenous Knowledge, Sustainable Development, Education

Summary
This article explores the relationship between culture, indigenous knowledge systems, sustainable development and education in an African context.

The global, hegemonic role of the Western educational discourse, world-views and knowledge systems has over the last years been questioned and critiqued by a number of scholars and politicians in both Africa and Asia as well as in the West. Inspired by the African Renaissance in particular, interest in and focus on world views and indigenous cultures and knowledge systems in Africa as a supplement to what some call reductionist science and knowledge systems have led to a comprehensive exploration of “the role of the social and natural sciences in supporting the development of indigenous knowledge systems” (Odora Hoppers, 2002: vii).

This note first briefly discusses some characteristic features of African (indigenous) world-views and knowledge systems, stressing the lack of distinction between the spiritual and the temporal, so common in European modernity.
The article then analyses the concept of sustainability with particular reference to education and indigenous knowledge systems. The question is to what extent indigenous knowledge has been taken into consideration in the various syllabi and curricula in Africa south of Sahara. And is the inclusion of indigenous (home) knowledge including world views and culture in the schools, a necessary if not the only prerequisite in Africa’s struggle for sustainable development? Moreover, when indigenous cultures and knowledge systems are ignored, in what way does it impact on power relationships in a given society?

The paper analyses the documents from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 in particular and argues that the Summit links sustainable development to a modernist knowledge discourse with hardly any reference to indigenous knowledge.

The paper proceeds to explore Curriculum 2005 launched by the ANC government and highlights the dilemmas of exclusively introducing Western-based scientific knowledge in a cultural context based on indigenous epistemology. The revised Curriculum 2005 asks the following question: Does an exclusion of indigenous knowledge systems hinder or facilitate learning? The importance and seriousness of this question are underlined by Ogunniyi who states in connection with science teaching: “The concept of world view is central to science education because it is the knowledge that a learner brings into the science class. Research has shown that such knowledge has a great potential for hindering or enhancing the learning of science” (Ogunniyi, 2003: 27). The crossing of epistemological borders to accommodate the so-called modern, rational world of science means that the pupil has to negotiate between various, conflicting world views and mental states. The complexities of these negotiations and navigation should not be overlooked.

In what way can the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems contribute to developing a curriculum which transcends the borders of modernity and thus help to provide a broader foundation for sustainable development? By way of conclusion the paper calls for more research into the viability of indigenous knowledge systems as a potential tool in sustainable development.

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Paving a Sustainable Electronic Highway to Africa’s Schools?

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1. Introduction
The notion of investing scarce financial resources on the promotion and implementation of ICT strategies in furtherance of sustainable development is often contentious. A common argument made is that such resources are better used for more immediate and tangible problems. Such arguments are sincere in addressing the need to prioritise. Yet they neglect the need for longer-term investments to get out from under the development treadmill by treating its causes, rather than the symptoms. This does not mean that more immediate survival problems must not be taken care of too, but that they should not be seen in terms of competition. Rather they should be treated as different issues with each having a strong justification. In line with the latest thinking in development assistance, new and additional resources need to be directed towards empowering societies and individuals to manage future challenges on their own.

Education and access to information are universally recognized as the most important enabler in this regard. Governments worldwide have acknowledged this by prioritizing education in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Meeting the MDGs, however, has proven difficult for a number of reasons. Many developing countries have made significant progress in increasing primary and secondary school enrolment rates. However, ensuring that students enrolled in schools are receiving the high quality education that will be relevant to the challenges of tomorrow remains a major challenge. These challenges relate to funding constraints, teacher quality and availability as well as the overall infrastructure (both in terms of buildings and education materials). Furthermore, on-the-ground realities such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, high birth rates, food insecurity and civil unrest create additional constraints in certain regions in meeting the targets. Traditional education models, and the development assistance that has supported them so far, are not in themselves capable of addressing all these challenges: innovative alternatives must be pursued.

2. ICT for Education
ICT for education presents tremendous opportunities for innovation. It is not a miracle-cure, and does not change the physical reality that more schools will have to be built, and more teachers hired to fill these classrooms. The provision of quality education, however, is dependent on more than just teachers and classrooms. The quality of the content taught, the materials used to teach it and the skills that are developed are also of great importance. And in this arena ICT innovations have great potential, particularly with regard to access to information, collaboration and the creation and sharing of ideas. The realization of these, however, will require new innovations in the methods of implementation.

The concept of deploying ICT for education in developing countries is relatively new – this year, for example, marks only the third anniversary of the e-Learning Africa
conference. As a result of this, many initiatives in the field are confined to smaller ‘pilots’ or ‘trials’. However, for the field to have a real impact these must be greatly expanded.

3. From Concept to Realization

The field of ICT for education brings together ideas from three disparate groups: groups, sharing the same overall objectives, but that have often had a difficult time operating in effective partnerships. The successful introduction of ICT into education will continue to depend primarily on the public sector - national and local governments and the international development community (inter-governmental agencies). NGOs have long been active in promoting educational innovations and solutions, generally on small and pilot scales. Thirdly, there is the increasingly proactive and integrated role of the private sector in extending communication technologies throughout the continent.

The potential for new forms of partnerships between entrepreneurs, civil society organisations and the development community is enormous. There are, however, a number of challenges that will have to be overcome to fully realize the potential for a greater impact.

From an outsider perspective the fact that these parties struggle to work in collaboration is puzzling. Fundamentally they all share the same overall goal – sustainable economic development in developing countries. Furthermore, they are all active in the same sector: education. The successful introduction of ICT for education, however, requires the expertise and support of all sectors. The international development community is ideally suited to support initiatives in their early stages. Indeed without this support many will not see the light of day. Beyond just financial support, early stage concepts must be developed and trialled under the umbrella of a comprehensive and standardized monitoring and evaluation framework. In this manner, their potential for realizing tangible benefits for education can be determined - and it is often the role of NGOs to implement and evaluate such pilot trials.

A sustainable introduction of a new technology, however, is dependent on more than just its potential to realize benefits in terms of education: it must also create an economically viable construct that entities are willing to invest in, year after year, to maintain because it is advantageous to do so. It is at this stage that private sector involvement should be encouraged, in ways that are appropriate to sustainable development. The challenge of “paving” a solid information channel connecting schools in Africa with curriculum and information that is cost effective and current may best be addressed by the private sector. The private sector may have an inherent capacity to invest upfront and pay off investments through the small scale payments of multiple users over time; it has capacity to partner and network, and it has the flexibility to apply resources where needed, when needed. The private sector has generally always had a role in education, through publication of textbooks. An increased role, through paving new means of providing textbooks electronically (with less waste to paper and shipping costs) is part of the future. Another, equally compelling part is the development of service industries that can employ and train people in building skills to use new technologies and develop local ownership over the technologies and training capacities.
4. Conclusion

The market for ICT in education is still at early stages of development in developed countries – and even more so in developing ones. However, there is a new trend towards affordable technology solutions, pioneered by the One Laptop Per Child project but now replicated by others. There is also a growing awareness in governments and donor agencies that these technologies may hold great potential for achievement of education goals.

Herein lies the impetus for collaboration. Governments in developing countries must take interest in these developments. Intergovernmental organisations and donor agencies should give greater consideration to models of investment and return, and overcoming the risks that impede investment from all sectors. NGOs open doors through pilots and trials to prove that concepts work. The private sector has developed the technology and has the know-how to implement it. Each has a critical role to play and working together can build the combined resources needed to invest in solutions to challenges, and “well-paved” virtual roads to schools. Ensuring that these approaches are really sustainable will take serious political commitment.

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Education for All, Fee Abolition, and Sustainability: Lessons from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda

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Keywords
EFA, UPE, Fee Abolition, Sustainability, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda

Summary
This article outlines the findings of a comparative analysis on UPE policies organised by Kobe University in partnership with African colleagues. The study analyzes financial, administrative, and attitudinal issues around UPE policies in four selected countries (Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, and Ghana) and indicates a number of issues that should be considered for sustainability of UPE policy.

Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy in the form of fee abolition has become popular in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) for achieving Education for All (EFA) since the mid-1990s. Despite its recent rapid expansion, UPE policy has a long history in SSA. Existing literatures indicate that previous attempts to achieve UPE in developing countries faced problems in its supply-driven policies, unclear mechanisms, and declined quality of education (Allison, 1983; Bray, 1986; Prince, 1997; Sifuna,
The past experiences in poor countries such as Nigeria and Kenya also show that UPE policy implementation was prone to be affected by economic crisis (Obasi, 2000; Sifuna, 2007). Having a number of existing lessons in the past, however, the current UPE policy critically lacks analytical studies on its impacts and challenges beyond school enrollment (Nishimura, et al., 2008). Furthermore, some researchers have indicated the recent uniformity of the educational policies that prevail in SSA and suggested that there should be studies to examine how these seemingly similar policies are responding to the capacity and needs of each country (Samoff, 1999; Foster, 2000; Brown, et al, 2001; Klees, 2001).

In response to the above question, Kobe University has conducted a comparative analysis on UPE policies in partnership with five researchers in Africa and five in Japan under the international cooperation initiative supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan. The study attempted to analyze financial, administrative, and attitudinal issues about UPE policies in four selected countries (Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, and Ghana) and to indicate a number of concerns that should be considered for sustainability of UPE policy.

**General impact of UPE policy**

UPE policy signifies strong government commitment and donor contribution towards EFA goals by enabling children who would not have enrolled in school to come to school. The most apparent impact of the UPE policy is seen in increased enrollment in all four countries. In Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana, UPE intervention also included provision of teaching and learning materials and additional classroom construction. However, UPE policy also had drawbacks at the school site. When school fees were abolished, over-age and underage children flocked into school. The most notable challenge was overcrowded classrooms, which in some schools led to low teacher motivation. The leverage between strong commitment of governments and donors and available resources was another issue. Schools suffer from lack of funds, while not being able to ask parents for tuition fees. Parents have also become passive in every form of participation in school activities and decision making. A common attitude illustrated by parents and communities is that now that the government is responsible for everything, they have no stake in school governance. Under such an environment, dropout of pupils is another challenge under UPE policy.

**Financial Challenges**

Under UPE policy, the capitation grant has been disbursed from the central government to schools directly in Kenya, and via districts in Uganda and Ghana. The capitation grant is calculated as per pupil cost of primary education. Nevertheless, our interviews revealed that the amount of the capitation grant is not guided by baseline surveys but more affected by whatever is available within the national account and that the aggregated amount at the school level is lower than how much schools used to collect from parents and communities prior to the implementation of UPE policy. In addition to the insufficient amount of the capitation grant, delay in the arrival of these funds is commonly experienced at school level in all countries. This evidently affects daily school activities. Mismanagement of school funds is also reported as a challenge.
Since the introduction of UPE, the budget for primary education has become heavily dependent on the central government. Although districts are allowed in principle to put some additional resources into schools, in reality minimal or no resources are available at the district level. Parents are also found to be covering private costs of schooling (e.g. uniform, development fees, examination fees, lunch, transportation, tutoring, etc.) that is higher than the capitation grant. The overall insufficient budget allocated towards primary education at district level seems to most negatively affect monitoring of schools.

**Administrative Challenges**

Common themes that cut across administrative issues of UPE policy are mainly rooted in its top-down policy implementation and unpreparedness of the system for the changes. Since the inception of UPE policy, no clear policy on roles and responsibilities has been shared by stakeholders. Ad hoc training opportunities given to head teachers on accounting and school management under UPE were not enough for head teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) to obtain confidence in daily school management. UPE policy also creates some policy conflicts that make administration fairly difficult. For instance, automatic promotion policy and an increase in enrollment throw teachers into an extremely difficult situation. Fee abolition and inadequate amount of UPE capitation grant are also contradictory and give head teachers’ headaches and sometimes even push them into debt. As a consequence of these conflicts, schools are compelled to hold larger classes with more limited resources.

**Stakeholders’ Perception**

UPE certainly was a consensus agreed upon by democratic elections and a domestic decision making process in each country. The majority of stakeholders interviewed in this study perceive that the current policy is good and they view primary schooling as either important or very important for both boys and girls. Parents in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana also report that although they are bearing the private cost of schooling under the UPE policy, the amount is lower than what it used to be. The UPE policy is greatly appreciated by parents and communities for its equitable nature and benefit to the poor. The cases of Uganda and Kenya also showed that parents appreciate the provision of teaching and learning materials under the UPE policy.

However, the majority of respondents view the implementation of the policy as having a number of problems. In particular, the automatic promotion policy is much contested by all stakeholders at the district and school levels. This is due to the fact that to promote pupils to the next grade without meeting the proficiency set by each grade will do more harm than good for a child since s/he will not obtain anything at the end of the primary cycle and the school system will compromise quality of education.

What this study revealed clearly was that effective policy implementation would require considerable consultation with key stakeholders. Without a baseline survey, any systematic implementation of the policy may become unworkable. Although governments and donors have organized a series of advocacy campaigns on UPE policy, continuous and untiring sensitization and commitment towards the policy may be required to avoid any confusion or local political interference. In particular, there is a
need for an effective system of monitoring the programme and tightening accountability of the policy. Faced with increased enrollment, each country now needs to bear cost-effective strategies to raise the quality of primary schools with limited resources in order to tackle the challenge of maintaining both quantity and quality of education. Furthermore, equity issues should be considered, and the current flat rate of capitation grant may need some revision as the cost of schooling should vary depending on the location, disability, language problem, and other socio-cultural backgrounds.

Finally, who owns UPE policy is an important question to be posed. As mentioned earlier, our study revealed that the relation between school administration and parents and communities has weakened after the inception of UPE policy. This is not to say that parents would need to pay in order for their voices to be heard at schools. On the contrary, how parents keep their voices heard when fees are no longer required is a key question to be pursued in order to make UPE policy sustainable. Who owns UPE policy and who is accountable for UPE policy? Ultimately, it is not just the government who complies with the policy and is accountable to the public, but it is the public who should also hold consistent interest for what they voted for. The responsibility deficit of the local population induces neglect of downward accountability of the overall education system and causes a negative spiral of accountability absence. Sustainability of UPE policy can be ensured only with this mutual responsibility relationship.

NB: The full report of the research project can be downloaded on the following website: http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~ogawa35/english/e_top.htm

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Sustaining the Mechanic Village (out-of-school Vocational) Schools in South Eastern Nigeria Using Information Communication Technology

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Keywords
Mechanic Village Schools, out-of-school vocational schools, Nigeria, ICT

Summary
The paper presents the brief on the use of information communication technology (dynamic profiled tutor) to improve on the out-of-school vocational schools so that programmes would more flexible and responsive to academic needs of the learners.

The Mechanic Village (out-of-school Vocational) schools were initiated by the United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as an intervention to mitigate the adverse educational effects of male drop out in South Eastern Nigeria. These schools are located inside the massive work area (mechanic village) allocated to auto mechanics, allied trades and artisans some of whom had no formal education or dropped out of primary/junior secondary school without having acquired basic literacy and numeracy. These schools were part of UNICEF’s initiative to address the problem of male dropout in five south eastern states of Nigeria wherein the Igbo people have shown practical dissatisfaction in the rate of return on investment in formal education which is clearly manifested in low
enrolment of young men and youth in formal education (UNICEF, 1999). This laudable initiative of out-of-school vocational programmes ran outside the formal school system but it has suffered a serious set-back because of the rigid school structure that requires the learners to attend school three times per week from 12.00 noon to 2.00pm in some instances while others attend from 4.00pm to 6.00pm. Many of these students are losing interest in attending these schools thereby defeating the purpose for which they were established.

Fortunately, the Education Trust Fund, Abuja commissioned the Skills for Life’s Seasons Educational and Health Center (SLSEHC) to sustain the programmes of Mechanic Village schools by redesigning the curriculum and exploring ways of improving its implementation by use of information communication technology (Oranu and Ogwo, 2006). Beyond the basic literacy and numeracy subjects studied in these schools as introduced by UNICEF, more vocational subjects like, metal work, automechanics, basic electricity, business studies have been included in the redesigned SLSEHC curriculum. It is believed that the inclusion of these subjects that relate closely to the trades, and to mechanics practice, would rekindle their interest and make the schools more sustainable. The introduction of information communication technology (ICT) has provided for more flexibility for students who can take the school work at their convenience and would not have to attend classes as often as was previously the case. The ICT intervention was primarily to develop software that will minimize schooling time and make it more convenient and flexible for the students, thus justifying the development of the dynamic-profiled lessons/tutors for the Mechanic Village schools. The tutors will be hosted on the school website and also have the standalone versions on their CDs. The use of on-line tutors in Nigeria is still in its earliest stages. Owing to the low motivational level of these students, it was necessary to design a dynamic profiled tutor that will provide immediate feedback and remedial measures in the course studying a particular lesson. Furthermore, seeing that the learners in these schools could easily drop out from the lesson when overwhelmed by overt feedback of poor performance, the Tutor sought to redirect learners to appropriate content without explicitly allowing feedback on poor performance to discourage them from completing the lesson.

Dynamic profiling best describes the intelligent nature of the Tutor which enables it to adapt to the current achievement profile of the learner. The profiling engine keeps track of the learner performance and intelligently selects the appropriate learning content to suit the learner. The profiling table specifies a 40%/80% benchmark for undertaking a lesson. The Tutor is developed in Java due to its capability of running applications across a wide variety of computing platforms (servers, personal computers, mobile phones and other devices); Java is robust and the fact that Java is open source is an advantage. In addition, software applications written in Java adapt the application code for the specific device and interpret this at the time when the software is running before executing it. To ensure extensibility and portability across database management systems, the Tutor also has Hibernate for the web version – an object relational mapping solution that abstracts persistence related tasks from the engine – and XML (Extensible Markup Language) for the standalone version. The choice for XML for the standalone version was to reduce the system requirement for deploying the application. With XML there is no need for
installing database on each of the learners’ machine thereby reducing installation procedure and any user frustration for these set of students. Apologies for the technical jargon!

