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Education for Diversity: Investing in Systemic Change through Curriculum, Textbooks, and Teachers

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Diversity represents a challenge and an opportunity for education. It is a challenge because policymakers and educators are called to respond to the claims of disadvantaged minorities for whom education represents a key to greater opportunity and parity with other groups in society. It is an opportunity because a society that learns to live with diversity is likely to achieve faster rates of economic growth and social development—if only by avoiding ethnic conflict. The accommodation of diversity in the educational system is also fully consistent with (and may even contribute to) the “outcome-based” educational practices that researchers agree are needed if societies are to achieve sustainable social and economic development in our globalized world.

Combined, *education for diversity* has the potential to propel growth and progress while reducing and perhaps preventing social conflict. Recent research points the way toward reaching that potential through changes in curriculum and textbook selection and, most important of all, through more effective policies on the recruitment, training, and retention of teachers.

Before turning to the topic of investing in diversity, let us first consider the forms in which diversity manifests itself in educational systems. How diversity is handled can provide valuable information about the potential for conflict in society.

Diversity, Conflict, and the Characteristics of Educational Systems

The power of diversity to promote development and mitigate conflict should be considered not only at times of crisis, but also in routine planning and development in the mainstream education sector. The three main reasons for this are that:

- Education is a fundamental right that provides an important means of protection against abuse and discrimination, partly by providing children and young people with the knowledge and skills to access their rights and responsibilities.
- Education is an essential tool for human development and eradication of poverty—an investment not only in individuals but also in social and economic development. Children rarely get a second chance at education.

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- Education can be part of the problem as well as part of the solution. Policies and practice at all levels within the education system need to be analyzed in terms of their sensitivity to diversity and their potential to aggravate or ameliorate conflict.

Diversity and Social Conflict

There is little doubt that conflict retards education and development more broadly. Conflict and instability are major barriers to attaining the international community's goal of Education For All (UNESCO 2002). The stakes are particularly high in Africa (DFID 2001a). Ten of the 15 countries in Africa that require urgent support because enrollment rates are less than 50 percent are experiencing or recovering from conflict.

But it is important to avoid a simplistic view that, because so many conflicts occur in low-income countries, it is poverty that causes conflict. Duffield (2001) is among those who argue that the prevalence of conflict today is related more to issues of political transformation and globalization than to persistent poverty. Conflict in the world is not restricted exclusively to low-income countries or to those with the lowest enrollments in primary education. There are many examples of violent conflict in high-income countries with well-developed education systems. The "highly educated" are just as capable as the uneducated of turning to violence (including ethnic or racial violence). That fact emphasizes the need to look more closely at the *type* of education that is on offer and the values and attitudes it promotes.

While ethnicity is commonly cited as a major cause of conflict, many analysts conclude that ethnicity is more often mobilized and politicized by conflict than the other way around (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). One of the ways in which ethnicity may be mobilized for conflict is through education, either intentionally or unintentionally. Education may be used explicitly to promote a particular definition of national identity that includes certain groups and excludes others. It may be used as a weapon in cultural repression of minorities, by denying them access to education, or using education to suppress their languages, traditions, art forms, religious practices, and cultural values. Segregated education may serve to maintain inequality among groups within society. And textbooks may manipulate history for political purposes, particularly when government defines the "national story" (Bush and Saltarelli 2000).

More often, the process is an implicit one, whereby education contains certain values and messages about the diverse groups within society. The way in which other peoples or nations are described, and the characteristics that are ascribed to them, may inculcate attitudes of superiority. Where diversity of gender, ability, disability, language, culture, religion, and ethnicity map onto inequalities of power and status among groups, it becomes easier to mobilize attitudes of prejudice and intolerance that may ultimately lead to violence and conflict. Many of these negative practices will have a particular impact on girl pupils from minority groups who also must contend with gender-based discrimination.

In other circumstances, education can play an important preventive role by developing greater sensitivity to diversity and by raising awareness of the ways in which inequalities based on difference carry the potential for conflict.

Diversity as an Indicator of Trends in Educational and Political Systems

How diversity is handled in an educational system (explicitly or implicitly), and how that system is used by the authorities, can tell us much about the potential for conflict within a society.

The presence or absence of a political commitment to pluralism will be reflected in the way the system is structured and administered. Political involvement in operational matters, such as education appointments, deployment of teachers, and determination of the curriculum, may be indicators of the extent to which education is regarded as a tool for political or ideological purposes.

