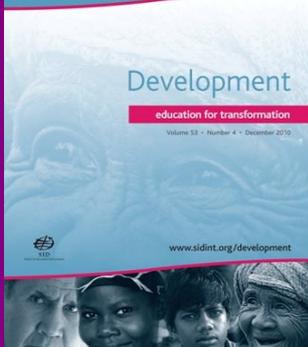


Education for Transformation



Interviews with authors: Regina Cortina, Shivali Lawale Stephen Heyneman, Wesley Snider

Interviews by Laura Fano Morrisey for *DevelopmentPLUS*
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REGINA CORTINA. EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY IN PERÙ



Q *How can we make sure that access to education leads to gender equality?*

RG It is not access to education that leads to gender equality but access to high-quality education. In many communities around the world, girls and boys go to schools where teachers are not well educated, instructing in a language other than the one the students use at home, without adequate learning resources and reading materials. In this type of school, education is not a source of transformation, nor a way to changing the world in any positive sense. In contrast, high-quality education provides an opportunity for girls and boys alike to grow to their full potential academically while enabling the cultures and communities from which they come to thrive in a changing world.

Q *How was GTZ successful in tackling education problems among Peruvian indigenous women?*

RG Building upon the right of indigenous communities to uphold their own language and culture, the approach of the GTZ toward improving education for indigenous communities in Latin America has been to provide technical assistance over several decades in order to create a new model for education in the region. That model, known as intercultural bilingual education, is an enrichment strategy that improves the quality of education for indigenous children by fostering learning of their languages and cultures, resulting in the parallel acquisition of the Spanish language and the maintenance of their traditional cultures and traditions. As one of its key aims, intercultural bilingual education seeks to empower girls and women to be agents of change in their communities.

Q *What is the trade-off between valuing culture and tradition on the one hand and challenging the status quo through education on the other?*

RC Culture and tradition hold people together with shared meaning, but they are not static. They need to engage new circumstances in a changing world. At best as they evolve, culture and tradition should be able to reflect and build upon transformations in the social reality. Rather than viewing tradition and change as a trade-off when thinking about the influence that education might have, I believe it is more helpful to focus on the interplay between education and the capacity that communities and families have to adapt to new circumstances shaping the world in which they live. From my perspective as an educator, schools are social institutions that can help girls and boys to understand their local and national communities, their own culture and traditions within that larger context, and possibilities for transformation that can enable them to achieve their potential as individuals, communities, and society.

Regina Cortina is associate professor of Education in the Department of International and Transcultural Studies, Teachers College, Columbia University.



SHIVALI LAWALE. EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Q *What is the link between education and sustainable development?*

SL Education and sustainable development are intrinsically linked. Development, in the true sense of the word, is not possible without striking a balance between the economic, social environmental and cultural dimensions of society. The linkages between these dimensions are not always clear and there is a pressing need to make them explicit and clear to people. This is where education plays a vital role. Education brings in the awareness of development-related issues and the savoir-faire in terms of terms of

knowledge, values and attitudes, skills and behaviours that are necessary to ensure sustainable development.

The link between education and sustainable development was institutionalised through Agenda 21 that was adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The agenda reflects a global consensus on development and international cooperation to address the challenges of the 21st century and consequently marks the beginning of a new global partnership for sustainable development. The programme areas of Agenda 21 are elaborated through objectives, activities and means of implementation. Chapter 36 of the agenda is dedicated to education, public awareness and training, one of the means to implement and reach the goal of sustainable development.

Q *What is the importance of the 'Four Pillars of Learning' that you mention in your article?*

SL The 'Four Pillars of Learning' as elaborated in the Delors report is a blueprint for education for the twenty-first century. The report underscores the need to enhance inner capacities and to learn throughout life to be able to tackle the changes and challenges that the 21st century presents. To this end, the authors recommend that all education should be organized around four pillars of learning: learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together. The four pillars of learning present four broad categories that respond to the challenges of the present day and go beyond the traditional premise of education. To this end the four pillars of learning correspond to the principles of education for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a paradigm shift in education that proposes going beyond the traditional premise of education by providing populations, children and adults alike, with the savoir-faire to tackle the complexities of tomorrow.

Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 underscores the importance of education as a means of implementation to achieve the objective of sustainable development. The Delors report through its recommendation of the four pillars of learning indicates what type of learning is essential for the 21st century. To this end, we see that there is a link between the two and hence see the recommendations of the Delors report as an important element for consideration in the framework of Education for Sustainable Development. This thinking finds reflection in the work on ESD competencies for educators that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is currently doing.

Q *What are the main achievements of the UNESCO-led initiative The Decade for Education for Sustainable Development?*

SL ESD is a long term process as it aims to bring change in attitudes, values and behaviour of people. For this to happen, the involvement of a range of stakeholders that includes governments, NGOs, academia and civil society organisations is necessary. It is exactly for this reason that UNESCO has embarked on the Monitoring and Evaluation process within the framework of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) for which it is the lead agency. UNESCO will be publishing a series of M&E reports entitled 'Learning for a Sustainable World' during the life of the Decade. The 2009 DESD M&E report shows the progress that has taken place with regard to contexts- settings and backdrops against which ESD has evolved in different parts of the world, and structures like national policies and plans, budget allocations and coordination bodies, to name a few, that facilitate the progress of ESD. The report indicates the progress of reorientation towards sustainability that countries around the world have embarked on. The report can be found at the following address: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf>

We are also keen to promote the development of an assessment framework that will allow people to assess the outcomes and impacts of ESD. Our article is a very small step in that direction.

Shivali Lawale works at UNESCO, Paris, where she coordinates the Monitoring and Evaluation process for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.



STEPHEN HEYNEMAN. EDUCATION FOR ALL'?

Q *What are the main achievements of Education-for-All, the international initiative first launched in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to 'every citizen in every society', and endorsed by national governments and international organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank?*

SH From the beginning the Education-for-All initiative has helped to focus the world's attention on the importance of basic education. As it progressed over the last 20 years, it helped stimulate the use of learning achievements and other student output information as criteria for assessing educational quality and efficiency. It has helped our understanding of students at the margin — rural females, the handicapped, and those with special learning needs. Many new initiatives have been sponsored in the context of Education-For-All and from them we have learned a great deal. These include monetary benefits for families of children with good attendance records and randomized trials of various interventions. Moreover, and perhaps better than from any other source, it has made vivid the need for improved and regularized educational statistics from low and middle income countries and helped to highlight the importance of the improved newly professionalized UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

Q *With funding for education withering, how can we make sure that it becomes a priority in development?*

SH The problem is not that education funding has been 'withering'. The dollars invested in basic education are greater than in 1990. In the last fiscal year, education operations at the World Bank constituted 7% of overall new commitments, up from 4%. The problem is that the Education-for-All initiative has failed to generate the level of new resources for education which was part of its original intention. It was hoped to raise the portion of ODA devoted to education from 4% to 10% or 15% in general and to a higher percentage for Sub-Saharan Africa. The problem is that education has thus far failed in the competition to be seen as the highest priority solution for development problems. Health, transportation, energy and mining constitute about double education's share of ODA; governance and democracy constitute three times the share of education.

Education-for-All has had deleterious effects on education and education policy. It has caused many to treat the Education Sector as if it were simply a charity rather than a flexible, multi-dimensional solution to the full gamut of development problems. It has generated an ideology of correctness so over-whelming as to diminish requests for reforms to higher education, education research and many other important endeavors. It has led to a lemming-like behavior of Donors which has diminished the choice and flexibility of recipient countries.

Q *What has been the role of the state in education in the last few decades?*

SH It is common today to hear (rather shrill) adjectives used to describe non-state solutions – neoliberal, educational commercialization, knowledge capitalism, privatization. History helps us better understand that what is often suggested is a return to basics, a return to using some of the solutions and institutions which provided education often with efficiency and quality prior in the 1950s. These include communities of churches and mosques and local independent charities. The problem is that the role of the state expanded in the 1960s and 1970s often farther than it could intelligently accommodate. Private providers of basic education for poor families are growing exponentially in Jamaica, India, Kenya, Ghana, Indonesia and many other countries. Non-state providers of basic schooling for low-income families are expanding in Stockholm, Chicago and Sao Paulo. The reasons are similar. Wealthy families have always had an alternative; but now poor families are fed up. They are fed up with classrooms overflowing with students. They are fed up with their child's boredom and discouragement. They are fed up with low performance; with teachers who do not come on time and who are paid regardless of professional competence. They are fed up with bullying. They are tired of waiting for solutions which, if implemented successfully, will be too late for their own children. In these cases, and there are many of these cases, it is a rational choice for the poor to try and pay for non-government schooling instead of remaining with the low quality of 'free' places in public schooling.