Conclusively, the introduction of ICT-based programme improvements in the Mechanic Village Schools makes the vocational subjects interesting and more compliant to the education-work needs of the students. ICT is the in-thing for most human endeavour and introducing it to the Mechanic Village School would guarantee its sustainability both in terms of delivery mode and demands of modern educational practice. The Tutor affords students, who for any reason could not attend the Mechanic Village School regularly to use it for individualized instruction and complement the usual face-to-face teacher instruction. This landmark programme improvement will afford the students a strong academic prowess and allow them to sit for the same public examinations as those in regular formal education system and justify every effort at making the schools more efficient. By sustaining these types of alternative education forms, the government will be making stronger statements rather than lip-service in providing education-for-all and ensuring a more knowledgeable workforce.

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Universal Primary Education in Ethiopia: Going Beyond Increasing Numbers and Considering the Diversity of Out of School Children

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Keywords
Ethiopia, Out of School Children, Basic Primary Education, Quantitative and Qualitative Growth

Summary
The paper considers the remaining challenges for the Ethiopian Educational Primary System to achieve EFA goals by 2015 and sets priorities on the diversity of out of school children.
In the summer of 2007 an Ethiopian educational expert claimed that EFA goals are “old wine in new bottles” for Ethiopia. He referred to government officials who have expressed their thoughts to the effect that none of the EFA goals are new in Ethiopia. “Well there are six goals. One is education for all and this is not new for Ethiopia. Starting from the era of Menilk, in the era of Haile Selassie or the provisional Military government of Ethiopia, those three governments were trying to reach the whole society and education for all is not new to us.” (AYELEW/ARSANO in Yamada 2007:129).

Contrasting to this statement and to an estimated gross primary school population of 8.1 million an estimated number of 5.05 million children aged 7-14 remain out of school (CHECKOLE 2004: 1). More than half out of school children have never been in school and may never enrol without additional incentives (UNESCO 2008:51[1]). We argue that there cannot be a sustainable approach to primary education without understanding who are the missing children.

Who are these estimated 5.05 million children out of school?

- Girls: Ethiopia has increased substantially the enrolment of girls in lower primary education but still the gender parity index (GPI) lies at 0.87 (BINES/WOOD 2007:5).

- Extremely poor children: According to the Human Development Index 2005 Ethiopia takes position 170/177. Poverty significantly reduces the likelihood of school participation and a strong negative correlation [-0.4 or above] exists between household poverty and primary school attendance in both rural and urban regions in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Ethiopia (UNESCO 2008: 3 [2]). Still today education is regarded as a ‘useful luxury’ particularly among poor parents (MAYRHOFER 2001: 140).

- Orphans: More than 1.2 million AIDS orphans (CHECKOLE 2004: 4) challenge the education system by increasing the dropout rate and especially gender disparity as girls are expected to care for the victims. The former tradition where close kin takes care of orphans no longer seems to function. Many relatives seem to feel too poor to take an additional child in their home and poor children especially in towns are often left to manage on their own (POLUHA 2007: 4). The Ministry of Education (MoE) reacts to the HIV/AIDS threat by introducing HIV/AIDS education into their curricula. But so far there is no governmental program showing how to support AIDS orphans.

- Children with various disabilities: In 2006 a special needs strategy was introduced in Ethiopia. Special needs education (SNE) remains still in its initial stage. The chances of a disabled child not being in school are two to three times greater than for a child who is not disabled in many sub-Saharan countries. In 2000 the enrolment in special schools in Ethiopia was only 3800 out of 2.73 million children with special needs. This figure does not include children enrolled in inclusive orientated schools or in school programs offered through NGOs and faith based organizations. One of the main obstacles to expand SNE, besides untrained staff and teachers, is to find in backward attitude and bias explaining disability as a curse or punishment from God (ZEHLE 2008: 239).
- Children from remote areas and pastoralists’ children: Primary net enrolment rate (NER) increases led to greater geographic disparities in Benin, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Kenya and Zambia (UNESCO 2007: 5 [2]).

- Street children: This group of children include street working children, working children and street children. Some provision is made for street children in Ethiopia mainly through NGOs and faith based organizations. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) 2002 about 150,000 children live on the street in Ethiopia, 60,000 of them in Addis Ababa. However, UNICEF 2000 estimates that the problem might be more serious with nearly 600,000 street children countrywide and over 100,000 in Addis Ababa. If children are able to combine daily labour work and school attendance then this is mainly in non-formal education (NFÉ) programs (Zehle 2008: 309). Although strengthened as a fundamental pillar within the educational system the amount of budget allocated to NFÉ still remains low: 1.1% of the total education budget (Checkole 2004: 4).

- Children growing up in refugee camps.

- Children growing up in prison as their mothers are in custody.

Hardly any investigation has been conducted so far in the education of the last two mentioned groups of children. And of course this list of out of school children is incomplete and different priorities have to be set in different regions. Additionally to the actual enrolment situation at primary level, demographic pressure will remain a challenge for the next decade, when the primary school age population is expected to grow at a sustained pace particularly in sub-Saharan Africa with expected growth of 22% (UNESCO 2008: 42). Ethiopian’s Government public expenditure on education as a percentage of the gross national product (GNP) increased from 3.6% in 1999 to 6.1% (UNESCO 2008: 14 [2]). At the same time external assistance and loans to implement the education sector development plan (ESDP) and to promote EFA goals through Fast Track initiatives show an increasing trend compared to governmental contribution: 1996/97: 12.5% to 2000/01: 21.3% (Checkole 2004: 7). The numbers and figures noted so far do not give evidence of the quality of primary education. Ethiopia has undertaken two national learning assessment samples, both of which indicated that only half of the students at grades four and eight met the achievement expected of their grade.

To conclude, noteworthy progress has been made by the Ethiopian Government to achieve EFA. But it is doubtful whether the expansive growth (of numbers) really leads to sustainable fundamental growth – not only quantitative but qualitative. As long as marginalized groups of the population are still excluded from basic primary education, achieving EFA by 2015 will remain a challenge for Ethiopia.
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Notes

[1] Ethiopian names have been entered generally by first name rather than by father’s name.
Implementation of the Universal Post-Primary Education and Training (UPPET) Programme and Economic Growth in Uganda

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The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) for Uganda highlights but also challenges the importance of sustaining the economic growth that the country has been experiencing in recent years in addressing poverty. The Government of Uganda considers quality education at both primary and secondary levels, in particular a focus on life skills, a critical factor in economic development. To date, Uganda has been successful in achieving its access goal at primary level. Data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) indicate that following the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme in 1997, the enrolment of pupils in primary schools rose from 3 million to over 5 million in the first year of the Programme. The number of pupils currently enrolled in primary schools stands at over 7 million. However, only about 30% of a cohort of pupils who join the primary education cycle go on to complete the cycle, with a full seven years of study. This wastage is detrimental to the country’s economic development and clearly unsustainable. The Government of Uganda has committed itself in recent years to addressing some of the impediments to education, which include: poor quality, lack of focus on literacy, numeracy and life skills, negative attitudes, cultural practices that prefer sons to daughters, early marriages, petty trade preferred to schooling, and insecurity in some areas of the country.

The Government of Uganda has also recently turned its attention to addressing access and quality problems at secondary level. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for Lower Secondary Education (S.1 - S.4), which represents the number of children enrolled in S. 1 – S.4 as a percentage of the children entitled to be in school, was only 18.55% in 2005. It increased to 22.10% in 2006, and to 34.20% following the launch of UPPET in February 2007. However, not all the pupils who complete the primary education cycle are able to join secondary education. Only 50% of the candidates who completed primary education in 2005 joined secondary education in 2006. Following the launch of UPPET in February 2007, the transition rate has increased to 67%. But it must be remembered, as we said above, that this is 67% of the 30% who actually manage to complete 7 years of primary.

In contrast to primary education, the incidence of secondary education has become more unequal, with the public sector not adequately targeting the poor. According to the Uganda Government’s Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) for the period of 2004/05 - 2007/08, the incidence of secondary education is highly skewed towards the higher income groups and urban or semi-urban dwellers. This is impeding economic development in Uganda, which relies on an un-educated and un-skilled workforce. Uganda’s National Poverty Assessment Report of 2003 indicates that post primary education and training is prohibitively expensive and therefore, inaccessible for many learners who would otherwise attend Secondary Schools or Technical, Vocational
Education and Training (TVET) institutions. The TVET institutions seek to develop students' vocational skills, including entrepreneurship skills. In an effort to address the problem of inaccessibility of post primary education and training, in February 2007 Uganda introduced the Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) Programme. The challenges of UPPET in Uganda are many and specifically:

- The rationale for implementing UPPET and its role in Uganda’s sustained economic development
- The equitable development of this Programme
- How it meets national objectives, in particular development objectives and international commitments
- Implementation modalities
- Training and deployment of teachers

But none is greater than the financial sustainability of the Programme. But we should end on a more positive note of hope, despite these massive challenges that lie ahead.

The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, is committed to addressing these challenges and thus eventually providing a high quality secondary education for every child in Uganda. A quote from a parent I met at a local market highlights the public support for UPPET – ‘I am so happy and I thank God that my daughter can now get the chance of going to secondary school. She is bright and can now have a better future than me’. Ugandans will strive to make UPPET a success because it is necessary for sustainable development.
NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: LATIN AMERICA
Alice in Wonderland:  
The reality of popular education in the world of development policy

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The bases for public education come from three perspectives. The first considers education valuable in its own right, something that makes the individual and society a more civilized and healthier place. The second is from the perspective of social justice and wellbeing: that education is a public good and a fair society should ensure that all have access to it since all citizens are equal before the law. The third perspective is pragmatic. It sees education instrumentally - as a motor for employment and economic growth via the formation of “human capital” an ingredient of capital, and those who possess it as “human capital”. These views are not mutually exclusive and tend to coexist.

Situating of public education in the economic growth policy framework, predominant in recent years, can easily make us lose sight of the fact that each of the views propounded above arose from particular interests in society. Public education did not originate only in, nor is it the preserve of, the government. Its principal sources lie in civil society and even while we rely for its administration on government bodies, the driving force and inspiration for change and continuity in public educational provision remain civil-society-driven, even though governments may shape these drives. This paper affirms this view in relation to Mexico. It does so, particularly from the standpoint of the most vulnerable sections of the civil society, the urban and rural poor, and examines their contribution to public education. In so doing, the article challenges the illusion, commonplace in government circles, that significant educational changes emanate from official policy-making. This illusion was ridiculed in the Mexican press coverage of a recent ex-president’s visit to the USA. The president characterized Mexico as a wonderland over which he presided, and in which all manner of amazing things could happen. The press subsequently dubbed his complete lack of grasp on reality as Alice in Wonderland.

In contrast, the marginalized sections of the population who wrestle with the problems real life in Mexico and tend to see their attempts to overcome their conditions, in part through education, have more often than not experienced frustration, at home, and the decision to migrate abroad. But in some cases, where a set of factors come together in a propitious way, the result has been the generation of home-grown solutions to the deficiency of existing educational provision. What poor communities see as their cultural richness and strength, contrasting with their material poverty and exclusion from prosperity, is what has helped to generate educational innovations of value to other disadvantaged populations, and to educational development more widely, as has been recognized recently in UNESCO, the OECD (CERI) and PREAL.

One of the most well known examples of a local level innovation that emerged from local popular aspirations developing user-based educational solutions is the Escuela Nueva [new school] of Colombia. But throughout Mexico, too, as in other parts of the continent
there are a wide variety of such innovations, each addressing the educational concerns of the users with appropriate, often home-grown solutions. Typical among these are indigenous and intercultural educational projects that conserve and develop local language and cultural identity, and teacher dissident movements that seek democratic reforms inside their union, and undertake new pedagogical and curricular approaches in response to local learning needs and traditions.

Valuing these typically small-scale, local educational innovations is not easy. The public, governments and international agencies tend to be more impressed by accomplishments that resound at the highest levels of our societies or which have the widest impact. Yet the stress on impact and up-scaling misses the point that the local initiatives are not meant to be replicated and up-scaled. Their strength is their specific response to specific conditions. Since the circumstances in each setting are unique, the solutions must be so too, prohibiting standardized, “one-size-fits all” solutions. What can be transmitted more widely is the methodology of making education more locally responsive, democratic and something in which the users take ownership.

To make this sustainable, the small-scale initiatives need to network, to disseminate and share their work as well as to campaign for support to enable them to grow and flourish as a legitimate part of public education. This in turn requires a very different partnership between civil society and the state in which the latter does not so much control, but establishes the conditions that facilitate, regulate and propitiate local education within a wider, national framework.

In summary, this paper takes issue with the assumption that the size of a social phenomenon is the measure of its importance and that the further from mainstream, growth policies it is, the less value it has. In education the opposite may be true. What ought to be the criteria of value is the quality and nature of the work it accomplishes. Popular educational initiatives challenge the idea that public education is best driven from above, and counterpose it with the view that being a public good it concerns the public not just the government. Popular initiatives also act on the conviction that educational advance can be effectively achieved by de-centering it and making it serve the public, and the aspirations of its divergent sections. In this way their sustainability is most effectively secured.

Skills Training in Rural Secondary Schools;
Sustainability Challenges of a Meaningful Experience in Mexico.

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The educational system faces important challenges when it endeavours to address the educational and job-training needs of young people living in impoverished sectors. Set up in 1982, the Community-linked Telesecondary Schools (Spanish initials: TVC) are an
example of an educational practice developed at lower secondary education level in vulnerable contexts. The TVCs offer job training as part of their curriculum and set out to provide an education that is relevant to the profile and needs of students from such contexts. This type of program has the legitimate aim of offering schooling that responds to: (i) the lack of programs at this level in rural areas, (ii) student desertion on completing this level, (iii) the need to anchor young people in their communities, thus preventing them from migrating, and (iv) the need to develop local productive options.

The TVC educational model, developed in 14 schools belonging to the Telesecondary system, consists of a flexible, nation-wide, government-run programme designed for isolated rural zones. Hence, though the TVCs are bound by the same rules that apply to the Telesecondary system, what makes them different is their implementation of an innovative model that was created at the local level in the northerly mountain region of the State of Puebla. The said model consists of five basic components: an alternation between education and productive activities that links theoretical content to practical work-related activities carried out by the students in workshops; practical research projects that link the contents of each scholastic level with local and regional concerns; the recovery and complementing of know-how whereby students recuperate traditional community knowledge; communicative-expression furthering whole language (involving oral, body-language, dramatic and artistic skills); and life within the educational community that helps the student to develop social competence by experiencing school as a place for socializing.

An outstanding feature of the model is the inclusion in the curriculum of work activities that involve participation by the students in various productive workshops (devoted to bakery, vegetable growing, preserve making, mushroom cultivation and handicraft creation). This structure overcomes the traditional split between education and work by incorporating the latter into everyday scholastic life.

In short, the TVC experience is proposed as a contribution to efforts to redefine traditional education, springing up out of local practice per se, rather than constituting a model imposed from outside.

To what extent, then, can we speak of self-sustainability when referring to the TVC experience? Various research studies of the programme have pointed out certain limitations -such as improvisation by the teachers, parental doubts about the productive elements, the low level of preparation of the students involved in the various workshop activities, and the dearth of job-related skills in graduating students- that affect its sustainability. Nevertheless, not only do these shortfalls take second place to the model’s achievements; they arise precisely because of the magnitude of the challenge faced by the TVCs.

As indicated in the following list of pros and cons, though the study of this programme that was carried out from 2005 to 2007 points to a series of situations that weaken the experience, nevertheless it simultaneously acknowledges organizational and knowledge-generating processes that strengthen it:
• Effectiveness is watered down as a result of teachers both being rotated within the TVC system and switched between the said system and other ones, since the knowledge accumulated in the special technical workshops is lost. However, the said teachers constitute a collective group whose members are willing to learn about the productive workshops by watching them and making them more systematic.
• The said teachers report that one of the main difficulties is the fragility of the workshops, since new practices get watered down, while the learning-for-life aspect of them is forgotten, making it necessary to “start all over again”. On the other hand, the incursion of teachers into new specialized areas leads to a flexible attitude towards work on the part of both teachers and students.
• The lack of financing for the workshops, which are not covered by the federal budget that is assigned, is another limiting factor, forcing the schools to look for alternative funding in order to shore up this component and maintain high training quality.
• Social and economic pressures win out over the schooling in question, since, though the aim is to prevent young people from leaving their communities, the TVCs are unable to achieve this objective in the face of spiralling migration and its inevitable cultural and economic effects.
• The project is dependent on a body of teachers whose initial training, which has been along the same lines as that provided to TVC teachers, results in teachers identifying with, and becoming committed to, the project. However, this situation can be seen as a weakness, since teachers trained in other systems, who are not familiar with job-related training and other aspects of the model, are also assigned to the programme, so that their involvement in, and commitment to, the TVCs are weaker. Though the TVCs’ dependence on a leader-organizer who has functioned as an overseer of the project from the outset might be seen as a drawback, the length of the experience, along with a solid structure, ongoing, intensive on-the-job teacher training and high levels of teacher commitment lead us to conclude that the wheels might well keep turning even without such a leader.

Faced with the aforesaid limitations, one can point to some factors that could arguably support the conclusion that the project is self-sustaining. One such feature is the system’s special *sui-generis* location within the federal Telesecondary programme. In other words, due to the activities and links of the experienced leaders, the TVC has run for 25 years as a programme attached to the Telesecondary schools, but without operating in the same way as the latter – i.e. a different model has been allowed to operate within, and run alongside, the context of a federal programme.