A lack of sensitivity to diversity is likely to give rise to concerns about equality. Equality concerns may arise in terms of “inputs,” such as equal access of all groups to education; transparency in the allocation of resources; and the recruitment, training, and deployment of teachers. Bush and Saltarelli (2000: 9) claim that restricted access to education “should be viewed as an indicator of deteriorating relations [among] groups” and “a warning signal that should prod the international community to initiate what the World Bank would call a ‘watching brief’ so that it might anticipate and respond to further deteriorations.”

Equality issues also arise in terms of educational “outputs,” such as differences in education attainment and qualifications among groups. These differences have important consequences for equal opportunity of employment. Bush and Saltarelli (2000: 10) suggest that educational attainment is one of the ways in which dominant groups seek to maintain their privileged position within diverse societies. They cite examples from Rwanda, in which historically Catholic missionary schools favored the Tutsi minority through preferential treatment that led to employment by the colonial government; and Burundi, in which restrictions on the admission of Hutu children to secondary schools prevented the acquisition of necessary employment skills.

The identification of inequalities, whether in terms of educational inputs, such as access, or outputs, such as qualifications, requires *accurate information and reporting systems*. Where diversity exists, interpretations of inequalities will be politically and emotionally charged, and the reliability of statistics and impartiality of monitoring systems contested. These realities make it vital that a critical interaction among government statistics departments, nongovernmental monitoring bodies, and independent academic research takes place. Monitoring also may provide the basis for the development of education policies to address inequalities as a means of building greater trust among different groups within society.

Trust among groups affects, and is affected by, the way in which diversity is managed in the overall education system and its institutions, which may fall into one of three categories:

- *Assimilationist*. Single institutions operating according to the values of the dominant tradition; minority needs and interests neglected

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- *Separatist*. Separate institutions, each serving different constituencies with relatively homogeneous populations; processes within institutions may or may not acknowledge broader diversity outside the institution
- *Integrationist*. Common or shared institutions with diversity represented within the population of each institution.

The extent to which government policy supports movement in any of these directions may increase or decrease the likelihood of education becoming a source of conflict.

Equally important are the dynamics *within* institutions, because the educational environment and the educational processes within the institution may emphasize different concepts of pluralism in practice.¹ For example:

“Conservative pluralism” is expressed by education environments that emphasize *similarities* among people and the view that all people share a common humanity. Exponents may use language such as “Differences are not important” and “We have more in common than dividing us.” Conservative pluralists avoid overt expression of cultural identity and regard religion as a private matter of personal conscience not for the public space. Display of religious, cultural symbols is avoided, and the workplace or learning environment is regarded as a “neutral” space in which controversial issues are avoided.

“Liberal pluralism” is represented by education environments that place more emphasis on recognizing and accepting *differences* among people. This approach may become preoccupied with “exotic cultures” and politically correct “celebrations of diversity” as ends in themselves. The workplace or learning environment may contain diverse symbols and expressions of identity juxtaposed within the same space. There may be more willingness to acknowledge difference as having potential for conflict—yet discomfort at addressing underlying causes.

“Critical pluralism” recognizes that similarities and differences exist among individuals at a personal level but also *acknowledges differences in status, privilege, and power relations among groups* within society and among societies; there is a willingness to identify underlying causes and explore possibilities for action to address social injustice.

Alongside its ideological characteristics, the *structure* of an education system has a bearing on the extent to which it promotes assimilation, separate development, or social inclusion; and each of these has different implications for tensions within the broader society. Educational *processes* within schools and other education institutions provide evidence of the way in which diversity is being managed and are an additional indicator of the dominant values within the wider society. An analysis of education structures and educational processes from a conflict perspective therefore could be an important component of a conflict “early warning system.” Diversity sensitivity and conflict potential also are the reasons that the current Education-for-All Model of Quality Education needs revision. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (UNESCO 2002) recognizes that conflict is an impediment to the

¹ Adapted from Kincheloe and Steinberg (1999: 1-26).

achievement of education for all. Despite this recognition, conceptually, the report treats the need for conflict-sensitive education as relevant solely at times of crisis and emergency. It evinces that bias in two ways. First, the model of quality education presented in the report identifies inputs, processes, and outcomes (p. 81, table 2.14).² Under them, the report references a gender-sensitive school climate as part of quality education. However, it contains no reference to the need for educational processes that are sensitive to diversity (conflict-sensitive) as an equally important aspect of quality education. Second, where the report focuses on “conflict and education,” it is discussed not as an essential ingredient of quality education (Goal 6), but in a separate section that refers to the “special case” of education in emergency situations (pp. 122–27).