This raises the question of what 'should' the future role of the state be with respect to basic education. The state may retain the right to set the objectives and performance standards of the public curriculum. This is the national compact of citizenship. The state has the right to regulate. On the other hand, the state has no right to a monopoly of the provision of basic education. That right belongs to the family.

Stephen Heyneman is Professor of International Education Policy at Vanderbilt University.



CONRAD WENSLEY SNIDER. BEYOND A STANDARD APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Q What are the main benefits and limitations of educational standards?

CWS Formal education involves several transactional arrangements, with the important one for learning established between the teacher and the students, as well as another potentially supportive one among the students. The formality entails the structure of the transactions. Teachers set up lesson plans, and students agree implicitly to participate (or not). The degree of structure reflects the level of programming, and this can vary from lesson to lesson. By intent, the classroom programme has direction, degree of depth, and purpose. The teacher largely determines the programme for the classroom, although some instructional strategies may open up the possibilities and reduce the rigidity of the experiences. Education standards structure the programme for all the teachers and, by extension, the classrooms, so that every student has the same opportunities to learn the same material and experience the same instructional programme regardless of their teacher, school, or geographical location. Standards enhance the possibilities for educational equality and the opportunity to learn. On the other hand, by their very nature, standards also limit some of the possibilities in accordance with their prescription for inclusion of some kinds of experiences and information and their proscription or exclusion of others. Most advice on standards recommends enough clarity and specificity to ensure teacher understanding and corresponding compliance on standardization, but not too much to limit creativity and teaching moments for exploration.

Q What is the relationship between assessment and learning?

CWS Learning is a complex concept, describing some change in the learner as part of a process of change and possibly associated with some specific external ecology or internal cognitive synthesis or accommodation. In education, learning is usually associated with outcomes, such as observable behaviours or documented performances. Assessment concerns the evaluation of those behaviors and performances in terms of some concept or construct that is important to schooling. These concepts and constructs are embedded in standards, and assessment, therefore, reflects the extent to which the individual has assimilated or accommodated the important features of the education standard. Assessment is frequently characterized as just another instructional event, but this time there is an evaluation of how the event is handled by the individual (or class). Historically, assessment was used for “sorting” or ranking students in their accomplishments. Now the hope is that new assessments will describe what is understood and what is not for each student and contribute accordingly to their own insight about their academic needs and help the teacher create better learning possibilities for them. Assessment preparation specifies what should be learned (along with associated standards), the scores and related descriptions indicate what is learned, and overall, the assessments indicate progress on standards or individual, parent, or teacher expectations. Instead of being an end point, assessment is part of the learning process.

Q What can flexibility add to the standards approach?

CWS Early experience with standards emphasized their prescriptive strengths, and they were all-encompassing, and viewed as intrusive or rigid by teachers and administrators. In the professional model of teaching, standards are minimal requirements and to have a high quality education system, the educational experience should reach beyond these basic expectations. Flexibility is essential to a rich and deep instructional programme. Great teachers change lives in dramatic and lasting fashion. The purpose of standards is to ensure that all experiences at least meet minimal requirements. It is useful for standards to ensure the provision of the opportunity to learn, but it is not useful for them to limit the possibilities. Evidence suggests that a series of poor teachers has serious repercussions for student progress in the future, and some level of standardization provides a basis for the determination of student accomplishment and teacher expertise. Flexibility enables the best to exceed the standards and coupled with clear standards, it provides the possibility to compensate for the others (e.g., team teaching, peer teaching, projects, etc.). By definition, flexibility results from stretching and remains adaptive to different contexts.

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