Over time, it has been possible to put down roots inside the official structure, so that we can be optimistic both that the program in question will be able to keep running and remain self-supporting, and also that it can be expanded to other regions where Telesecondary schools exist. This is very significant and leads one to believe that much remains to be learned in the future regarding the advantages of promoting educational innovation within the confines of the official education system. Another significant feature is the way in which the project has continued to renew itself and generate innovation based on its own dynamics and the lessons learned along the way. Moreover, there is a track record of joint participation by students, parents and the community,
which bears witness to the project’s increasing consolidation in the different community environments where the schools operate.

Finally, another crucial aspect of the project’s ability to sustain itself is the presence of work as the linchpin of the whole experience, slotting into the other innovative dimensions of the program, rather than being something separate from it. One point to be stressed in this regard is the way in which the teaching staff impart a wide range of meanings to the work component, just as the workshops, in practice, serve different purposes for the students, allowing them to acquire various technical, work-related and emotional competencies, making it easier for them to fit into the job market, laying the foundations for the possible development of micro-enterprises, enabling local resources to be exploited, forging community links, and providing a context in which values and attitudes (pertaining to leadership, teamwork, etc.) may be fostered.

These varied conceptions of job training are just the opposite of authoritarian schemes based on models bent on homogenization. In the TVCs, experience itself leads to reinvention and learning on the part of both students and teachers, making it possible for new meanings to spring up out of a praxis that is open to change and diversity. Thus, it is not resources or adherence to standard patterns that guarantee sustainability, but, rather, training per se. In other words, the high quality of the training and the resultant satisfaction of the students, teachers and parents constitute a cornerstone of sustainability, being in turn, rendered possible only by the existence of the teaching collective.

Are Expansion and Quality Both Sustainable in Latin American Secondary Education?

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Progress was made in terms of access to basic education in most of the Latin American countries during the last few decades. Gross enrolment ratios in secondary education, which is increasingly considered as the minimum level required to have access to paid employment, rose by nearly 70%. Nevertheless, there are still some serious problems to resolve: a very high proportion of children and adolescents still leave the school system very early, without acquiring the minimum levels of knowledge and skills needed to integrate into society. Repetition of grades and overage pupils, together with a low level of learning of the basic contents of the education provided, are also typical characteristics of the Latin American education systems.

On average, almost 40% of Latin American adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age drop out of school at some point during the basic education cycle, and almost half of those who drop out do so at an early stage, before completing their primary education. School dropout, be it during or on completion of the primary cycle, or during the
secondary cycle, is much more frequent among the poorest households. On average, the global dropout rate in the first income quartile in urban areas is 37%, whereas in the highest-income quartile it is 14%. Disadvantaged youths who begin vocational training programmes without having finished secondary education are often lacking in basic ‘transferable’ skills, which can apply to a variety of situations, not only because they dropped out early, but also because the schools they attended were not good enough. These youngsters face risks of long-term exclusion from work, as well as serious difficulties with social integration.

To address this situation, a number of programmes have been created which aim at providing these youths with the opportunity to be reinserted into more flexible formal education and training schemes to finish secondary school and/or acquire the basic and technical skills they need for the workplace.

Some countries have developed alternative schemes involving distance education and evening classes. However, a number of other risks have emerged. Although opening schools in marginal districts offers more opportunities for children living there to continue their education, it can also mean access to a notoriously low-quality system of education.

A number of NGO initiatives have shown that social and cultural projects as well as support to individuals and groups can provide a good starting point, motivating students to stay in or return to school. Scholarship schemes are another strategy to improve the retention. Flexible programs support youth and adults in flexible basic and secondary education. But, after all these efforts, do the youth learn what they need to get good jobs and a quality way of life?

Of course, the response involves not only education but also other development policies. But even concerning education, although there is a broad consensus that greater retention should go hand in hand with improved learning processes, too often policies to improve retention are perceived as lowering academic standards. So, the dilemma is not only how to expand secondary education but how to improve current strategies to foster and sustain quality.
EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: LEARNING FROM CHINA, JAPAN AND THE OECD
Education and Sustainable Growth in Africa: Following the Path of a Beijing Consensus?

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Keywords
China, Education, Growth, Development

Summary
This paper examines the relationship between education, growth and development, using the debate on China’s cooperation with Africa as a case study.

Introduction

Most development projects adhere to some form of modernization theory, in which development is almost synonymous with economic growth. Education is considered as an ingredient to drive this growth. In the 1980s and subsequent to Reagan’s definition of the state as being a “part of the problem”, a purified marked-based version of the growth paradigm was established and known under the term “Washington Consensus”. In 1987 the term “sustainable” was introduced into the development discourse by the Brundtland report, favoring ecologically sound growth. The notion of sustainability was adopted by most development agencies, and was also incorporated into the neoliberal discourse. The ultimate goal of development, of course, was still seen as economic growth, often while paying lip services to the term “sustainable”.

China’s discourse on a market-based “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, its economic growth, and the recent expansion of its Africa cooperation have led to growing interest on China-Africa relations and to a questioning of whether the China-proposed model is different from the Western growth-based paradigm. This paper examines the relationship between education, growth and development, using the debate on China’s cooperation with Africa as a case study.

Towards a “Beijing Consensus”?

A cooperation forum between China and Africa in Beijing in November 2006 received unprecedented media attention because of China’s new aid pledges to Africa. The aid is aimed at capacity building and technology expertise transfer in agriculture, medical, health and educational areas. Accordingly, the Chinese Government plans to increase the training of African specialists in various fields from 10,000 in the 2004-06 period to 15,000 in the following three years. The aid package includes assistance to African countries to set up one hundred schools; a pledge to increase the number of scholarships given to African students to study in China from 2,000 to 4,000 per year by 2009, as well as an offer of training to educational officials and heads of leading educational institutions.
China’s own economic success and its development engagement with African nations have led many observers to question whether there is a Chinese model for development, a “Beijing Consensus”. This development strategy is, according to Joshua Ramo of the Foreign Policy Centre (who coined the term of “Beijing Consensus”), based on three pillars, which include innovation- and knowledge-led growth, a focus on the quality of life (instead of economic performance), and self-determination. It is difficult to consider China as a bilateral donor without considering it as the diffuser of a development model along the lines of such “Beijing Consensus” because of its tremendous success in economic development. One of the means China may use to propagate its development views is through the International Poverty Reduction Centre in China (IPRCC), a 2005 joint government and UNDP initiative which has as its aim to gather and distribute lessons on poverty reduction in China and internationally.

Whereas most international observers welcome China’s accelerated engagement with Africa, others have pointed out that there are also grounds for caution. Concerns about the Chinese cooperation with Africa are related to China’s policy of “non-interference” in local affairs and hence its dealings with a number of leaders who have been criticized for human rights abuses, environmental destruction and large-scale corruption. Further, China’s education cooperation with Africa has been criticized for merely being a part of a larger strategy to obtain access to African resources, and especially oil. However, in many ways China’s approach is not very different from the aid offered by Western states, which also promote their own economic concerns through development and investment packages to poor countries.

**China as an unsustainable model**

Capitalist privatization and economic development in a totalitarian setting has proved to be a mix leading China to a possible ecological disaster. In rural areas, land degradation affects more than half of the country’s pastures and this has direct adverse consequences for 400 million people, whereas soil erosion may impact as much as one-third of China's total land area. Mao had attempted to create a very equal society in China and this was reflected by the Gini coefficient, which decreased from 0.33 in 1930s to about 0.16 in 1980, before rising to 0.45 in 2004 as an effect of the new economic policies. Currently, both ethnic and geographical inequalities are on the rise and can be discerned as potential sources of future conflict. I would contend, therefore, that China's much-hailed economic policies has (at least) two major drawbacks - destruction of the environment and the growth of a society with a huge disparity in economic terms. Both these issues have the potential to fester with alarming consequences. Implicit in this scenario is the debate as to which extent should these policies should be emulated elsewhere and indeed whether at all Africa would wish to follow the same path.

Similarly, in the field of education, it seems that China may not have much to offer as a model of development. China spends less of its GDP on education than most other countries: its target for 2007 was 4% of GDP. Current statistics puts the expenditure on education even lower, at less than 3% (2.82% according to *People's Daily*, January 2007). This is largely due to the introduction of user fees at all levels of education. Also,
Chinese education, since Deng Xiaoping’s opening speech at the National Conference on Education in Beijing in April 1978, appears to emulate Western education in its focus on an education system that is ironically at the service of the economy. In general, the Chinese education system can be characterized by the uneasy cohabitation of emphasis on expertise and modernity (leading to economic growth) as well as on social control and politics. Indeed, it can be said that the Chinese education system serves a dual purpose of creating capitalist uncritical economic development and at the same time preserving an undemocratic and politically frozen society. It is likely that this incongruence between of political control and modernity may prove to be a recipe for social unrest in the future. As an example or model of educational structure, its usefulness for Africa may be very limited.

Conclusion

China is increasingly involved in the education, growth and development discourse. For example, in 2005 it gathered African education ministers to sign a Beijing declaration on cooperation in education, and on education as a human right. Teachers from China are being dispatched to Africa and schools constructed, though within China education remains low on the domestic priority list. These apparent contradictions of China's engagements with African education remain largely unstudied. Further, when analysing China’s engagement with Africa (and the possibility of a Chinese model, a “Beijing Consensus”), it is important to nuance China’s great economic achievement and its failure in environmental protection and in creating equal development, so as to avoid an indiscriminate export of Chinese education and development programs to Africa. Maybe it is time to find an African model for Africa?

The Impact of Compulsory Education: a Layman’s Explanation of “Instrumental Variable” Techniques and Findings from Taipei, China

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I. Assessing the Value of Education

In the development literature, there is a large body of research to indicate that education, perhaps particularly basic education, matters. In the economics literature, much of this research has focused on estimating the value of, or “economic returns” to, education in

terms of things like adult wages, and generally finds that returns to primary and secondary schooling are larger in developing vis-à-vis industrialized economies.

At the same time, while the basic finding that “education is good” confirms what we’d all expect, several issues emerge as we look more closely into interpreting the numbers. The first set of these remains within the realm of economics—more specifically the field of econometrics—and deals with how much we can trust the numbers or the “leap of faith” between correlation and causality. Namely, much of the earlier literature runs statistical regressions of (for example) adult wages versus years of schooling and a range of other variables for which data is available, and interprets the coefficient on schooling as the increase in wages caused by each additional year of schooling. However, such estimates may be confounded by problems such as biases from omitted variables. For example, a child’s intellect (which by itself has implications for career prospects) may influence whether he/she stays in school, what economists term the problem of endogeneity, which would confound any simple attribution that school causes higher wages. Similarly, complex factors like parents’ social status clearly affect children’s development prospects above and beyond their parallel affect on children’s schooling; so if the former goes unmeasured, a simple regression may attribute the former effect to the schooling variable. Econometrics has provided an increasingly sophisticated array of tools to deal with such potential biases, including the technique of instrumental variables (IV) noted below.

For the development community more broadly, a second set of issues is whether wage returns “tell the whole story”, particularly in terms of implications for national policy or project interventions. For example, research (and perhaps more universally practitioners’ intuition) suggest that while the benefits of tertiary education accrue largely to the individual (e.g., higher wages), basic education can also yield society-wide and cross-generational benefits. These appear particularly strong in the case of girl’s schooling and female literacy: e.g., evidence from an array of countries almost universally finds that an educated mother invests more in the “human capital” of her children. The presence of such spillovers or “externalities” (i.e., which explain why the economist’s “rational decision-maker” may under-invest in public goods from a society’s standpoint) provides a strong justification for state investment. Of course, in untangling the causal role of formal education vis-à-vis other factors, one faces the same issues noted above.

II. The Case of Taipei, China’s 1968 Reform

While falling short of the hard scientist’s controlled laboratory experiment (or social scientists’ analogue of controlled pilot testing of multiple interventions in the field), so-called “policy experiments” sometimes exist that allow similar comparisons across experimental and control groups of people. Reforms in Taipei, China in 1968 that extended compulsory education from 6 to 9 years (i.e., adding lower secondary schooling), combined with the availability of extensive household data, provide such an opportunity to untangle a more credibly causal effect between education and various workforce and other outcomes.
To purposively oversimplify the perhaps rather daunting econometrics, start in the year 1950 and imagine that all children in a society born in that and subsequent years were assigned and received exactly six years of state-provided primary education. A graphical profile would show a flat line at six years of education across cohorts born in 1950, 1951, and so on. If, in this hypothetical case, the norm were switched to 9 years of schooling for cohorts born in 1955 onwards, the profile would trace out a step (an upward shift). Assuming this were the only major external shock that differentially affected those born before and after 1955, this would present a very easy test for whether education impacts (for example) average age at marriage: if yes, we’d expect to find a similar step-like profile in a graph for that. In either case, while we’d have a difficult time attributing different marital ages for two males born in 1954 to their different educational attainments (rather than for example reflect different family backgrounds), we would feel much more confident in attributing any difference in average marital ages between all males born in 1955 versus 1954 (cohorts who should otherwise be identical on average).

This is the essence of the econometric technique of “instrumental variables” (IV): in this case, we ignore data for individuals’ actual years of education (which might conceal factors like family background) and instead only throw into the regression their year of birth as a proxy or instrument for education.

Before departing from hypothetical simplicity, it should be noted that the logic wouldn’t change if average age at marriage were actually increasing across birth cohorts along a constant underlying trend: if education matters, we would expect to find the same step-up but with lines leading into and out of the step sloped according to that trend. Likewise, we’d expect a similar upward shift if average years of education by cohort were subject to constant underlying trend on both sides of the policy shock. Finally, if we wanted to look for the impact of education on other outcomes like wages, we’d have to find a way to untangle factors like respondents’ age at the date surveyed. The econometrics gets complicated, but the fundamental focus remains very simple: looking for corresponding jumps in schooling and the outcome variable of interest.

Interestingly, the profile of average years of education for males born in Taipei, China around the 1950s looks remarkably similar to the sloped step conjectured above. While not quite as sharp as the jump in that idealized profile, a cohort-by-cohort plot of average years of schooling for boys shows an upward shift vis-à-vis an underlying trend line starting with the 1955 cohort—precisely those who turned age 13 (the norm for lower secondary school entry) in or just after 1968, the year in which Taipei, China extended compulsory education from 6 to 9 years. After a short transition period, average years of education across birth cohorts return to remarkably similar trend rate.

**Did the reform work?—Impact on education levels.** While uptake was not universal (i.e., some non-compliance), data from household surveys confirm the increases shown in enrolment figures. Interestingly, while girls’ schooling had been catching up with boys (rising along a faster underlying trend), the reform appears to have had less impact on girls’ schooling: I estimate upward shifts relative to pre-existing trends of more than 0.4 years of education for males and 0.25 years for females in the first six cohorts affected by compulsory junior high schooling. Virtually all of this increase is explained by rising
years of lower secondary schooling, which again suggests that it was the reform (rather than, for example, the effects of hidden labor market shifts on returns to education) that drove the increase. While this is somewhat surprising given that lower initial enrolment rates meant that the reform had a larger potential impact on girls’ access to lower secondary schooling, but it may be explained by social and cultural factors. Finally, in terms of policy implications for other contexts, it important to note that the reform’s impact on raising enrolments in part traces back to a reinforcing supply-side factor: aggressive investment in school construction in the two years prior to the reform.

**So does education really matter?** Findings from this policy experiment in Taipei, China suggest a resounding “yes”. Moreover, while the finding that the reform caused a more muted upward shift in girls’ schooling may be somewhat “disappointing”, the estimates confirm broader evidence and intuition in finding that expanded education had a bigger impact on females, conditional on having received education thanks to the reform (see also below).

First, I find increased wages (economists’ typical focus in estimating returns to education), but moreover an increased likelihood that the individual is even engaged in formal wage-based employment. An additional year of schooling is estimated to increase males’ likelihood of reporting positive earnings by roughly 2% and, controlling for this selection effect, to raise annual earnings from work by 5.8%. Corresponding effects are stronger for females: the preferred specification indicates a 5.2% increase in the likelihood of reporting earnings, and a rise in earnings of 16.7% per year of additional schooling. Part of this is explained by the reform’s apparent role in shifting men and women who would most likely otherwise have worked in agriculture into industry and service sectors.

To look at broader impacts of girls’ schooling associated with the 1968 reform, I used a much smaller, single-year Taiwan Women and Family Survey (1989) and a more complex IV estimation approach. While subject to large standard errors, I find the following effects, which are plausible and align with broader empirical evidence:

(i) **age at marriage** increases roughly 1-to-1 with additional years of schooling;

(ii) maternity behaviour and **investment in children’s human capital**—an additional year of mother’s schooling (as a girl) appears to raise the likelihood that her own children will be enrolled in kindergarten by at least 8%;

(iii) effects (albeit imprecisely estimated) on **health and old age security**: e.g., a year of schooling appears associated with at least an 8% rise in the likelihood a woman will have accumulated any retirement savings by the date surveyed; and

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11 For those affected by the reform, I estimate that a year of additional schooling increased the likelihood of being in wage-based employment by roughly 4% for males and 6% for females.
a statistically significant impact of schooling on a multi-dimensional proxy of empowerment (including women’s autonomous control of their own income).

Looking beyond the numbers: are IV estimates really “better”? 
There is much discussion in the economics literature on use of IV or other techniques to avoid biases such as due to the noted problems of endogeneity or unmeasured factors. In this case, by comparing across birth cohorts (in the absence of any other obvious birth year-specific shock) rather than individuals, we can be more confident that our estimates are “cleaner” and that correlation reflects causality. However, while much less recognized in studies using IV estimation, an equally important subtlety concerns what Imbens and Angrist (1994) call “local average treatment effects”. Namely, strictly speaking, what IV in this case is measuring is the effect of education on only those persons for whom the reform caused a specific behavioural shift: i.e., we are measuring the impact of lower secondary schooling on precisely those individuals who would not likely have received that schooling in the absence of the policy shift (reflecting, for example, their parents’ low income and/or low value placed on education). I would thus argue that IV-based estimation provides a more compelling picture for thinking about policies (in this case or other contexts) on extending compulsory education to the extent these are justified as enhancing equity: i.e., expanding enrolment and providing longer-term benefits to more marginalized groups.