Curriculum, Textbooks, and Teachers – Fulcrums for Change

We began this chapter with the premise that although diversity can strengthen a society (for example, by making it more globally competitive), it can also become the locus of conflict. To maximize the constructive social potential of diversity and avoid the destructive, policies and practice at all levels of an education system need to be analyzed in terms of their *sensitivity to diversity* and *potential to aggravate or ameliorate conflict*. These issues should be considered as a *routine* aspect of long-term planning and development of all education systems (in much the same way that we seek gender-sensitive systems)—irrespective of whether we live in a society that is relatively peaceful, has emerging tensions, is in the midst of conflict, or is recovering from conflict or other humanitarian crises.

Taking an overview of an education system means knowing its structure and its characteristics and becoming aware of how it can be part of the problem if we are not vigilant. It is not just access to education that is important, but also what is taught and the values conveyed. Therefore, assuming that the quality of education is about the personal and moral development of children and young people as well as their academic achievements and practical skills for employment, the case needs to be made firmly that quality education in *all* education systems is about education that is sensitive to diversity.

There are many levels within a system that need to take diversity into account. Possible entry points include:

- Securing political commitment (aims and purpose of education)
- Legislation and policy changes
- Structural change (decentralization, differentiation, desegregation)
- Curriculum change
- Resource-led change (textbooks, information and communication technologies)
- Pedagogy (school-based, NGO-supported)

² Model derived from Heneveld and Craig (1995), OECD/INES (2001), and Scheerens (2002), and presented in *Education For All: Is the World on Track?* (UNESCO 2002: 81)

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- Teacher education (initial, in-service)
- Examination- and assessment-led change
- Parent initiatives, community links.

All these factors interrelate and need to be taken into account. In some countries, the education system will be complex, with functions decentralized and differentiated among different agencies. In other countries, there may be a single ministry responsible for everything. Taking a systemic approach, therefore, means taking stock of all these factors and making judgments about where best to invest time and energy to achieve educational processes that are sensitive to diversity.

The World Bank initiative to support education for diversity concentrates on three very specific aspects of education systems: curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods.³ One of the reasons for concentrating on these three is that they are normally a central part of education reform processes for which member states of the World Bank request funding. Often three key ingredients of any education reform proposal are to “modernize” the curriculum, to replace existing textbooks, and to improve the quality of teaching through improved teaching methods and investment in teacher education.

What Works? Research Evidence

To an extent, the research evidence supports the view that these factors significantly affect the quality of education that children and young people receive. For example, research by Throsby and Gannicott (1990) on quality education as part of international development suggest that:

- Trained teachers make a difference.
- Instructional materials are the most cost-effective investment.
- Instruction in the student’s mother tongue is most effective.
- Examinations are a useful way to monitor quality.
- Healthy, well-fed children learn better.
- The amount of learning time is important.
- Quality depends on good, decentralized education management.

On the other hand, lavish buildings and equipment will not necessarily raise quality, and curriculum reform, by itself, will not raise quality as much as effective implementation of the curriculum.

Later research by Pennycuick (1993: 1) on school effectiveness in developing countries identifies several “promising avenues” (improved curriculum implementation,

³ Respect for Diversity through Education is one of a group of five World Bank programs launched in 2002 under the title Civic Engagement, Empowerment, and Respect for Diversity (CEERD).

good textbooks, at least 25 hours of core teaching,⁴ and in-service education), as well as some “blind alleys” (curriculum adjustments, computers, reducing class size below 40, lengthy pre-service teacher education).

A synthesis of research studies by Letwin (1993) on achievement in development settings suggests that teacher salaries, teacher motivation, time spent on preparation, high expectations of pupils, and quality of texts are important. Less important are class size, school buildings, multiple shifts, and repetitions.

There appear to be consistent messages emerging from these research studies about the importance of curriculum, textbooks, and the role of the teacher. More important, it is the combined effect of these three elements that is significant—because they are interrelated. Curriculum specifies not just content, but also learning outcomes; and a key message is that *most attention should be given to effective implementation rather than curriculum change as an end in itself*. In many countries, the most tangible expression of curriculum is through textbooks, and in many developing countries a single textbook *is* the curriculum. However, the curriculum and textbooks are also mediated by teachers, and it is often teacher skills that determine the quality of learning experiences. Teacher competence in a range of pedagogies and teaching methods are an important ingredient.

Reasons for Curriculum Change—Anticipating Trends

Countries seek to change curriculum for many reasons. These may be economic (due to structural adjustment, rebuilding after financial collapse); modernization (replacing old content with new or changing the type of curriculum); political transition (new ideologies, new forms of government); reconstruction and reconciliation (after conflict), or as part of an investment in human development (the case in many low-income countries in which education is seen as the main tool). In most cases, there is a combination of factors.

Recent research by Parker, Ninomiya, and Cogan (1999: 117-45) suggests that the search for relevance is an important factor in motivating curriculum change. In investigating what future elements might be required for a multinational curriculum, the research team identified global trends likely to have a significant impact on the lives of people over the next 25 years, the characteristics required of individuals to cope with and manage those trends, and education strategies needed to develop the desired characteristics.

Significant future trends identified by the research include the following, several of which clearly hold the potential for increasing diversity within societies and presenting opportunities for conflict:

- Economic growth will be fuelled by knowledge (ideas, innovations, and inventions) more than natural resources.
- Conflicts of interest between developed and developing countries will increase.

⁴ Twenty-five hours of full-time education per week including an emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

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- Migration flows from poor to rich areas within and among countries will have an impact on security and social order.
- Economic gaps among people within countries will widen significantly; poverty will increase.
- The cost of obtaining adequate water will increase due to population growth, deforestation, and environmental deterioration.
- Increased use of genetic engineering will pose complex ethical questions.
- Information technologies will dramatically reduce the privacy of individuals.

Among the characteristics of citizens that are likely to be helpful in coping with these trends, Parker, Ninomiya, and Cogan identified the following:

- Ability to conceive of problems in global as well as local terms
- Ability to cooperate with others and take responsibility
- Ability to understand, accept, appreciate, and tolerate cultural differences
- Capacity to think critically and systematically.

The most significant educational strategy suggested to develop these characteristics is a move toward curricula that have a global as well as local dimension, as well as curricula based on “learning outcomes,” as described in the next section.

The Nature of Curriculum—Informational Content or Skill-Building?

The very nature of curriculum needs to be considered carefully. During the 1980s, there was a significant move away from school-based control of the curriculum toward centralized, national curricula. However, once again, the extent to which curriculum needs to be rooted in prescribed content is being questioned.

For one thing, when curriculum is conceived narrowly as the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, it also may be perceived as an extremely powerful tool to promote particular political ideologies, religious practices, or cultural values and traditions. There is also the problem that, if the curriculum is conceived as simply transmission of factual knowledge, the pressure to include more and more content will increase.

The rate at which knowledge is increasing, complaints about curriculum overload, the desire to avoid a curriculum biased toward one or another group, and the need for more transferable skills add weight to arguments that have led education policymakers in many countries to advocate approaches that emphasize the development of generic skills, such as the ability to draw on multiple sources of information and evaluate conflicting evidence, the development of media literacy, critical thinking, and social and moral development. These are the type of transferable and adaptable life skills that today’s children will need in the rapidly changing world and work environments of the future. They are also likely to encourage greater sensitivity to diversity.

The rationale for moving toward skills-based curricula suggests it has a number of advantages:

- Less prescribed content means that the curriculum does not need continual updating and that teachers have more flexibility to determine how to develop generic skills across disciplinary lines.
- Inquiry-based curricula encourage problem-solving and skills development.
- Critical thinking increasingly is seen as necessary to challenge abuse of power.
- Participatory pedagogy is seen as a key element in democratization.

Implications of a Skills-Based Curriculum for Learning Resources and Textbooks

The move toward a skills-based curriculum has implications for learning resources and textbooks. The following brief examples illustrate some of these:

The operation of a *single textbook policy* may offer a Ministry of Education a way of guaranteeing a “minimum entitlement” for all pupils to basic learning resources, particularly important in low-income countries and where equal access needs to be demonstrated. However, questions may arise about who controls or benefits from the production of textbooks and about their content.