III. Broader Lessons

While the 1968 reform was not pursued in isolation from other policies and shifts, looking back nearly four decades later, Taipei, China’s experience appears to provide strong evidence that universalizing access to good quality and affordable basic education remains fundamentally important to promoting inclusive growth and equitable development.

But what about sustainability? Arguably, the latter needs to be assessed in a different light for public goods like basic education. Whereas cost-recovery may be the best yardstick for services with benefits accruing mostly to individuals, for those with considerable (and often non-monetized) benefits for society as a whole, I would argue that sustainability often boils down, first and foremost, to government commitment. Alongside the noted pre-reform school construction boom, government expenditure on education nearly tripled (in nominal terms) from school years 1965-66 to 1970-71, comprising a growing majority of total (public plus private) expenditures on education, which reached the 4 percent of GDP threshold in the first year of the reform.

Looking across the Taiwan Strait, the People’s Republic in China (PRC) has enacted a reform to phase out fees for nine-year compulsory education in rural areas starting in the poorer Western Region in 2006, an historic move to which the Asian Development Bank
is very proud to have contributed via dialogue with Government partners. More generally, for developing countries, it appears clear that adopting (including fully operationalizing and adequately funding) such policies, particularly in poorer rural areas, represents a key step in leveling the playing field and shifting from vicious to virtuous cycles of human capital accumulation and overall wellbeing.

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Gaps for effective skills development in low income developing countries

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Key words
Skills development, policy, finance, relevance

Summary
Low-income developing countries face increased demand for strengthening skills development in the wake of sustained economic growth in recent years. This article raises cautions to the countries by saying that lack of clarity and consistency in policy orientation, along with three main gaps in policy, finance and relevance may impede effectiveness of renewed investment in skills development.

Policy Orientation
Human resources development is viewed by policy makers in low-income developing countries as a vital element for achieving development goals. Skills development (SD) is an important aspect of the human resources development and its roles are explained largely by two approaches to respective policy objectives. The first approach is associated with economic growth and enhanced competitiveness of the country trying to respond to changing technologies and industrial needs. Human capital theory backs up this approach. SD that meets this need is expected to continuously upgrade skills of learners. The second approach includes social protection and poverty reduction. The government makes efforts to equip the target population with necessary life skills and basic industrial skills that will enable them to engage in economic activities thereby uplifting their living standards.

It would be misleading, however, to think that the two approaches are distinctly different. If, for instance, under the social protection approach, SD fails to provide opportunities for continued upgrading, acquired skills may only be useful for a limited purpose, and therefore students and trainees will have a limited upward social mobility. SD needs to be understood to include a wider scope that goes beyond equipping learners with specific and static skills but more importantly with continuous, or sustainable, trainability. Ability

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12 In March 2008, the PRC subsequently announced the move to eliminate fees for urban compulsory education.
to apply the acquired skills and to adapt to changes will form a basis for the trainability which in turn requires a solid ground developed by basic education cycle before taking a technical or vocational stream.

For SD to be effective, efforts in supplying a quality labor force must be matched by concerted measures on the demand side. Policy interventions have to stimulate an active labor market and be directed to improve access to credit and new technologies, especially by small-scale industries that often face market failures.

**Three Gaps for effective SD**

Over the past several years, many developing countries that export natural resources and raw-materials have been enjoying a healthy economic growth. This enhances demand for SD, even if the in-country industrial value-added may not have increased much. But the weak private sector economy cannot provide necessary SD by itself and necessitates increased roles in SD to be played by the public sector. Before embarking on a massive investment in public SD, countries should be reminded of typical gaps that they tend to face - policy, finance and relevance gaps.

Too often, policy makers tend to set a vision that is too ambitious -such as to become a globally competitive middle-income nation by 2020 - when the country's industrial base is still weak and an informal sector dominates economic activities. SD policies tend to be drawn up without a realistic pathway to reach the goal and without close consultation with business community, opening a gap between SD policies and actual needs of the workplace.

The second gap is between policy intents and budget allocation. In most low-income developing countries, technical and vocational education receives a meager portion of the total education sector budget. Both an expansion of primary education and subsequent needs for expanding secondary education, and increasing pressure to strengthen higher education in an effort to be competitive in a globalized economy simply give rise to a harsher competition for intra-sectoral resource allocation. Limited resources available for public provision of SD coupled with weak cooperation with industry leave little scope for modernizing equipment and attracting competent teachers, making a school-based SD a less favored option for students and trainees. This only helps to mount a criticism against public intervention in this area.

Policy goals so detached from the reality, curriculum formulated without listening to voices of the industry, and equipment and methods left un-updated for long all lead to lack of relevance of SD. Furthermore, the aspiration of learners to get a high-income job is often denied by absence of job offering in such a specific desired area. Lack of timely and accurate information on the job market further aggravates the learners’ employability - a key indicator of relevance.

Countries that are about to embark on a massive investment in SD are invited to review their policy environment and conduct a realism check to make the best use of limited resources. This might help to ensure that SD (Skills Development) also contributes to SD
The standard boilerplate printed in every Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) education publication might be read as a warning label as much as a mission statement. In its importunate mantra, the OECD vows to promote policies designed to achieve economic expansion and growth in member countries through the expansion of world trade. Within this framework of economic growth and expansion, the OECD coordinates, develops, and disseminates thematic research and policy initiatives. As these themes are examined comparatively, many of the same ideological goals emerge. Phillip Jones articulates the result of this pattern quite perceptively, “...why is it that in many dispersed and disparate parts of the world we see homogeneity in educational decision-making? Differences of local tradition, convention and politics would normally suggest a far greater diversity in educational developments than we are currently witnessing world-wide” (Jones 1994). In further analysis of the relationship between the OECD and Member States, Kopra’s (2004) research on Finnish education contends that OECD research suffers from a lack of neutrality, which may affect the credibility of their work. This lack of neutrality is manifested through “a clear vision of the advantages of the market economy and liberalization” (Kopra).

This unwavering predilection for educational privatization has been central to the OECD’s global sphere of influence for half a century. Inasmuch, they are responsible for the widespread promotion of an educational ideology which is highly experimental. This ongoing experiment of inverting the basic tenets of educational funding and purpose has had a deleterious effect on the ability of nations to meet the needs of their populations. If education is the remediation for disease, illiteracy, starvation, and unemployment we must now consider that OECD education policy has played a causal role in failing to overcome these obstacles. Therefore, OECD education policy not only hinders the ability of nations to equitably finance education, but also stymies their potential for future growth and prosperity.
Over the decades, the various organizational appendages of the OECD, (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, commissions, committees, Directorate, etc.) have largely focused their work around a small cache of familiar themes. These themes and programs form the preponderant substance of their research and subsequent policy positions. One of the most overarching OECD policies is to establish a flexible and retrainable workforce willing to forego a comprehensive general education early in life in exchange for the opportunity to learn specific skills later in life. This underlying premise benefits industry interests in various immeasurable ways, not only lightening the burden on industry to train workers, but also mitigating their responsibility for excess labour.

Various flavours of the month, including: Demand-side Schooling, Human Capital, Knowledge Society, Learning Society, Lifelong Learning, Recurrent Education, Reschooling, Schooling for Tomorrow, ad infinitum...all share similar constructs and goals, having been re-researched and repackaged in order to adapt to societal trends. Does the research produced by these OECD umbrella programs have the primary onus of fulfilling OECD’s vision and goals...as opposed to the search for truth? Regardless of methodology, there exists a great risk of irreconcilable bias stemming from the self-fulfilling prophecy that binds the motivation, implementation, outcome, dissemination, and perceived credibility of such research. This bias is perhaps best articulated by the OECD itself, “The distinctive perspective applied by the OECD to its educational activities derives from the importance attached to the interaction between education, the economy, and the wider society” (OECD 1985). This perspective is the crux of the issue...that OECD education research is conceived almost exclusively within the context of the economy; diplomatically disposing of any pedagogical philosophy or analytical paradigm not aligned with neoliberal theory or supported by econometric measurement. Of course, not every scholar who has written for the OECD is pushing a singular vision of education; however, much of the research donning the OECD label is produced using a unique OECD shade of Claude glass.

Public relations-oriented research themes like Lifelong Learning are merely selling a truism both in concept and practice. Of course human beings are engaged in lifelong learning...from the day we are born to the day we die, humans continue to learn. Lifelong Learning is simply a strategy to control what is learned. The OECD often claims a universal and unequivocal support for Lifelong Learning: “Lifelong Learning is now the broad aim that commands widespread consensus as the way ahead for education” (OECD 1999). As Jakobi notes, this ambiguity allows for vastly differing practices to be grouped under the same overarching title (Jakobi 2006). Which, of course, makes gaining a consensus quite easy, much like getting a consensus for lifelong health or lifelong happiness...of course there would be consensus! Claiming public consensus for a generalized concept while manipulating the details privately leads to a dictatorial and coercive policy process. Indeed, the devil is in the details.

OECD literature on Demand-side Schooling persuades readers to accept the premise that education will improve only when the monopoly of public education can be broken (OECD 1996, 2006). Unfounded claims such as public schools being characterized, “first and foremost by lack of opportunity for external voice to be heard” (OECD 2006) are
endemic throughout their publications. These types of statements are central to the neoliberal interpretation of education: that the market provides greater voice, choice, and quality than public systems. In reality Demand-side configurations, like user fees, decrease school enrollment and put excessive burden on the poorest families (WB 1997). User fees create a sort of hyper-regressive tax; whereas, the family not only has to pay a disproportionate share of their income for education, but also must consider that sending their child to school may constitute an additional loss of income from the child working fewer hours in the family business, farming, etc.

*Human Capital* has been a topic of debate for at least 50 years. The theory of *Human Capital* allows economists and the lay public to quantify, and thus justify, the value of education. This quantification can then become a numerical representation of a nation’s collective educational capital investment and holdings. Educational expenditures are calculated against the anticipated worker productivity in an attempt to assess the rate of return on educational investment. The OECD makes numerous claims about the value of the *Human Capital* approach to education, from the conceivable to the outlandish, such as implying *Human Capital* may help to lower suicide rates and incidence of Alzheimer's (OECD 2007).

*Recurrent Education* was a major source of debate in educational circles of the 1970s and constituted a large portion of OECD research of the period. The OECD focused a large portion of their resources on developing and promoting the concept of an alternating pattern of education and work throughout one’s life. The intent was to redistribute educational opportunities with an emphasis on adults rather than youth. The rapid expansion of education in the 1950s and 60s, and the subsequent recession of the 70s, resulted in many calls for a slowdown in educational expenditures (UNESCO 1977). This concept of amortizing education over one’s lifetime became a popular selling point for decreasing educational expenditures. Although heavily lobbied throughout the world for over a decade, *Recurrent Education* was dismissed summarily by teachers, high level policy makers, and the public alike (Kallen 1979; OECD 1994). Whether by *Recurrent Education, Lifelong Learning*, or one of their many other monikers, the OECD has admittedly spent decades attempting “to shift the centre of gravity of educational effort towards adults and older people” (OECD 2000).

The OECD has harnessed its boundless resources and supranational influence to a two-fold belief that schools should be modelled after businesses, and education should primarily prepare students for the workforce. Thus, instead of measuring success in terms of the individual, the individual is measured in terms of future productivity. The needs of industry to maintain a trained workforce are therefore competing with the individual’s right to self-determination. The framework for this concept is specified in numerous OECD publications, (OECD 1995; et al) which discuss such topics as the ramifications of over-educating and the cost effectiveness of correlating educational expenditure with anticipated workforce needs. Might some nations be directed to steer their education systems to cultivate future workers for specific industries in the global workforce? Like pieces in a global puzzle...certain nations accepting a prescribed course of skills-based
education for their citizens while other nations are encouraged to provide access to more comprehensive bodies of knowledge.

Given the chronic failures over the last 50 years to redress inequality and inefficiency in education, we must now question whether the OECD’s mono-faceted approach to education is contraindicative to sustainable growth? Under the tutelage of the OECD, education has largely become a socioeconomic commodity further exacerbating the divisions between wealth and poverty on a global scale. The OECD has been quite aware for decades of its omnipotent impact upon education; as seen in such infrequent admonishments, “There is some evidence to support the view that financial constraints, caused by heavy investments in the economic and other social sectors, but also the predominantly quantitative approach to human capital investment, have led to a situation where the evolution of the educational system was severely limited in its possibilities for fundamental changes” (OECD 1971). This orchestrated evolution continues today, and the lack of fundamental change in education has, at best, resulted in sustainable stagnation rather than growth. Flying under the radar of public scrutiny, their stealthy modus operandi has succeeded in allowing the OECD to affect education unlike any other person or entity...and so it goes...

References


NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: SOUTH AFRICA
Going for Growth or Development? Fractured State and Ruptured Policy: 
the National Qualifications Framework in South Africa

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Keywords
National Qualifications Frameworks, Post Apartheid State

Summary
The paper considers the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa. It argues that the implementation of a single integrated framework of qualifications failed as the policy ruptured along a fault line within the post-apartheid state between practices building a corporatist state and those constructing a developmental state. The differing forms of the emergent state were associated with different visions of education, training, and sustainable development. The ruptured policy points to complex challenges that states in transition face when simultaneously articulating with globalised discursive practices for growth, and for sustainable development.

The first piece of education legislation passed by South Africa’s democratically elected government provided for the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (RSA, 1995). By bringing education and training together through a coherent approach to qualifications, the framework was intended to build new forms of equality across apartheid’s differences, not only between education and training, but across other divisions they buttressed; thinkers and workers, men and women, black and white. New qualifications would be designed to ensure the development of knowledge and skills for both economic growth and social transformation. Yet, by 2001, only six years after the idea of an NQF had enjoyed extraordinary consensus in Parliament, the Minister of Education was so concerned about its implementation that he commissioned a review of its progress (DoE/DoL, 2002). The review revealed widespread dissatisfaction with practices associated with the NQF, and a deep rift between the fields of education and training that threatened integration. It seemed that instead of weakening differences, the NQF had strengthened them.

This paper briefly examines contestation over the NQF, drawing on the findings of doctoral research (Lugg, 2007) and using concepts derived from Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory to reveal how political frontiers were drawn in changing political conditions. It argues that the implementation of an integrated framework stalled along a fault line within the post-apartheid state between practices building a corporatist state and those constructing a developmental state, each associated with different visions for education and training for sustainable development.
Several writers have noted that the idea of an integrated framework of qualifications emerged as a point of consensus during negotiations associated with the transition to a democratic market economy (McGrath, 1996; Chisholm and Fuller, 1996; Jansen, 2001; Allais, 2003). Similarly, antagonisms generated within the post-apartheid state can be traced to struggles over the link between education and development taking place during the same political period. In the early 1990s, groups within organised labour began to view global markets and international competition as a threat to South African workers’ survival. Drawing on strategies that had benefited workers in Australia and Canada they argued that South Africa’s growth and development would be best protected through a new corporatist pact between state, labour and business and a shared focus on skills development. Recognising that high skills policies would exclude workers denied access to education under apartheid, training policies became partly constituted in terms of expansion of education. Anticipating a state with constrained resources, organised labour argued that employers must contribute to skilling the nation. The idea of an integrated framework of qualifications for all forms of education and training began to emerge linked to a corporatist state.

At the same time, education activists within the mass democratic movement began to develop education policy proposals for the post apartheid era. These were constructed in antagonism to apartheid education, and focused on the development of a single system of education founded on the principles of non-racism, redress and democracy. Drawing on experiences in late industrialising countries, the policy envisaged a state that would focus on its role in delivering education, the transformation of apartheid institutions, and prioritising resources to the most marginalised. These education strategies were argued to be essential for more equitable and sustainable forms of growth (Bennell, 1992).

With the establishment of the Government of National Unity, the two policy streams became lodged within the post-apartheid state. A new institution, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) was established to develop the NQF. The Department of Education began the daunting task of transforming all areas of education. A third policy stream emerged from the Department of Labour; a new skills development discourse built on organised labour’s policies for training reform. Differences between these policy discourses became evident in contestation between quality assurance agencies established in the fields of education and skills development, and in conflict with SAQA. Quality assurance practices and qualifications that linked the corporatist state to decentralised providers and labour market opportunities threatened practices that linked the developmental state to its education institutions – practices which in turn excluded forms of skills development from education institutions. Constructed in conflicting ways by each, SAQA could no longer suture the rift between the corporatist and development states.

The rupture within the NQF, brought into the public view in 2002, was finally resolved in 2007 when the Ministers of Education and Labour announced new institutional arrangements for quality assurance of education and training (Education and Labour, 2007). Renewed impetus to resolve the conflict had come with the government’s announcement of a new development policy, the Accelerated and Shared Growth
Initiative which placed education and skills at the core of its development strategy (McGrath and Akoojee, 2007). Emphasising the leadership role of the state in poverty reduction, the policy seemed to suggest a shift towards the development state. Yet, whether new institutions will construct revitalised equivalence between education and training, whether they mark the expansion of the developmental state in support of equity and poverty reduction, or the expansion of market forces within the state and education institutions, only the nature of future conflicts over qualifications will tell. In the meantime, the rupture in the South African NQF points to complex challenges that states in transition face when simultaneously articulating with globalised discursive practices for growth, and for sustainable development

References


Private Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Individual and National Development - Evidence from South Africa

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Keywords
South Africa, Private Vocational Education and Training, priVET

Summary
This article explores sustainability issues related to private vocational education and training in South Africa.

Recent years have seen a debate about private schooling in the South, which has examined its contribution to pro-poor access to education. However, there has not been a parallel development of new research on whether private vocational education and training (priVET) can play a similar role. In part, this may reflect the relative marginalisation of VET in education and development discourse until recently. Moreover, it may be informed by a view that VET is already the most market- and economy-oriented part of the education system and, thus, not a place to expect pro-equity developments.