In contested societies, arguments over *textbook content* can become cultural and ideological “battlegrounds.” For example, part of the education reforms in Bosnia has involved the removal of “offensive material” from history textbooks.⁵ Such a process necessarily raises sensitive issues about the judgment of what might be considered offensive and by whom, about who should be involved in such a process, and how it is implemented.

The production of *single textbooks for different linguistic communities* also can present difficulties. For example, textbooks produced by Sinhalese authors in Sri Lanka have been translated to produce copies for Tamil pupils. However, the Tamil Teachers’ Union identified inaccuracies in the translated versions and claimed cultural bias in some of the illustrations and content matter. This has led to demands for greater involvement of Tamil authors in textbook production.

Education reforms that promote a change from content-based syllabi to a “learning outcomes” model have significant implications for learning resources. Drawing on a variety of texts and incorporating the use of different media and new technologies may contribute toward the development of multiple perspectives. On the other hand, these particular reforms have an economic cost, and this broader approach requires different skills from the teacher than simply teaching from a textbook.

⁵ See, for example, UNESCO (2003) for an overview of UNESCO’s role in the revision and review of textbooks and learning materials.

Implications of a Skills-Based Curriculum for Teachers and Teaching Methods

Any education strategy that seeks to develop more sensitivity to diversity must take account of the central role of teachers. Teachers mediate the curriculum and the values it conveys. The extent to which they can guide students toward productive lives in a diverse, conflict-free society will depend on several factors.

A “learning outcomes” curriculum provides opportunities to develop critical thinking but also poses commensurate challenges in the teaching skills it requires and the controversial issues that must be addressed as part of the teaching and learning process.

Whether teachers are able to rise to those challenges will, in turn, depend on recruitment policies, teacher education, and the overall status of teaching in society.

Diversity-sensitive recruitment and deployment policies include ensuring an adequate recruitment of male and female teachers from different ethnic groups and an adequate supply of teachers to provide education to different groups in their first languages. Incentives, such as housing, may be offered to encourage the deployment of teachers in underserved areas, often rural.

The quality of initial teacher education and type of training are crucial. The extent to which teachers are trained in the basics of human rights education, and the extent to which personal values and perspectives are challenged, may be important. A related issue is whether it is helpful to provide teacher education through separate, faith-, or language-based institutions.

The social status of teaching—as reflected in entry qualifications, rates of pay, and terms and conditions of employment—will affect morale and motivation.

The move to skills-based curricula, defined in terms of learning outcomes rather than knowledge content, requires teachers who are more than “subject specialists.” The characteristics of teachers likely to be successful in mediating this type of curriculum include those who have:

- Basic training in rights and responsibilities
- An interdisciplinary awareness of social, cultural, civic, political, legal, economic, environmental, historical, and contemporary affairs
- Disposition to interdisciplinary learning
- Commitment to inquiry-based learning
- Skill in facilitating experiential learning
- Ability to draw on multiple resources
- Confidence in addressing controversial issues
- Sensitivity to emotional dimensions of learning
- Ability to assess student learning outcomes.

In a typical classroom lesson, teachers rarely use a single pedagogical strategy. They commonly employ multiple strategies in any single classroom session. Furthermore, the literature on teaching suggests that multiple teaching strategies enhance student learning (Rosenshine and Stevens 1986; Brophy 1990; Stanley 1991). Considerable research, particularly from Canada and the United States, demonstrates that the traditional expository strategies frequently are ineffective, for example, in teaching civic education across a broad range of students (Patrick and Hoge 1991; Dynesson 1992). Yet, expository strategies often remain the dominant form of teaching.

Osborne (1991) suggests that effective teachers adopt *democratic styles of teaching* and share nine principles in common:

- Teachers have a clearly articulated vision of education.
- The material being taught is worth knowing and is important.
- Material is organized as a problem or an issue to be investigated.
- Careful, deliberate attention is given to teach thinking within the context of valuable knowledge.
- Teachers are able to connect the material with student knowledge and experience.
- Students are required to be active in their own learning.
- Students are encouraged to share and to build on one another's ideas.
- Theoretical and practical are established between the classroom and the outside world.
- Classrooms are characterized by trust and openness so that students find it easy to participate.