However, just as part of the argument for a more nuanced view of private schooling arises out of the weaknesses of public provision; so scepticism about the pro-equity nature of priVET, understood as incorporating both the for-profit, non-profit and in-house (in company) education and training sectors, needs to be tempered by a widespread discourse about the limited pro-equity performance of public VET. Moreover, public provision internationally has become increasingly more like private in its concern for financial sustainability and its managerialist shift. Equally, private provision cannot be isolated from making some response to the national development context. Clearly, therefore, the gap between public and private is not that great and the sustainability of
both is dependent in large part on their ability to align their offerings and programmes with the prevailing national development context.

There are clearly concerns in South Africa about the sustainability of public provision as the restructured colleges are still perceived as being of low status and relevance by employers and society more generally. There are concerns too that their constrained responsiveness may make them vulnerable to competition from private providers, particularly as the latter seem better positioned to access skills levy funds.

The sustainability of private providers may depend as much on their ability to engage with the regulatory system as on learner demand. Sustainability on both grounds seems relatively unproblematic for those successfully engaging with the national skills development architecture through a focus on training the already employed. For providers catering to more vulnerable unemployed and pre-employed learners, sustainability is less certain. These providers need to attract learners who may have difficulties in paying and, indeed, may need to attract poorer students for political reasons. They may find regulation costly and time-consuming and this may further threaten their sustainability. Nonetheless, there are some providers, who clearly are performing well and have every likelihood of continuing so to do.

South Africa’s overall development project requires that relevant skills are delivered effectively and efficiently. It appears that segments of private provision are best placed to support this. However, there is need for caution about how this relates to the delivery of medium- to long-term skills development needs. Both public and private providers also need to be receptive to broader development agendas. Our evidence suggests that the private sector often performs better than public provision on race and gender (although both sectors exhibit complex demographic dynamics when the data is disaggregated). Moreover, priVET is markedly better than the public system in catering to an older, employed learner type, typically enrolled in shorter-term courses. In comparison with their public counterparts, costs for less advantaged learners are not prohibitive. Furthermore, many private providers favour a programme structure that allows learners flexibility to weave in and out of the system that is far in advance of the public system. Greater flexibility over admission requirements means that priVET may also be delivering more of the promise of recognition of prior learning, although the quality implications of this are not straightforward.

However, it must be remembered that many of those providers who are targeting the poorest learners are also themselves the poorest and most vulnerable to market failure. It is in this segment, too that the real “fly-by-nights”, those considered in official documentation to be most vulnerable to closure and considered to be exploiting poorer learners, are to be found.

The current emphasis on regulating all providers equally may not be the most efficient way of dealing with the sector. In light of the national development prerogative to protect those most vulnerable from the risk of market failure, there is need to provide support to, and exert effective regulation over, those providers most responsive to this group - in this
instance, those ‘full time’ providers responding to the pre- and unemployed learner cohort. In contrast, providers responding to the employed and corporate client groups are adequately regulated by the market and do not need much policy attention. Thus, there is a need to focus policy attention primarily on the poverty reduction rather than growth supporting elements of private vocational provision.

Finally, the state needs a better understanding of the diverse nature of private provision from which to develop a policy approach that can strategically take advantage of where private provision can support growth and equity, whilst being able to limit the risks related to the more fragile and potentially exploitative segments and institutions. Such steps can support the sustainability of both public and private provision and of the overall South African development project.

Actioning Change - Responding to Growth and Development Imperatives for Education

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Keywords
South Africa, Pro-poor Growth, Shared Growth, Developmental State, Quality and Outcomes, Balance

Summary
Continuing public investments in education must carefully balance the priorities of achieving global human rights goals such as equity and equality through universal access with that of chasing shared economic growth prospects through expanding the skills base. This paper explores the choices and trade-offs that result from this balancing act, and attempts to address the link between investments in education and shared, sustainable development.

Responding effectively and meaningfully to inequality and low levels of confidence in the quality of education requires decisive actions on the part of government and education to enhance and improve learner performance and success. With the South African government’s, and by proxy the people of the country’s, contribution to education expenditure the highest of all public institutions, the potential impact on economic and social outcomes is significant. Decisions that governments make regarding educational spending and educational service delivery are therefore critical. The South African government’s agenda in the second decade of democracy is to ensure that growth is pro-poor, that the growth agenda is shared by all the people of the country, and that to effect the change, the growth trajectory must be accelerated beyond the current levels. In an economic environment in which 23.6% of the population remain unemployed (of which
the biggest proportion is the youth), the quality of the economic growth becomes a critical success factor in shifting the development path of the province. Within the province, this economic growth is guided by a provincial growth and development strategy which aims not only to guide public and private investment decisions and development spend, but to also present this as clearly articulated plan of action and basis for a sustainable development path [1].

For South Africa, gearing itself towards meeting a transformation agenda means crafting a ‘developmental state’ capable of directing the economy on a path of innovation, sustainable growth, redistribution, and poverty reduction in order to manage the delicate balance between growth and social development [2]. Achieving this shared growth within an education system demands responsiveness on the part of government to addressing issues of equity by ensuring access to a minimum standard of educational services and prioritizing empowerment by redressing historical disadvantages. Undoing the legacy of apartheid evident in the spatial planning of schools and the social exclusion of many disadvantaged communities requires commitment and strong political will. Therefore balancing growth in education over the four key service delivery platforms of early childhood development, general education and training (primary and lower secondary), further education and training (upper secondary), tertiary and adult basic education and training is critical. In this paper, we consider the factors and the context for decision-making as it relates to determining and maintaining the balance between these sectors, both within the country as a whole, and within the Western Cape specifically. We look at arguments that address the issues of universal primary education versus skills development, the attainment versus achievement as an indicator of quality education and identify several core cross-cutting education priorities. We also consider the argument of the sector wide approach (SWAP) and identify to what extent this approach has been implemented and is successful within the South African (and in particular, the Western Cape) context. Specifically, arguments are presented that relate to the financial resourcing constraints and the human resourcing constraints being faced within the Western Cape, and the impact these have upon the ability of the government to deliver on its mandate of quality education for all.

While it would seem apparent that the South African schooling system is not producing the learner outcomes that could be expected considering the allocation of resources in comparison with both developed and developing countries in Africa, the current climate for actioning education change agendas is ripe. The first decade of democracy pursued quantitative goals, and education policies and programmes reflected this, and so paid less attention to the issues of quality, and by proxy, to the issue of the sustainability of educational interventions. With the second decade of democracy upon us, while access (in terms of enrollment, attendance and participation) must still remain a priority in order to sustain the development successes of this first era, the debate must shift from inputs to outcomes [3], which are by their nature, more relevant and more sustainable. An outcomes orientation forces education planners and agents not just to reach a target or goal, but to ensure that their strategies, activities and interventions have a greater, longer term impact on educational achievement and performance of the system as a whole.
Critical to this change agenda must be the ongoing development of the human resources within the teaching and learning system. Quality teaching, quality support from school managers, quality supervision of performance and quality continuing education for staff is the key. This is where the investment and the allocation of resources must lie. Parallel to this, is the dual dimension of creating a solid platform for learning in the early childhood development years, and the transfer of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learnt throughout school into skilled learners completing their education and entering the workplace. If an educational system is not clear about its specific objectives and priorities, it lacks any rational basis and starting point for appraising and improving its performance, and for planning its future. However, we must emphasize that these programmes can only be successful if those responsible are committed. “If we are to be successful…we would have to make some critical transitions. These include the transitions from policy to implementation, from strategy to programmes, from planning to delivery, from compliance to innovation and from caution to leadership” [4].

Notes

[3] Outcomes are more than a combination of inputs and outputs (quantitative measures of performance), but are concerned with qualitatively measuring the quality of educational programmes.

Further resources

For the full text of this article, go to:

The Western Cape Education Department appointed a small research unit to develop a series of position papers on a range of issues affecting education planning within the province. These papers (of which this paper is one in the series) are available on our website: http://wced.w cape.gov.za/HCDS
NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: ASIA
Financing Education: Thinking Holistically Toward Skills Development Beyond Basic Education

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Keywords
Education Financing, post-primary education, Education for Sustainable Development, Education For All

Summary
This article explores the interrelationship between Education for Sustainable Development and Education For All and initiates discussion on the implications of the combined intended effects of these two education mandates in terms of financing education into the future.

The interrelationship between the growing global recognition and priority accorded to both Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Education For All (EFA) is arguably worth a more close examination than perhaps has been accorded it so far. While both of these universal education initiatives are coordinated by UNESCO, it is perhaps timely to initiate discussion on the implications of the combined intended effects of these two education mandates in terms of financing education into the future. What is the current state of education financing? How will it change to continue promoting sustainability in the long-term? What are the implications for the future of education financing and prioritization of countries’ educational needs as ESD and EFA progress?

The challenges for post-primary education
Clearly as EFA, at least in terms of its quantifiable goals, makes progress towards universal primary education and increased access, then demand for the provision of secondary education will escalate and continue to do so in developing countries. What will the impact of this increased demand for post-primary education be? Where will these educated young people go and what will they learn in terms of skills for employability? How can the skills provided by post-primary education programmes be matched with both the needs of the labour market and sustainable development? These are some of the major questions arising as progress continues toward universal primary education and the need for relevant post-primary education increases. At the core of these questions, one issue exists – how the demand for quality education and relevant ‘life skills’ will be met. This issue lies at the heart of the relationship between EFA and ESD.

In the Asia-Pacific region, most countries have yet to seriously grapple with the challenges posed by EFA Goal 3: meeting the diverse needs of young people and adults through organized programmes of education, training and the building of basic skills, life skills and livelihood (UNESCO, 2007). As noted in the subregional synthesis reports for the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment among South East Asian countries, several needs still
exist with regard to meeting the skills necessary to respond to labour and market demands. These revolve around the design of relevant Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes that match demand, and allow for all learners, especially women and disadvantaged groups, to access and participate in training and life skills programmes.

**Trends and benefits of linking EFA-ESD in the area of skills**

The quest for improved quality of education is clearly the aim of both EFA and ESD. The strategic paths by which they set out to achieve these goals through skills development are somewhat different, although there is convergence. Under the Dakar Framework, EFA traditionally promotes the development of cognitive skills such as literacy and critical thinking. Also in the area of EFA, through TVET, skills have focused on specific technical areas such as cooking, mechanics and computer literacy, whereas ESD adds to EFA and TVET what are being called *soft skills*, such as reflective/systemic thinking, interpersonal and emotional skills; skills which are being seen as more and more important for quality participation and contribution to the work environment.

In a knowledge society where ESD is an integral component, an employee’s competency profile should include work-related generic skills intimately associated with sustainability. These skills focus on the capacity to apply knowledge and technology in an integrated way in work situations rather than being specific to work in particular occupations or industries. These sets of generic skills are, therefore, not only essential for effective participation in work, but are also essential for critical thinking towards sustainable development and effective participation in society more generally (UNEVOC, 2007).

Recent workshops hosted by UNEVOC with the support of UNESCO Bangkok have begun to elaborate in more detail the potential to bring the world of business and learning much more closely together, particularly through the lens of sustainability. Labour markets are increasingly searching for TVET graduates who have the ability, for example, to work as a team member, possess skills related to good communication, interpersonal relations, problem-solving, quality awareness and readiness to innovate. It is felt that these competencies have an important effect on good citizenship/social behaviour and add to the elements of, not only an outstanding company image, but leadership and management for sustainable development (UNEVOC, 2007).
Financing trends and some practical steps

According to high-level discussions in Paris on the topic of future ESD-EFA coordination, there is “seen to be ‘added value’ in linking ESD and EFA to engage the ESD and EFA constituencies in strengthening the case for increased resources and support for education and learning” (UNESCO, 2008a). Linking EFA and ESD in the area of skills may also answer some of the growing concern over aid effectiveness for education which is resulting in a fundamental shift in governance, structures and modalities of education financing. This shift, coupled by the need for additional aid to reach the EFA goals by 2015, is beginning to place emphasis more on the “harmonisation, coordination, and capacity-building for aid” (UNESCO, 2008b). In an effort to enhance the effectiveness of education aid, the Global Monitoring Report for 2009 will evaluate the impact and implications of such trends for education and the EFA goals, focusing on “the role of aid as a catalyst for accelerated progress and greater equity” (UNESCO, 2008b).

In light of these trends, how can the need for holistic skills development through EFA and ESD be brought to the surface through evaluation processes to gain recognition for donor support? The following include possible recommendations to support the emergence of such joint EFA-ESD aid efforts:

• Map ongoing quality education and skills initiatives at the national level. Identify how these activities link to both EFA and ESD, in practical terms, to promote funding for holistic skills development.

• EFA-ESD constituencies have the opportunity to collaborate in an effort to identify skills needs that EFA, TVET and ESD can work to enhance through the comparative advantages in their programmatic philosophies and structures.

• Link EFA and ESD programmes at the national level by sharing lessons learned in the area of skills among the National EFA Forum and National ESD Committee.

Final remarks

In an era of education finance reform, it is important for donors, governments and organizations to reflect upon the underlying purpose of education and how to utilize aid effectively to steer education initiatives toward relevant learning at all levels. As 2015 approaches, the questions emerging about financing and skills development go beyond the goals of any one initiative. The answers to these questions require programmatic collaboration among EFA-ESD constituents, focus on national sustainable development priorities and financing to promote and encourage these changes.

References
Skills Formation for Economic Development in India: Fostering Institutional Linkages between Vocational Education and Industry

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Keywords: TVET, apprenticeship, India, enterprise-based training

As national economies are integrated into the global economy, which is increasingly becoming “knowledge-based” (OECD, 1997), and as technological change occurs at unprecedented speeds, it becomes increasingly important for developing countries to develop institutional mechanisms that can foster skills formation at both national and firm levels, to become globally competitive and to promote sustainable economic development. As the knowledge and skills required for today’s production activities are becoming more and more tacit, hard to obtain, and costly to transfer between firms, and thus more specific, and often even firm-specific (Najmabadi & Lall, 1995), firms are taking on an increasingly important role. Indeed, they have become de facto institutions for skills development that will improve productivity and competitiveness (Okada, 2004). These changes pose enormous challenges to institutions of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in developing countries, in terms of their design, planning, and management, as they affect the adequate supply and deployment of skills needed in the workplace as well as the productivity of the workforce, and thus the growth of economies. Conventional pre-employment school-based TVET may become less relevant and less important, given its difficulty in keeping up with fast-changing skills in demand, caused by: 1) the changing nature of skills, 2) changing production processes, and 3) changing labor markets. Thus, there is a growing recognition about the need to develop an alternative model of TVET in which the private sector is more deeply involved (Middleton et al., 1993; OECD, 1994; ADB, 2004). Training, whether conducted on-the-job or off-the-job, is an institutionalized form of knowledge and skill transfer. Particularly in the work context, training is a means of acquiring and enhancing firm-level learning: lessons the organization has learned are translated into learning by members of the organization, and knowledge acquired by the firm is shared among them in different parts of the organization. That is, in-firm training promotes the intra-firm transfer of knowledge and skills. Despite the current trend in which production processes
converge across different countries, considerable diversity still remains in the various national systems of skills formation, even in the face of globalization (Ashton & Green, 1996).

This study examines the nature of institutional linkages between vocational education and industry in the Indian skills formation system. The Indian case is of particular interest for two reasons. First, India has faced an acute need to upskill its workforce, as India’s economic reforms since the mid-1980s, and more notably in the 1990s, have led to dynamic restructuring, a growing exposure to global competition, and an increased inflow of foreign capital. Second, although the Indian TVET has been widely considered to be unsatisfactory, interestingly, it has had a formal apprenticeship training scheme institutionalized by the government in the 1960s, when India was still at a very early stage of its economic development. This tripartite institutional arrangement involving the government, industry, and TVET institutions, has worked well during India’s rapid economic restructuring in more recent years, as it has provided incentives to both firms and workers. The study focuses on the linkages that TVET institutions, such as Industrial Training Institutes (ITI), have forged with firms to accelerate the upgrading of workers’ skills. In particular, making special reference to the Indian automobile industry, I examine the changing patterns of interactions between the ITI and the firms, as the industry grew very rapidly in the 1990s; I then consider how such interactions have helped the industry upgrade workers’ skills. The automobile industry is one of the Indian industries that has gone through the most rapid transformations in recent years. The existing literature on TVET, particularly in the Asian context, has mainly focused on school-based education and training institutions; as few studies have looked at enterprise-based TVET, we lack sufficient insights into how workers are actually trained inside the firm, and what incentive systems would motivate governments, firms and training institutions to develop the kind of tripartite partnership that will forge the formation of skills that the country and the industries require. This study thus fills this gap by drawing on a detailed firm-level observation of the Indian apprenticeship training scheme.

This micro-level study is based on three rounds of fieldwork that I carried out in India between 1996 and 2004. In this paper I argue that while India’s vocational education system has been considered largely unsatisfactory, the institutional linkages that vocational education institutions have forged with firms through state-mandated apprenticeship schemes, have actually played an important role in developing and diffusing the skills that industry requires, thus allowing industry to achieve rapid transformations.

References
NGO sustainability in an aid dependency situation

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UCEP, the Underprivileged Children’s Educational Program, is a leading Bangladeshi NGO. It strives to inculcate marketable skills among the hardcore poor, urban working children and adolescents through general education followed by vocational/para-skills training and on-the-job apprenticeship in close collaboration with potential entrepreneurs and enterprises/industries throughout Bangladesh.