Reducing Conflict While Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: New Programs, New Teachers

Globalization has made most societies of the world more diverse and in many cases more unequal and thus more prone to conflict. Educators have been called upon, and in many cases have volunteered, to meet those challenges through innovative and interdisciplinary programs. Making those programs work, however, will require major changes in policy for the selection, training, deployment, and retention of teachers.

Educational Programs for the Prevention of Conflict

Areas relevant to the preventive role that education might play in terms of conflict come with many different labels and emphases. During the 1990s, UNESCO became preoccupied with trying to draw together these disparate areas under the common label of a "culture of peace." However, this approach has been criticized for being too eclectic and unfocused, with too much energy devoted to securing agreement on definitions.

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A recent UNICEF paper defines peace education in broad and inclusive terms, emphasizing its preventive role:

Peace education in UNICEF refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural. (Fountain 1999)

The UNICEF paper emphasizes the view that peace education is an essential component of quality basic education and should be part of formal education in all countries. The paper also acknowledges difficulties in terminology and points to a variety of terms used in its country and regional offices such as “education for peace” (Rwanda), “education for social harmony” (Sri Lanka), and “values for life” (Egypt).

The diversity of practice and eclectic range of peace-education initiatives can be confusing. However, in terms of their emphasis, most peace-education programs appear to fall within the following broad categories:

Skills-based programs, often labeled as “peace education,” involve workshops in communication skills, interpersonal relations, and conflict-resolution techniques. It is not always clear in implemented programs how the development of *interpersonal* skills in conflict resolution might affect the dynamics of *intergroup* conflict.

Multicultural and intercultural education emphasizes learning about diversity and concepts such as mutual understanding and interdependence. It has been suggested that such programs fall short of their aspiration to generate more harmonious relationships within society because they “abandon the crucial issues of structural inequality and differential power relations in society” (McCarthy 1991: 313).

Human rights education focuses on universal values, concepts of equality and justice, and the responsibilities of states. Few advocate the teaching of human rights as a separate subject, but it has proven difficult to integrate it into the curriculum and other school activities. One difficulty lies in the absence of a human rights dimension in initial teacher education. Other difficulties include lack of commitment at the political level – because of the challenges that human rights education might raise for existing legislation, and because of conflicts with existing political, economic, social, religious, and cultural practices.

Civic education, citizenship, and education for democracy place their emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of the individual in society. During the 1990s, the number of formal democracies in the world increased from 76 (46.1 percent) to 117 (61.3 percent) (Print 1999: 7–20), a trend that has been described as the “third wave of democracy.” This wave was related to significant world events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the democratization of former communist states in Eastern Europe, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the ending of apartheid in South Africa. It was accompanied by renewed development of civic and citizenship education programs, reconceptualized to emphasize principles of democracy and participation. Modern civics programs go beyond simple “patriotic” models of citizenship that require uncritical loyalty to the nation state. By defining citizenship in terms of human

rights and civic responsibilities, they attempt to decouple the concept of “citizenship” from that of “nationality” to make it more difficult to mobilize political conflict around identity issues (Council of Europe 2000).

Education for international development emphasizes the interdependence of different peoples and societies in political, economic, social, and cultural terms. The relevance of such programs for the prevention of conflict has been heightened by the impact of globalization and the events of September 11, 2001. The Cold War era was characterized as one of peace and security through “deterrence.” Since the September 11 attacks and subsequent events in Afghanistan and Iraq, the link between global security and development assistance has been highlighted.

Individually, none of these education programs offers a magic solution for the prevention of conflict. But together, as a complex matrix of education initiatives that address key themes and values, they could have a preventive effect in the long term. It is unrealistic to expect that such programs will have immediate impact. Nor is it reasonable to expect that nonspecialist aid managers will be familiar with the intricacies and claimed “efficacy” of individual programs (although see the chapter by James Socknat in this volume).

It may be more realistic to adopt an audit approach, one that encourages education authorities to take stock of educational provision, with a special focus on features that could have a role in preventing conflict. The absence of “key themes” might then become part of a broader debate about curriculum development strategy within the education system.