The origin of UCEP is connected with a philanthropic New Zealander, Lindsay Allan Cheyne. In 1970, he came to Bangladesh to establish a health clinic in the wake of a disastrous tornado. The clinic had just been established when the war of independence broke out in 1970, but the destruction caused by the tornado paled beside the tragedy of human misery left by the war. Along with relief operation duties, Cheyne assisted, with the Directorate of Social Welfare, in planning an educational programme for the underprivileged, homeless, poor children. He worked on finding a sponsor, and the Danish government responded to the appeal and extended financial assistance to launch a three-year project. The Government of Bangladesh provided a building to house the programme.

Since 1972, UCEP has expanded to comprise 32 general schools, 4 technical schools and 8 para-trade training centres. During the period 1972-2000, UCEP extended support to as many as 128,116 poor urban working children. Out of them, 16,771 students completed vocational training and 4,800 completed para-trade skills training. At present, 25,000
children are pursuing general education and vocational and para-trade skill training at the UCEP schools and training centres.

Providing real opportunities for the poorest will always be expensive and require dedicated funding. There is no real exit strategy for projects such as UCEP, because real poverty reduction needs dedication and the commitment of very substantial funds. Presently, UCEP is dependent on a consortium of donors including Danida, DFID, the Royal Norwegian Embassy and Save the Children. These donors have repeatedly requested a higher degree of self-financing from UCEP, but the fact remains that UCEP is almost as aid-dependent as it was at the outset, although the aim of UCEP is to diversify its revenue base, ultimately becoming self-sustaining. In 2002, an evaluation of Danida’s assistance to vocational education and training found that there had been insufficient attention by the donors to securing financial sustainability of the project and, indeed, donor ‘goodwill’ has almost conspired against this. However, this kind of project targeting in particular the underprivileged is probably not one for which government would readily have taken financial responsibility, even if the donors had pursued this much more vehemently as a condition for their continued funding. Also, the concept of ‘non-formal education’ has been gradually grounded in UCEP as a useful approach to improving the condition of poor out-of-school children who are considered to be an ‘especially disadvantaged group’, and government would probably be reluctant to include this concept in the formal school system or to run it as a parallel system. However, in the national context, replications are many, some in partial form, and others conceptual. Very recently, the Ministry of Labour and Manpower, underscoring the need for disciplined, well-groomed skilled manpower, has come up with a project for establishing schools for hardcore poor children. No doubt, UCEP’s proven model has influenced the decision-makers to pay due attention to that same model.13

As an alternative to dependency on external sources, involvement of the private sector, including employers of UCEP graduates, and community sources in the financing of UCEP could have been explored more vigorously. However, it will not prove easy to rapidly build a strong local community base or private sector base for a project that for more than three decades has doubtless been seen as generously foreign-aided. Nor will it be easy to engage in various forms of income generation, although UCEP is doing better in this aspect than most mainstream VET institutions.

The sustainability message of UCEP is probably rather simple: a project such as this, successfully targeting the poorest, will not be sustained by regular funding. In a way, it is a demonstration project, showing that tens of thousands of the very poor can have their own and their families’ lives improved by this kind of dedicated funding. But there is no guarantee that it will continue through local funding.

13 The strong sense of discipline, integrity and etiquette that is imparted to each and every UCEP graduate through the socialisation process that takes place in UCEP schools has been noted by employers, who often advertise “UCEP-graduates preferred”. 
Whither Nepalese Education and Skill Development?

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Keywords
Skills development, Nepal

Summary
This paper, which is the first progress report of an on-going research project on Nepalese education and skill development, looks at the Nepalese education and skill development sector by paying closer attention to its policy changes and prospects.

Conflict, regardless of whether it is internal or external, does affect adversely people’s livelihoods in any society in the world. Nepal is no exception with the decade long internal insurgency. However, in November 2006, a historic comprehensive peace accord was made between the Government of Nepal and the Communist party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M), which has provided Nepalese an opportunity to build peaceful and prosperous society. Transition is now underway with a new political landscape as the multi-party coalition government is being formed.

One of the major challenges for the new government to tackle is to revitalize the local economy and sustain Nepalese livelihoods. Improving peoples’ livelihoods requires many efforts from at least three key human development areas: decent economic base, knowledge and skill development, and high quality in health. As the Human Development Index (HDI) has shown, Nepal is one of the poorest performers in human development in South Asia, which suggests that improvement of people’s well-being may not be an easy task. To tackle people’s anxiety over their livelihoods, sustainable economic development is needed and, for that stable economic growth, local-level skill development should receive a high priority of the government.

In order for Nepalese to secure long-lasting social and economic well-being, pro-poor economic growth policy is helpful. Pro-poor economic growth policies include human resource development in the key economic sectors of the country. The needs of human resource are constrained by the type of the economic sector and its state of development. Working from the initial assessment about the human resource base of the people, a
careful design of skill development policy could be made. A post-conflict country such as Nepal needs to develop a viable private sector along with the reconstruction of the political stability through the set up of the new government structure. In particular, aiming at sustaining economic growth for the country’s stabilization and prosperity, skill formulation, for those who are in the rural area or in the informal economy, should be given higher priority. In the case of Nepal, key questions include: How does the government design a policy to enhance people’s productive work and incomes? How does the Nepalese government challenge educational development to find a way to grow its society and economy which makes people’s livelihood better in the long run?

This paper, which is the first progress report of an on-going research project on Nepalese education and skill development, looks at the Nepalese education and skill development sector by paying closer attention to its policy changes and prospects. It is our first step to look into the needs in human resources for economic development in Nepal and the effectiveness of the conventional educational system in Nepal before we would conduct a micro-case study in Nepal to look into these inquiries in detail. This descriptive paper reviews the Nepalese educational and skill development policy, and examines the current debate over the education and skill development reform in Nepal.

This study sheds some light on this policy perspective over its educational reform in Nepal. It pays closer attention to (1) school enrollment in the primary and the secondary school levels, and (2) skill development in technical schools and vocational trainings. Also, it pays attention to parents’ perceptions over their expectations for schoolings in Nepal. The paper identifies key issues in educational development and skill formation in Nepal by linking school providers’ aspects and school senders’ aspects and discusses if the educational policy change can bring about positive growth orientation for Nepal.
BREAKING THE CYCLE OF INTERGENERATIONAL ILLITERACY AND POVERTY: THE ROLE OF POST BASIC EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION AND SKILL INITIATIVES
Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Illiteracy and Poverty: the Role of Education and Skill Initiatives in the Unorganized Sector in India.

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Keywords
Education and Skill Initiatives, Unorganized Sector, India.

Summary
This article addresses the issue of India becoming increasingly concerned about its ability to become competitive in a globalised economy, but also goes on to question whether India can face the new technological challenges and promote the knowledge society and economy without tackling issues of equity and access in relation to skills development, basic education and literacy of its huge unorganized sector.

The 1987 Report Our Common Future brought the terms “sustainable development” and “sustainability” into widespread use (WCED 1987). However, it was only at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002) that the prominent role of education and training was highlighted. It was also at this Johannesburg meeting that an agreement was reached to find a balance between economic growth, social equity and environmental protection. A resolution was adopted on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) in 2002 and UNESCO was designated as the lead agency for the promotion of the Decade. It is also important to note that the vision regarding sustainable development broadened to encompass social justice and the fight against poverty (UNESCO 2003).

It is in the context of this broadened notion of sustainable development that this article will position the discussion of the role of education and skills initiatives in India’s unorganized sector. The paper addresses the issue of India becoming increasingly concerned about its ability to become competitive in a globalised economy, but also goes on to question whether India can face the new technological challenges and promote the knowledge society and economy without tackling issues of equity and access in relation to skills development, basic education and literacy of its huge unorganized sector (94 per cent of its workforce).

The abundant supply of cheap labour, which was once considered a major comparative advantage for developing countries (Wood 1995) is coming to be questioned as a short-term solution, not only from the point of view of it being an unsustainable basis for competitiveness or for promoting knowledge economies and societies, but also from the point of view of social justice, equity and poverty reduction. To enhance productivity and thus economic growth, but also to reduce the negative social impacts of cheap labour production, Lall (1999) argues that the respective countries should embark on a strategy of skills development, which enhances both their general vocational and technical skills, but also their more work-place related skills. Similarly, Krishna (2005) and Mitra (2005) point out that the extent of new technologies, relevant to workers and units in the
unorganised sector will depend on the value addition through continuing or lifelong education and training. Training and education for the informal sector can no longer apply local standards, but must meet world standards.

Not only globalisation and technological development, but also the reality of poverty demand that new skills and technological literacy be facilitated with a view to promoting employability in the low-income sector (Krishna 2005). There is growing realisation that India needs to recognize, value and capitalize on individuals’ and communities’ existing potentialities in the informal economy in order to identify forms of knowledge and skills that will work for the poor and promote equality and employability. Such recognition of skills and competencies, regardless of where they have been learned (formally, informally, at work, at home or in the community) is likely to improve lifelong learning for sustainable development (See Jakarta Meeting, Concept paper 2008).

The Development of India’s New Training Policy strives to support skills development of the informal sector by making training durable and of high quality. It supports institutional partnerships between the training system and societal agencies such as private sector, business, science and technology, workplace, NGOs local communities and the voluntary sector. The 1st National Consultation, jointly organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India and the International Labour Organisation, on 20-21 February 2008, has produced a road map of actions for the development of a the National Training Policy for India. The Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh and others have underlined the key principles of sustainable development by highlighting the importance of training and skills development for maintaining high economic growth and reducing inequality and poverty in India. The 11th Five-Year Plan has a strong emphasis on skills development. The roadmap for actions proposed the setting up of four Review Committees to undertake analysis and make policy recommendations. One of the committees is on “Skills training for the unorganized sector”. Both equity and access as well as lifelong learning and skills training for the knowledge economy have taken prominence in the title given to this review committee. As a member of this Committee, the author will try to dwell upon some of the recommendations of this committee, even though they are still in the process being finalized.

Skills training for the unorganised sector: equity and access

Central to the notion of education for sustainable development is the view that a transition to a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable economy is possible only by promoting lifelong learning and by engaging all spaces of learning- formal, non-formal and informal, from early childhood to adult life – and in which everyone is a stakeholder, be it the government, civil society, the private sector or the media. Such learning partnerships constituted an important element of the Review Committee’s recommendations on education and training for the informal sector.

Combating low literacy and basic education in the workplace in trade and industry
A literate labour force is crucial to a properly functioning society and economy, capable of competing and anticipating future trends. Considering this, the review committee adopted a long-term approach to skills development for the unorganized sector by recommending a close cooperation between government, employers, and employees. Employers and employees are advised to tackle low literacy and basic education of low qualified workers, in service, trade and industry sectors. All labour must have at least an entry-level qualification in order to participate in the employment process on a long-term basis.

All agencies of society, media, culture, community-based organizations, education institutions, social movements, trade unions, employers associations, NGOs, private sector, and government should spread awareness of better quality of life (literacy related to health, new technologies, nutrition, legal matters, as well as communication skills, English language skills, and work-place related skills) in the workplace for workers with limited literacy and basic education.

Proposals were made to set up institutional mechanisms that will advise parties (employers and their associations, employees, government, businesses and institutions) on collective agreements to encourage low-literate employees to enrol in literacy programmes combined with retraining, and to support them by means of arrangements laid down in collective agreements and through the Skills Development Fund.

School-based vocational training
Schools should give options for vocational training to students after the fifth standard, so that they can get an entry-level qualification of both primary education as well as a vocational skills certificate. The same applies to those going up to the 10th standard. Appropriate grade/ level of skills acquisition should be certified by a joint body of Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), so that they have the choice and opportunity of further general education, vocational training and entry to the labour market. New modules and certified courses for in-service teacher training and training of vocational instructors should ensure that teachers and vocational instructors should have a good level of competence in their vocational subject areas, in order to establish a foundation on which to build quality vocational training in schools.

Creating a training market for the private sector
It was suggested that government should facilitate the building up of a market for training for public and private sector providers to respond to the training requirements in the unorganised sector. Access to public funds by the private sector providers (including civil society groups) should be linked to quality outputs certified by accredited bodies as well as training outcomes. Generation of revenue/part recovery of cost by private sector providers should be one of the criteria for financing. This will ensure the financial sustainability of training provision and foster public-private partnerships.

Public authorities and social partners should focus on the possibility of introducing organised training schemes to cater to the needs of those working as apprentices in the
unorganised sector. This training should complement on-the-job training with theoretical training.

**Lifelong learning and skills training for the knowledge economy**

Another important aspect of education’s contribution to sustainable development is the notion of recognizing prior learning experience. By making visible kinds of knowledge that are being kept outside the curriculum or standard development processes, recognition of prior learning creates, constructs and reconstructs knowledge that has meaning and relevance for our lives, our societies and our economies. Such a concept of education goes beyond educating as being supply-driven, in which individuals are seen as mere receivers of that education. Instead, recognizing prior learning experience is expected to generate a demand for learning by creating motivated individuals who have an interest in continuing to learn.

**Recognition of prior skills**

In this regard, it is commendable that the proposals made by the Review Committee related to creating avenues for knowledge development that target adults and the so-called “cheap labour” in the unorganised sector by deepening their knowledge and skills needed to ensure cutting edge competence and renewal through national schemes of recognition of prior skills and assessment and certification of skills acquired informally or non-formally.

**Provision for promoting lateral and vertical mobility between education and training and different vocational areas**

Suggestions were made to set up preparatory studies and access courses, part-time courses, evening courses and new courses, which match better the demands of students with varying backgrounds. These would strengthen a support system for non-traditional students entering into general education or vocational training. Bridge courses should be set up between non-formal skills training, upper secondary education, and vocational education. These institutional /structural dimensions are very important and are sometimes seen as complementary routes to the recognition of prior learning.

**Conclusion**

Education for sustainable development is about respect for difference and diversity. Education enables us to understand ourselves and others and our links with the wider national and social environment; this understanding serves as a durable basis for building respect. Respect and recognition are crucial and central if a fundamental reorientation in our thinking towards the unorganised sector is to take place. It is high time that India’s New Training Policy recognized that this very cheap labour, - workers who are perceived as being illiterate and incapable of fending for themselves - is in fact the backbone of the economy (responsible for 60 per cent GDP) and is feeding the expanding capitalist economy with their productive skills. Many adults with limited literacy and low levels of education are engaged in productive and community activities. Not only should the very
notion of who are the so-called “illiterate” and those who are “literate” be reassessed, but also the experiential learning of adults should be recognized and serve as a support in programmes for upgrading basic skills and knowledge.

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Creation of Literacy Skills for Sustainable Development
Results from a Study in India

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Keywords
Literacy Skills, Sustainable Development, India

Summary
This article reports on the results from a study in rural areas of District Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh, India where literacy skills are being linked with achieving sustainable development.

The most challenging task of making adult and continuing literacy programmes successful is the retention of interest and use of the literary skills created in the neo-literates (in the form of reading, writing, and numerical abilities) and motivation to spread their abilities and skills that have been created by literacy campaigns of various types (UNESCO, 1996). The basic question relates to why we are making people literate. If we can link it to their life requirements, it will motivate the people to join the campaign to take benefit from it and it will make the task easier. It will also make the literacy programme worthwhile and useful and the money spent on it will act as investment in human resource development.

An overview of the learning programmes reveals that unless they are related to the life of the people, their success is often elusive (Robinson-Pant 2003). For example, since the Indian masses are often religious and they habitually take up reading of the holy books in itself as the worship of God, merely convincing them that literacy programme will enable them read the holy books (like Ramayana or Quran or Guru Granth Sahib) will make the task easier as they will easily be convinced that the literacy will be immediately useful in their daily life. It will be a big motivation and the force of religious passion will be behind the programme and their regular reading of the religious scriptures will dispel the fear of their relapsing into illiteracy.

It may look good to begin with. But this is not enough. Apart from cognitive skills (reading ability for instance), other dimensions of learning need to be given more attention such as learning to apply knowledge (OECD, 2000) and skills in the pursuit of
livelihood so that it can help in daily life of the people, learning to cooperate with other groups of the society and learning to develop oneself as “autonomous” person (Rychen and Salganik, 2001).

There is another side of looking at the problem. On account of a number of reasons including the impact of mass media, the aspirations of the people have been rising at a fast rate and hence only those programmes which are perceived to help the people towards fulfilment of their socio-economic aspirations can be self sustaining. In the absence of visible progress made by the neo literates towards literacy, there is little motivation let alone enthusiasm for efforts towards literacy. The apparent attitude of literate persons to shun manual work (and hence reject many avenues of employment) is also not conducive to the creation of motivating and encouraging environment for literacy. In the absence of a follow up programme a neo literate may relapse into illiteracy or at best suffer a partial loss of skills, associated with literacy i.e. reading, writing comprehension, numerical skills etc.

For the development of the individual it is necessary to have follow-up programme for neo literates which will provide them with knowledge and skills and corresponding level of literacy to enable the individual to meet their aspirations. In a country like India, the national interest demands an effective follow up programme for neo literates, to let them realize their full potential for all-round development. The design, delivery system, monitoring mechanism, built-in self renewal and associated infrastructure may hence be formulated after extensive discussion based on ground realities. The implementation must be made efficient and the self renewal should continuously be put in the active mode.

The dissatisfaction with various types of literacy programmes as being theoretical and irrelevant to peoples’ economic development is much too evident. The need is widely felt in developing societies to make literacy and learning courses more relevant and practically useful to the individual recipient and the community. The most challenging task of making literacy programmes successful is the retention of interest and use of the literary skills for vocational improvement and social progress.

The question is again why are we making people literate and how can it help in their social and economic development? The literacy agenda should focus not only on cognitive skills but also on other dimensions of learning. Knowing the proper application of knowledge in varied situations of life is the ultimate goal. The scope of human needs and options is very wide, from earning a livelihood to environmental concerns like natural resource preservation and sustainable development. Aspirations increase as development advances.

This paper addresses these issues and offers suggestions conducive to local situations. It reports results from a study in rural areas of District Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh, India where the creation of literacy skills is being linked with achieving sustainable development. The rural areas under study are mostly inhabited by socially secluded and less aware people for whom full formal education has been a distant dream. But local need-based specific skill creation programme is producing wonderful results. One of the important forest
based products in the area is the long grass “moonjh” which is used for fine rope making by the local people. The literacy and skill creation programmes have enabled the local people to better use the material and check the wasteful cutting of the grass. Thus the green cover has been preserved and soil erosion has also been checked.

The programme of neo literates has been linked to (i) high level of functional literacy, (ii) advancement in vocations which are or may be taken up by neo literates, and (iii) newer avenues of income generation. Advancement in vocation has been the real test of the professional success of education. Creation of literacy has enabled the people to use printed (knowledge) material and skills to advance in their professions. People have been able to integrate the previous manual skills and their capacities with newly acquired skills. In the terai region, which is mostly covered by long grass and forest, an experiment has been made wherein small booklets/pamphlets were printed for neo learners. These were read by neo-literates to a group. The reaction of the group led to further improvement in the booklets and this formed the basis for further improvement to the local needs of development of the people.

In order to make education helpful in sustaining individual’s life and making literacy skills sustainable and lasting, one does not require merely literary skills but also life skills. Environment and sustainable development are the issues that people should be aware of. A conscious effort is required to inform local people through the neo-literates, of the issues in resource conservation, environment protection and sustainable development along with their interrelationships and trade offs. The issues are really complex and the solutions are not easy but a beginning can be made by explaining these locally with a view to create awareness and making the community better informed. This study reports some results that may be considered for replication elsewhere.

If the programme is to be developed on a larger scale, the following problems will need to be addressed: (a) the visualization and production of learning material, (b) the identification and creation of useful skills as a site-specific process, (c) the formulation of a local need-based course structure. In the identification of learning material, and giving useful instruction, the primary and middle school teachers may be found to be most suitable trainers. Incentives may have to be devised for better results. The message will go out that the literacy skills not only help in sustaining life in the present but also ensuring sustainable development so that human prosperity is ensured in future as well.

Thus, the scope of formulation and spread of literacy skills goes much beyond the conventional literary confines of cognitive skills to wider domains of vocational knowledge and sustainable development. The real onus will come not only on the visualization of appropriate teaching and learning material, but their production on commercial lines, ensuring a fitting delivery mechanism and effectiveness, and, finally, finding out adequate financial resources to back up the programme on a permanent basis on a larger scale.
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**Non-formal education:**

An alternative bridge to wage employment or a dead end?

A case study from Mali

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Since the beginning of the 1990s, the universalisation of primary education has been at the top of the international co-operation agenda in education. In this context, there has been renewed interest in non-formal education (NFE), which is now considered as playing a critical role in the achievement of the objective of Education for All by reaching the learning needs of youth and adults who do not have access to formal education and contributing to poverty alleviation.

But does NFE really reach the needs of out-of-school? Does it contribute to integration into the labour market? Does it reach those aims sustainably? This short note intends to provide insights on the relationships between NFE, out-of-school educational needs, employment and sustainability by discussing data on the Educational Centres for Development (_Centres d’éducation pour le développement_ - CEDs) in Mali. CEDs address out-of-school youth from 9 to 15 years of age in rural areas and combine a basic education cycle of four years with two years of pre-professional training. In 2006 there were 860 CEDs and 22,925 young people registered at the national level.

This short paper brings together empirical evidence collected in 2007 and 2008 in the district of Bankass (which is located at about 700 kms east of Bamako, the capital of Mali) with information regarding the outcomes of CEDs drawn from the Permanent Household Survey made in 2004 (Enquête permanente auprès des ménages - EPAM).

There is a major contrast between the images of the CEDs provided by those two sources. Indeed data collected in rural Mali presents poor learning conditions, high dropout and
the inexistency of the pre-professional phase of the programme. On the other side, information drawn from the EPAM shows that the unemployment rate is lower among the economically active population from CEDs than for those who come from any other components of formal education. Moreover the incomes of employed CEDs learners are higher than those of employed people who attended other components of formal primary education. CED learners have not only access to blue-collar jobs but also are present in white-collar positions. This result is unexpected given that the CED programme does not deliver diplomas, and that the lack of certification is identified in the literature as a main limitation of NFE when considering its outcomes in the labour market.

How to explain such a gap between our two sources? A first hypothesis is that the household survey is based on a relatively small sample and might not reflect the picture at the national level. If it is the case, further evidence is needed to confirm the results of CED in relation to employment and salaries.

A second hypothesis is that the 2004 permanent household survey might reflect the outcomes of the first generation of CEDs in the 1990s. All the first experiences of CEDs were supported by NGOs both for the basic education and the phase of pre-professional training. Moreover those learners who completed both phases received material to support their installation in the labour market. It is partly to overcome the incapacity of formal educational supply to fulfil demand in rural areas that the CEDs were mainstreamed and included in 2000 in the Decennial Programme of Educational Development (Programme Décennal de Développement de l’Éducation - PRODEC), which promises one school and/or one CED in each village. Despite the inclusion of CEDs in the national agenda for education, in 2004 non-formal education still received only 0.7% of the current expenditures of the educational sector. The CEDs of the 2000 programme are supported by the state but the communes and the communities assume an important part of the cost of the CED programme for the first phase of the cycle and the totality of the pre-professional phase. If this second hypothesis was to be confirmed, CEDs would be another illustration of the difficulty of transforming an externally-funded pilot project into a national programme.
THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY
A Sociology of International Research Partnerships for Sustainable Development

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Keywords
Research Partnership, North-South Relations

Summary
This article summarises some of the findings from a recent research project that investigates the knowledge-power-politics-nexus in international development and looks deeper into the everyday realities of research partnerships between institutions and individuals from the Global North and the Global South.

Nobody would deny that partnership is a great concept that helps structure relations from the private sphere of individual couples up to the level of international economic and social affairs. What it implies is most appealing: voluntary and self-organising in nature; based on mutual respect and responsibility; sharing risks and benefits; adding value to existing achievements; and including the possibility for revising agreements if necessary (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Mayers and Vermeulen, 2002). No wonder that the partnership idea has become programmatic in international development (Bossuyt and Laporte, 1994). And also in the research sector the partnership idea has advanced to a veritable hype in the competition for ever more innovative scientific ventures aiming at cutting-edge understandings of the increased complexities of our globalised world.

However, there is also controversy and critique. The partnership agreement in itself will not automatically change the relationships between partners. Inequalities stemming from unequal power relations, various political and economic interests, or differing norms and values continue to exist. This requires special attention, respect, and commitment. In short, the very positive aspects of the partnership concept are intrinsically linked with the need for negotiating social relations, finding solutions to emerging conflicts, and searching for common ground. Partnership is not only a goal but a way to grow together – sometimes for a life-time, sometimes for the short term.

In a recent research project [3] that investigates the knowledge-power-politics-nexus in international development we have started to look deeper into the everyday realities of research partnerships between institutions and individuals from the Global North and the Global South. We are interested in providing evidence of what it means to engage in research partnerships that take into account and deal with the inequalities, differences, and polarisations that characterise both the subject matter of development research as well as its scientific organisation.
Based on narrative interviews conducted with senior researchers we can say research partnerships help in tackling complex and pressing issues that mark the thematic involvement of development research. They bear the potential to integrate various forms and sources of knowledge, they reshuffle historically loaded North-South relations by intellectually and personally rewarding experiences, and they show little by little ways and answers to deal with inequality and asymmetry in our globalised world as well as in globalised research networks.

Despite the ultimately rather positive accounts, we would like to highlight two critical issues regarding the functionality of research partnerships with respect to science policy and the political economy of research funding:

1) International research collaborations and the research partnership concept are contingent upon science policy frameworks. However, science policy frameworks and performance measurement schemes usually fail to do justice to the procedural aspects of research partnerships between institutions of the Global North and the Global South engaging in sustainable development research. The output-oriented standard performance measurement of science (e.g. number of publications, international visibility, prices, patents etc.) miss out on aspects such as individual and institutional capacity development and the social and political relevance of sustainable development research conducted in research partnerships. To take them into account would mean preparing the scientific organisation of research relations between the Global North and the Global South for new modes of functioning, collaborating, and exchanging. Clearly, this would involve a radical change.

2) The implementation of funding schemes drawing on the concept of research partnerships creates obligations with potentially negative implications for development research undertaken in partnership. It creates a new political economy which organises research according to a targeted distribution of resources, in which the partnership concept may not be able to crucially address and reduce power asymmetries. By overly responding to external demands or due to project cycle pressures, insufficient attention may be paid to certain risks with partnerships, including conflicts of interest, or poor choice of partners.

In sum, international research partnerships for sustainable development are not an easy remedy to act upon inherent inequalities in the field of development research as well as the undertaking of sustainable development per se. And yet, those who engage in research conducted in partnership prove that they are able and willing to withstand structural constraints and scepticism and that their engagement for contributing to a better world is supported by the international and cross-cultural exchange, respect and friendship built up in common research endeavours.

Notes

[1] This research project is part of the international research network of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South (http://www.north-
south.unibe.ch/). For information about the project on ‘Knowledge, Power, Politics’ please follow the link ‘research for sustainable development’.

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Limited Sustainability of Development Research in Austria?

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Keywords
Development Research in Austria, Global Challenges, Cross-Disciplinary Approach

Summary
Faced with multiple challenges in a globalised world, the question arises whether the highly fragmented Austrian development research landscape is prepared to find adequate and sustainable answers.

Faced with a rapidly changing world, development research all over Europe and beyond has to question whether the kind of work it offers is still adequate. Austria is no exception, indeed.

Development research in Austria is, in contrast to many European countries and in particular the Anglo-Saxon world, a highly marginalised field. It is, moreover, substantially fragmented. Different approaches, different languages, different understandings of basic terms such as “development” and different objectives lead to an Austrian development research landscape characterised by parallel rather than synergistic ways of working, by mutually applied prejudices and by competition rather than cooperation. In short – we do not live as we preach.
When we talk about ‘development research’, our understanding goes beyond a traditional definition of ‘development studies’ as such. We distinguish three main approaches to development research in Austria: **Research ON development** is done mainly by social sciences, humanities and economics. It deals with development as a social phenomenon. **Research FOR development** is more oriented towards technical, agro- and natural sciences, but with an increasingly strong social science orientation. It might be defined as applied research supporting innovation processes in developing countries. **Development policy research** covers research and consultancy about/for policy, strategy and practice of development cooperation, and research on development politics.

As horizontal fields we consider **research in the context of development issues**, and **random or unintended development-related research**. Both deal in some way with development-relevant issues, either by research topics such as poverty reduction or by location, such as tropical biology carried out in developing countries.

Austrian researchers working in this field sometimes show little interest in or knowledge about development issues. Furthermore, until the 1990s interrelations between environment and development oriented science were limited. Globalisation and the accompanying changed understanding of global connections in both social and environmental areas of research made it necessary for Austrian scientists to look beyond European borders on a larger scale. This trend started with the emergence of a number of very active NGOs in the environmental sector, the anti-globalisation movement and a rising consciousness for global interconnectedness in sustainability science. Research FOR development found an easier entry-point into sustainable development, while for scientists in other areas this was not seen as a priority for much longer. Only very recently, a structured dialogue between social sciences, or the research ON development approach, and the environmental movement has started.

Yet, the question arises whether Austrian development research with the above described features is prepared to respond to the manifold challenges that have emerged in the global development debate. In fact, globalisation and its side effects such as unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, rising inequality in and between nations, growing marginalisation and social disintegration, food and energy crises, diseases and health risks such as the HIV/Aids pandemic or the avian flu – in brief, globalisation has generated challenges that tend to erase geographical and disciplinary boundaries. They are complex and of global relevance by nature. They require answers that single-disciplined and geographically limited scientific approaches are not able to give.

The development discourse is trying to subsume the necessary answers to the above outlined global challenges in the term “sustainable development”. While the notion might be questionable since it is far from reflecting the issues’ complexity, it however contains a few crucial considerations: the concept of sustainable development applies to rich and poor countries alike and it is multidimensional, i.e. it has to account for the economic, social, ecological and cultural level.
In this context, the question arises whether development research in Austria, and this might apply to other countries as well, still has a significant role to fulfil or rather, is doomed to perish in insignificance? In other words, is it at all sustainable? Those research groups entirely depending on external funds and donor money perceive increasing pressure from a kind of utilitarian approach requiring applicable research and empirical consultancy. Space for analytical and reflection-oriented research, in particular if it has a critical stance, is narrowing. The global trend of commoditisation of education, science and research has strengthened a market logic, which, at least in Austria, significantly limits scientific interest in development research.

However, we believe that Austrian development research, and this as well might apply to other countries, really needs to reinvent itself, if it wants to contribute to sustainable development as a global concept. Firstly, this means to seek ways of constructive and synergistic cooperation across all three described approaches. A cross-disciplinary approach is particularly needed between social and natural sciences, or in terms of this contribution, between research ON and research FOR development.

Secondly, dialogue between science and society has to be strengthened in order to be able to contribute to societal development in Austria and beyond. The focus needs to shift onto global approaches rather than continuously isolating issues of developing countries from issues of ‘the North’. This would imply, however, to substantially increase the weight of stakeholders in partner countries in the Northern debates. The question remains, if we are willing to concede power to other actors, and if we are in a position to do so, especially in light of the growing dependency of development research on donor priorities.

**Further resources**


EFA and the Global Agenda for Education and Development: Addressing Critical Questions and Omissions

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Keywords
Education, Development, Globalisation, Neoliberalism

Summary
This article raises some critical questions regarding the current global compact on education for development, represented by Education for All (EFA), and analyzes how its form and content are embedded in a neoliberal model of economic development. It also argues that this neoliberal embedding represents an obstacle for the achievement of the EFA goals and their sustainability.

Since the Education for All (EFA) Conference in Jomtien (1990), a global compact on education for development has been framed. International organizations and the most important donors have reached an important consensus on common policy instruments to achieve EFA by 2015. Despite the fact that this new global compact represents some important advances in the education and development field, such as major donor coordination and the recognition of the centrality of education for sustainable development, there remain critical issues that need to be addressed.

Numerous sources suggest that the current global agenda of education for development, which crystallises in EFA, represents a compromise between neoliberal economic priorities and social democratic principles - a balance between an approach to education as a basic human right and the more instrumentalist human capital approach. We suggest that a deeper analysis of the evolution of the form and content of the agenda demonstrates that it has more continuities than differences with the Washington Consensus proposal, which remains inadequate to addressing the immense social and educational challenges ahead and to promote an endogenous and sustainable process of education for development in Southern countries.

Firstly, the Dakar EFA Conference (2000) and subsequent developments (such as the institutionalization of the MDGs) reaffirm the limited focus of education for development as a primary education concern. This reifies the (neo)classical ‘rates of return’ rationale, which was hegemonic in the eighties, and implies leaving out of the agenda other levels of education, which are more and more important for development. For instance, strong empirical evidence demonstrates that the level of education of parents is a key factor for educational quality and performance at schools. Therefore, leaving adult education out of the agenda represents an important omission for the success of the global compact. Paradoxically, there is a parallel international education agenda, associated with the master meaning frame of knowledge economies and societies, which emphasizes the
importance of knowledge for development and takes more seriously issues such as higher education, vocational education and life-long learning. Nevertheless, it seems that this other agenda is only valid and desirable for already developed countries.

Secondly, for the neoliberal advocates of the EFA movement, placing education in the centre of the development strategy is not challenging their core policies and priorities. This is not only due to the well-known ‘human capital’ argument. It is also due to the fact that education is more and more framed and represented as a key social policy, the ‘magic wand’ to solve poverty and, very often, the best policy to achieve social equity (see this rationale, for instance, in the WB (2002) “Review of the poverty reduction strategy paper approach: Main findings”). Promoting education from this perspective allows the social to be addressed while avoiding deep policies of economic redistribution, such as a progressive fiscal reform.

Thirdly, the EFA movement agents actively promote the ‘good use of the private sector’ and the promotion of Public Private Partnerships to achieve EFA. The promotion of this policy is not only carried out by the now ‘demonised’ World Bank. In January 2008, UNESCO attended the World Economic Forum with the intention of reinforcing this proposal, which opens the door to education privatization and reifies a conception of the state in developing countries as a weak subject incapable of directly funding, owning and providing universal basic education. The EFA movement itself assumes that southern countries need the donors’ and the private sector’s contribution to implement this elemental function. Taxation of capital, reallocation of resources from other sectors that are not so central for development (such as military expenses), debt relief or tariffs on imports are policies that could be far more effective to get the necessary funding for education. These policy measures would contribute to the implementation of a more sustainable and less dependent education for development agenda. However, they do not resonate positively with the broader Washington Consensus agenda and, consequently, are out of the EFA scope.

This neoliberal embedding is noticeably stronger for those southern countries that participate in the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) to achieve EFA. These countries must have a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and a ‘credible’ national education plan. This means that governments are required to formally integrate social development goals with plans for macroeconomic stability, liberalization and debt repayment. The FTI strongly seeks to reduce the unit costs of primary education, which could contradict other education objectives such as expanding supply, improving quality and stimulating demand. Probably, the most controversial indicative benchmark of the FTI is that related to the cap on teacher salaries, which, for obvious reasons, clearly contradicts the objective of achieving quality education for all.

Various authors state that the FTI imposes certain policies through conditionalities and frames southern countries education priorities through benchmarks and indicators. However, we would like to conclude by also adding that EFA itself has also become a source of external influence. EFA represents a set of principles, causal beliefs and common understandings over the role of education for development. EFA also answers
the question of what ‘education for development should be’, what are the procedures and new forms of governance to achieve it, and what is the standard of behaviour of the actors that participate in this particular movement. At the same time, it reflects, in a more explicit or implicit way, what are the topics that should be excluded from the international discussion over education and development. So, the ideational power of EFA also frames education policies in southern countries in a particular direction, and restricts the imagination of policy-makers and education activists. In this sense, ‘Education For All’ acts as an accommodation mechanism that serves to unify potentially competing social forces and weaken movements and ideas that challenge the neoliberal agenda. The emergence of EFA has generated a feeling that some popular social demands have been adopted by mainstream global players; nevertheless the core neoliberal policies – both economic and educational – remain unaltered.