Diversity-Sensitive Education—Implications for Teachers

Cochran-Smith (2004) argues that an inescapable “demographic imperative” is leading toward greater diversity within populations. Gay (2000) finds, however, that the growing diversity of student populations has not been matched by commensurate changes in the teaching corps, which remains relatively homogeneous. Both writers find growing inequality—in Cochran-Smith’s words, “marked disparities in educational opportunities, resources, and achievement among student groups [who] differ from one another racially, culturally, linguistically and socioeconomically” (2004: 4).

Cochran-Smith goes on to suggest (2004: 143–49) that teacher education that is sensitive to diversity and committed to reducing disparities will explicitly or implicitly address eight key questions:

The *diversity* question asks how the challenge of an increasingly diverse student population should be understood. Previous approaches that address diversity as a *deficit* (such as lack of proficiency in the language of instruction) have been criticized. Rather, the challenge appears to be how best to draw on diversity as a teaching and learning *resource* and avoid assimilative approaches.

The *ideology* question asks, “What is the purpose of schooling, and the role of public education in a democratic society?” It questions the values and assumptions on which education policy and practice are based.

The *knowledge* question asks, “What knowledge and beliefs are necessary to teach diverse populations?” Debate may center on the extent to which knowledge of different cultures and traditions is necessary beyond traditional subject knowledge and the extent to which teachers understand their own culture.

The *teacher learning* question asks, “How do teachers learn to teach for diversity?” It is suggested that moving from concepts of “training” toward developing skills of inquiry is helpful.

The *practice* question asks, “What pedagogical skills are helpful?” It refers to documented case studies of “culturally responsive teaching.” Cochran-Smith identifies six “principles of pedagogy” that are sensitive to diversity and address inequality in practice:

- Develop inquiry-based, “communities of learners” that have high expectations of students and teachers to address problematic questions set by themselves.
- Build on what students bring to school with them—knowledge and interests, cultural and linguistic resources.
- Teach the skills necessary for new learning and bridge the gaps between what it is assumed children know and what they actually know.
- Work with individuals, families, and communities by drawing on family histories, stories, traditions; demonstrate respect for students’ family and cultural values.
- Diversify forms of assessment; it is widely recognized that most standardized testing practices perpetuate inequities and limit opportunities for poor children.
- Encourage critical thinking by including the discussion and investigation of inequity and injustice as part of the curriculum.

The *outcomes* question asks, “What should be the outcomes of teacher education for diversity?” It points to the shift toward the assessment of outcomes in terms of performance-based standards, rather than program impacts. In practical terms, this shift suggests that improvements in achievement for disadvantaged or previously excluded groups should be discernible.

The *selection* question asks, “Who should be recruited and selected as teachers?” It seems clear that teachers should reflect the diversity that exists within wider society, thereby being role models with whom children can identify and that those recruited to teach have the qualities and dispositions consistent with respect for diversity and the skills of critical inquiry. Experienced teachers may have more to offer in difficult teaching environments.

The *coherence* question asks, “To what extent is the approach to teacher education consistent across the areas identified above?” Contradictions and anomalies inevitably undermine even systemic commitments to teacher education that respects diversity.

The foregoing questions have significant implications for teacher education. For example, a country of 5 million people with one-fifth of its population in full-time education will have a student population of 1 million. At a pupil-teacher ratio of 40 to 1, such a system

will require at least 25,000 serving teachers and an initial teacher system of perhaps 40 teacher educators producing at least 1,000 newly qualified teachers per year. Various factors such as geographic location of schools, difficulties in teacher supply and retention, subject specialization, and diversity of school types mean that these figures are likely to be underestimates.

Although teacher education alone cannot transform society's inequities, the potential to influence the knowledge, skills, and values that are learned by significant numbers and successive generations of the population cannot be ignored.

Conclusion – The Critical Role of Teachers

Clearly, in educational development processes, the relations among curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods are important, but the role of teachers stands out as particularly crucial. Investments in teachers and teacher education need to be made in a systemic way that appreciates the interrelationship among the political, structural, and practice aspects of the education system. For example, more diversity in the recruitment of teachers is unlikely to have the desired impact if there is a lack of political commitment to retaining teachers through adequate pay and conditions. Similarly, it is probably a mistake to think that diversity-sensitive pedagogy can be addressed simply as a technical issue or divorced from the political environment in which it takes place. These are complex issues. Nonetheless, the potential of investments in teachers and teacher education appears critical for social and economic development that values diversity as a necessary resource rather than a source of conflict or threat to peace and stability.

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