Further resources


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**Education and the coming global ‘Great Transition’ – but which one?**

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Various studies, for example within *The Great Transition Initiative* (GTI), suggest that major changes are required in predominant human values during the next two generations, to ensure politically and environmentally sustainable societies and a sustainable global order. The GTI identifies three areas of critical uncertainties for humanity’s future (Raskin 2006): 1. Environmental risks; 2. The economic instabilities of ‘turbo-capitalism’; 3. Socio-political combustibility. The three areas are strongly
interconnected, which can bring chain reactions. We face a resultant likelihood of crises. The GTI sketches six indicative scenarios of global futures (Raskin et al. 2002). Each could be called a ‘Great Transition’ through the crises probable in the 21st century: whether a miraculous technological passage that rescues humanity despite our life-style, a slide or collapse into disaster, or a transition to a society better guided by humane values. Which scenario eventuates depends on the combination of intensity of crises and degree of coping capacity. With high intensity crises yet high coping capacity we may be both driven towards and able to make a ‘Great Transition’ of a profound yet favourable kind.

The GTI adjudges that global coping capacity can only greatly increase if a powerful global citizens’ movement emerges, with a shared vision, the shared identity of global citizen, and a realistic change strategy. Only with such a movement can even modest reform scenarios become plausible, as opposed to the longstanding reality of recurrent fine-sounding global commitments which are then hardly implemented.

The premise of a scenarios’ exercise is that people and societies have choices, which can be influenced by reflection and debate. Many social scientists are sceptical regarding what to expect from change by individuals, even if financially motivated by new incentives or full-cost accounting, if it runs against predominant meaning-systems. People have needs for meaning and identity, which in modern societies are in large part derived via material and commercial artefacts. The relative emptiness of consumption still requires and allows its endless repetition, with meaning-giving coming as much through the process as the product. Attempts to change consumer behaviour through addressing individuals, via information and via financial incentives and disincentives, may have little impact given people’s other motivations, their social lock-in, and the massive resources of business that pull in the other direction. Instead change must come through their peer groups and communities.

Processes of societal reform thus require values as drivers, that reconfigure and motivate patterns of action. Within a conceptual frame of co-evolving human-environmental systems, human values and the ‘carrier’ social movements are key variables, that have influence and are influenceable, even perhaps by scenario exercises. The major required value changes, as argued by The Earth Charter, the GTI and similar projects, are: away from consumerism (the pursuit of human fulfilment through purchases), to a focus on quality of life; away from the predominance of a certain type of individualism, towards more human solidarity; and away from an assumption of domination of nature, towards an ecological sensitivity. The GTI’s work reviews evidence from global surveys of values, with reference to what people say and what they do in these three dimensions (Kates et al. 2006). It concludes that while there is already much stated support for values of solidarity and ecological sustainability, behaviour does not match them well. The challenge in these areas is how to bridge the attitude-behaviour gap. Regarding quality of life values though, fundamental value change is required, away from consumerism.

Major value changes can be observed in human history, sometimes surprising and impressive, such as the rise of beliefs in and real commitment to human rights and racial
equality. How do fundamental changes in values and practices arise? What roles can education play? Or is it just a dependent variable within society, with no fundamental system-altering impacts? The conundrum that ‘we can’t change persons unless we change systems’ and ‘we can’t change systems unless we change persons’ partly arises out of the crudity of our concepts, as a sort of Zeno’s paradox of social movement. *Eppur si muove.* The arrow can sometimes still reach the target. Change happens, through actions by persons. This is the premise of scenarios thinking. The possible roles for imaginative education in facilitating sustainability, including through supporting value change, imply a fundamental agenda of research and exploration.

Changes in values and visions require societal ‘carriers’, and hard thinking about possible pathways of social change (see e.g. Krznaric 2007) and the roles of education therein. The *Great Transition Initiative’s* own model of change is via national and global citizens’ movements driven by the energies of young people, posited as the most dynamic element in civil society. To bank on youth, as the key force of energy, impatience and potential, is perhaps what educators and educationists implicitly do. But we need to share and reflect on our experiences, and values, far more. Of particular potential importance, one may surmise, is ‘global education’ (see e.g. George 1997), if it can absorb and promote sustainability values rather than their obverse. The policy agenda enunciated by the UN’s Commission for Human Security (the Ogata-Sen commission) in its report *Human Security Now* (2003) includes a major role for cosmopolitan education. Educators and educationists need, though, to absorb also some of the energy and impatience of youth.

http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/


NEWS ABOUT NORRAG
AND NORRAG NEWS
NORRAG Survey 2007: Summary of the Findings and Recommendations

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Background
As of May 2008 there are 2,060 NORRAG members worldwide. Between mid-November 2007 and mid-January 2008 an online survey instrument was used to capture the opinion of NORRAG members. Just less than 20% of all NORRAG members responded to this online survey. Below is a summary of the main findings and recommendations arising out of this survey.

Members by region
Between February 2007 and February 2008 NORRAG membership has grown substantially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (from 205 to 383), East Asia/ Pacific (from 181 to 353), Europe and North America (from 531 to 982). Nonetheless, efforts should continue to expand readership in these regions. NORRAG membership remains low in the Middle East / North Africa (41 readers), Central Asia/ Russia (13), and Latin America/ Caribbean (87). More effort should be made to expand readership of NORRAG News (NN) in these areas. Such efforts might include direct email targeting as well as including in NN more articles from authors of these regions (and articles on these regions). More use of appropriate languages for policy briefs will be initiated.

Members by institution
One of NORRAG’s objectives is ‘Critical advocacy of education and training policies and strategies to governments, NGOs and other organizations’. The survey responses suggest that just over a third of NORRAG members (approximately 600 individuals) are from these types of institution and so NORRAG is doing a fair job at directly reaching these groups. Nonetheless, there could always be more effort made to target NGOs, government departments and development agencies. It can also be argued that NORRAG indirectly reaches these groups through the bulk of its members; both academics (35%) and consultants (11%). The percentage breakdown of NORRAG members according to their institutional background is given below:

- University (academic) - 35%
- University (research student) - 11%
- Bilateral aid agency (e.g. government aid agencies - DFID, USAID etc.) - 4%
- Multilateral organisation (e.g. UN, World Bank, EU etc.) - 7%
- Government department - 11%
- Commercial organisation (e.g. private companies) - 1%
- Consultancy - 11%
- Media (e.g. press, radio, TV, etc.) - 0.3%
- NGO or other civil society organisation - 13%
- Other - 7%
Use of norrag.org resources
Most members use the NORRAG website to read and download issues of NN when they become available. However, approximately 30% are using the NORRAG website on a regular basis. This means that the NORRAG secretariat should do its best to keep the norrag.org website up to date and make it easier to use. During 2007 there were some updates to the website which have greatly enhanced its usability. A few further changes are underway (including updating the resources section of the website).

How members are using NORRAG News
For over a third of members NN is used to keep them up to date on education and training issues. A further quarter of all members are using NN for research work (both academic and/or consultancy).

• NORRAG should continue to keep members interested in NN by continuing to provide up to date information on education and training issues.
• NORRAG should make it easier for members to share particular articles or issues with their colleagues by creating a link on the norrag.org website that allows members to forward articles/issues to their contacts.
• NORRAG should continue to get authors of articles to provide additional sources of information to readers (web-links, references) so that these can be used for research or teaching purposes. Though not a priority, the NORRAG secretariat might do more to add additional links to articles (in addition to those that the article author adds) that could enable readers to more easily find related documents, websites etc.

Degree to which members consider the objectives of NORRAG are met
NORRAG’s objectives are:
1. Collection, critical analysis, and synthesis of research on education policies and strategies, and on international cooperation.
2. Dissemination of just-in-time information and knowledge on aid policies.
3. Critical advocacy of education and training policies and strategies to governments, NGOs and other organizations.
4. Cooperation with other networks in order to share information, carry out joint programmes, joint efforts in advocacy and strengthen networks.

Members considered that NORRAG has most successfully met Objectives 1 and 2; 89% and 79% respectively of all members considered that NORRAG had been ‘very’ or ‘quite’ successful it achieving these objectives.

While most respondents indicated that NORRAG had been ‘very’ or ‘quite’ successful in achieving objectives 3 and 4, there were small minorities who indicated the NORRAG had not achieved these objectives; 14% indicated that NORRAG had not been successful in achieving objective 3 and 20% indicated that NORRAG had not been successful in achieving objective 4.

Addressing objective 3 - ‘Critical advocacy of education and training policies and strategies to governments, NGOs and other organizations’: Currently NORRAG uses a
passive strategy to achieve this objective; it relies on members (including those members from governments, NGOs and development agencies) to pick up the key messages from NN and the policy briefs themselves. NORRAG needs to do more with its ‘policy briefs’ in order to get the key messages of each issue of NN across to policy audiences. NORRAG should do more to actively target potential members from governments, NGOs, development agencies and other organizations.

Addressing objective 4 – ‘Cooperation with other networks in order to share information, carry out joint programmes, joint efforts in advocacy and strengthen networks’: It is not surprising that about one quarter of NORRAG members feel this objective is not being met since NORRAG currently does not actively promote linkages with other networks. This is an area that needs to be actively addressed by the secretariat. Alternatively NORRAG should not state we are trying to do this. It was an objective because of the original links to ERNESA, ROCARE etc

**Topics that urgently need attention**

- There appear to be only three strong categories emerging from members: i) TVET (21%); ii) PARTNERSHIP, EDUCATION FINANCING, AID MODALITIES (9%); iii) ACCESS, EQUITY, EQUALITY and QUALITY (9%).
- Future editions of NORRAG News should consider incorporating the above issues.
- Clearly, members have more than one filed of expertise. It would be useful to incorporate this into the NORRAG database.

**Should NORRAG offer additional services?**

- NORRAG should not (at the current time) organize stand alone conferences. Instead it should continue its strategy of being involved with existing major conferences (e.g. NORRAG co-organised a whole series of panels on a major theme at the 2007 UKFIET Oxford conference). NORRAG should seek further conferences where it might be involved.
- NORRAG should consider organising piggy-back one-day mini conferences that directly precede or come after existing major conferences, like the UKFIET Oxford conference.
- Depending on resources, NORRAG might consider organizing an international conference in collaboration with another network, agency or institution. This had already been done with the Aga Khan Foundation in a meeting in Kenya, and with ERNWACA in a meeting in Bamako. These would be quite costly however (in terms of time needed by the secretariat for organizing).
- NORRAG should help to organize more meetings at the regional level. But NORRAG should not put on such meetings alone. Again, it should work with other networks, agencies or institutions to co-organize such regional events.
- The financial implications are obvious; if the NORRAG secretariat becomes more involved in co-organizing regional meetings or international conferences the workload of the secretariat, and hence the resources needed, would increase.
- At present, NORRAG cannot offer financial support to people to attend NORRAG events.
The NORRAG Networking Tool
15% of people said that they thought the tool was either very useful (10%) or quite useful (5%). Over half of all respondents considered the tool to be potentially very useful though they had not used it yet. About a quarter of all respondents did not know the tool existed.

- NORRAG should do more to publicize the networking tool.
- NORRAG needs to ensure that the networking tool is kept up to date. The second round of norrag.org website developments taking place in 2008 will address this issue.

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A New Tool to Disseminate the Work of NORRAG:
Policy Briefs in Six Languages

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During the last strategy group planning meetings of NORRAG (2006 and 2007 in particular), there has been an increasing concern for the dissemination of the research findings of NORRAG NEWS, its utilization in “the South” and its impact on policy makers. It is in accordance with the tendency to go beyond knowledge production and strengthen the links between research, policy and practice, but it is also the result of two observations on the limits of NORRAG:

- Despite the impressive rise in the number of members and the relevance of NORRAG NEWS for a critical look at current trends in the field of cooperation policies, there is no evidence on its utilisation by readers. It was even pointed out that NORRAG NEWS is rarely quoted in the publications of cooperation agencies or researchers. One possible explanation is that policy makers and practitioners do not have time to read the 80 pages of each issue of NORRAG NEWS. Thus, a digest of research findings (as other organizations already do) might be an additional and efficient to reach them and would perhaps encourage them to browse an entire issue of NORRAG NEWS for more information.

- Most readers of NORRAG NEWS are found in English-speaking countries. Next, come the French-speakers (approximately one sixth of registered members of NORRAG) and most of them are located in Europe. In some parts of the world, like Western Africa, South America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa, NORRAG members remain scarce. Although there are probably several contributing factors, the language issue seems to be the main barrier for the dissemination of NORRAG NEWS in these regions. A related issue is the content of the publication, which does not address these regions sufficiently. In a nutshell, it appears that the issues
of language and relevance apply to NORRAG in the same way that they do for education and training policies.

Drawing on the first observation, the NORRAG strategy group decided to elaborate a policy brief for each issue of NORRAG NEWS (starting with n°37). The policy brief, prepared originally in English by the editor, is conceived as a synthesis for readers to capture the main points of convergence and divergence emerging from the topic dealt with. It offers a glimpse into the rich and diverse content of NORRAG NEWS and it is a useful tool to disseminate better the work of NORRAG. To tackle the under representation of the network in some regions, policy briefs are now being translated into French, Spanish, German, Arabic and Chinese. Adding a translation into Russian in the near future has also been suggested.

To download the policy briefs, it is necessary to be registered in NORRAG and to log in (with your email address) before going through the whole list of NORRAG NEWS. At present, the policy briefs are unfortunately not accessible without log in.

In addition to the efforts made by the secretariat to publicize the work of NORRAG through national cluster meetings, emailing and the sending of printed copies of NORRAG NEWS in under represented regions, it is hoped that the availability of policy briefs in different languages will facilitate access to research findings for policy debate. However, the content issue still needs to be addressed, with a better coverage of the experience of different countries and regions.

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NORRAG Cluster Meeting in Switzerland

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This first NORRAG Clusteri workshop of the NORRAG membership in Switzerland was organized by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, on 21st April 2008. The topic of this workshop “Poverty, inequalities, exclusion: what cooperation policies in the field of education and training?” was already analyzed in NN37. We could draw from that special issue three essential points, which correspond to possible strategies to adopt: firstly, it is necessary to take care of education quality for all; secondly, we need to support a holistic vision of the development of education; and thirdly, we should go beyond a strategy centred on education by developing a favourable macro-economic environment.

The objective of the workshop was to put in the same room more than 70 persons who do not speak enough each other! It was a successful bet since this diversity of participants coming from NGOs, co-operation agencies, foundations, companies, and the academic
world, shared their experiences and insights and presented throughout the workshop their prospects, of which we can present the principal points.

First of all, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) presented the new tendencies of the global policies which correspond to a desire to help the disadvantaged populations through innovative methods; on the other side, public-private partnerships can also be an instrument for these policies. It is worth recalling that the State cannot act alone in the fields of education and training.

Second, the prospects for research consisted of a very valuable reflection and debate on the question of inequalities in access to education in Vietnam. We understood that the policies of aid did not manage to reach the most disadvantaged populations. There is thus a need to target these people.

Third the roundtable on the prospects for nongovernmental actors mainly left the impression that a greater investment in the private and non-state sector is necessary, but also the fact that there exists a multiplicity of private actors and thus of visions and actions in international cooperation.

From this workshop, two principal questions came out of the synthesis:

1) Is education an instrument of employment creation or is it an instrument to make equal citizens?
2) Is the school a mission which concerns principally the public authorities, including all their regulations or is it an hunting ground of a highly diversified market of suppliers?

The most positive point of this workshop is that it illustrated very persuasively the point that we have already made: that the Switzerland-based actors in the field of co-operation education and skills in the countries of the South are extremely diversified. But it was also obvious that they could dialogue together effectively. The tendency to compartmentalization of all these actors was recognised, but it was acknowledged as the comparative advantage of NORRAG to be able to bring them together around such a key topic.

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1 NORRAG Cluster Workshops are an innovation. They are designed to invite the NORRAG membership in a country to come together around a key theme, including possibly around a particularly salient issue of NORRAG News. There are no fewer than 130 NORRAG members in Switzerland. [Editor]
NORRAG Cluster Meeting in The Netherlands
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Ad Boeren of NUFFIC in The Hague is also planning a NORRAG Cluster meeting in the Netherlands. It will focus on the outcomes of the international conference, *Knowledge on the Move*, which was held in The Hague 26-28 February 2008 and which reviewed research arenas, research practices and research capacities. The meeting will also discuss the outcomes of the NORRAG member survey and its implications for the Dutch constituency of some 80 members at present. It is likely to take place in October 2008 in The Hague.

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In many African countries, however, growth is not improving human welfare; poverty and unemployment remain widespread. Some 133 million young people (half of Africa's youth) are illiterate. Many have few or no skills. Over 20 per cent of young people are unemployed in sub-Saharan Africa. Such figures tell their own story: Africa needs to invest its growth dividends in poverty reduction such as the creation of vocational training and employment opportunities for its youth.

This new 2008 edition of the AEO has as its special focus on technical and vocational skills development. One way out of poverty could be filling the skills gap that haunts most of African countries by investing and reforming training and vocational education.
systems. To find out more about our findings based upon 35 country studies, please visit our website *African Economic Outlook 2008* <https://www.oecd.int/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.oecd.org/document/33/0,3343,en_2649_15162846_39963489_11111100.html>, where the country notes are available to download, in addition to the overview and the statistical annex containing 24 tables on the economic, social and political development on the continent.

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