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CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION IN CONFLICT AFFECTED COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT: *The importance of education to human development is emphasised by its central place in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reflected in the global initiative Education for All (EFA) aimed at securing primary education for all children by the year 2015. There are many impediments to the achievement of universal primary education. These include lack of priority to education on the part of national governments such as, insufficient spending as a percentage of GNP or inequitable distribution of funding and resources. Significant barriers to education, particularly within low income countries, include poverty, child labour, distance from school, unequal access due to gender or cultural factors and the existence of conflict. Although the number of out-of-school primary-age children in the world has fallen in recent years, there has been little improvement in conflict affected countries. These countries are home to half of all children out of school (currently 28.5 million out of 57 million children), yet they receive less than one-fifth of education aid. This paper draws on research for the 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report to highlight a number of significant challenges for education in these countries and the contribution that education might make to longer term peacebuilding.*

KEYWORDS: *Education for All, Conflict, Peacebuilding*

Introduction

In terms of the number of armed conflicts the world is becoming less violent (Global Monitoring Report, 2011, p.136). However, the nature of conflict is changing, with important consequences for populations and their education. Conflicts are now overwhelmingly fought within rather than between states and many involve protracted violence. Civilians, schools and teachers are increasingly targets of attack as international norms on warfare are disregarded. Findings from the Global Monitoring Report indicate that twenty-eight million children are out of school in conflict-affected countries, half of the world total. Children in conflict affected countries are twice as likely as children in other low income countries to die before their fifth birthday. Refugees and internally displaced people face major barriers to education, and conflict-affected countries have some of the largest gender inequalities and lowest literacy levels in the world. Yet education remains a low priority in situations of conflict – it receives just 2% of humanitarian aid and only 38% of emergency aid requests for education are met. Whilst development assistance to basic education has doubled since 2002 to US\$4.7 billion, current aid levels fall far short of the US\$16 billion required annually to close the external financing gap in low-income countries. Yet, twenty-one of the world's poorest developing countries continue to spend more on military budgets than primary education, when redirecting just 10% into education could put almost 10 million additional children into school. The military spending of donor governments is US\$1029 billion per year, yet 6 days of this would meet the funding needed to achieve Education for All.

Education as a Humanitarian Response

Since the Machel Report (1995), and a further review in 2009, there has been increased awareness of the impact of conflict on education systems and the importance of education for children and youth as part of post conflict reconstruction. Child protection and child rights advocates

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have placed issues related to children and conflict on the international agenda and argued for the education of refugees and displaced persons, strategies to prevent the use of child soldiers, protection for girls against sex crimes, and the provision of landmine education and trauma counselling. The growing field of 'education in emergencies' has made arguments that education should be given more priority in emergency responses (Brock & McCorriston, 2008; INEE, 2010) and suggest that education can provide a physically safe space for learning and psychosocial development, interaction with peers and trusted adults, and opportunities to receive food and medical attention. Other arguments are that education can mitigate the psychosocial impact of conflict by creating stability, structure, and hope for the future. Furthermore, critical information and problem-solving skills may protect children and youth from exploitation and harm, abduction, child soldiering, and sexual and gender-based violence. HIV/AIDS prevention, landmine safety and peacebuilding education can also provide lifesaving information. It is also argued that education that promotes the rights and responsibilities of children, especially through active citizenship, can provide long-term benefits for society.

Despite these arguments the Education for All, Global Monitoring Report (2011) highlights reports that children and schools are increasingly on the front line of armed conflicts, with classrooms, teachers and pupils seen as legitimate targets (O'Malley, 2010). Children are often forcibly recruited as soldiers and the UN Secretary General's report to the Security Council, covering fifteen countries, identifies fifty-seven groups recruiting child soldiers (United Nations, 2010). Rape and sexual violence are still used as weapons of war and the psychological trauma for those affected inevitably impairs learning whilst the threat of such violence further impairs mobility and stops children from attending school. Mass displacement continues to be a significant consequence of violence and UN data suggests that almost half of the 43 million people displaced globally are under 18. Whilst efforts have been made to provide education as part of a humanitarian response, UN data continues to paint a disturbing picture of the state of education in refugee camps. Enrolment rates averaged 69% for primary school and just 30% for secondary school. Pupil/teacher ratios were very high, nearly one-third of camps reported ratios of 50:1 or more and many teachers were untrained (Global Monitoring Report, 2011).

Conflict Sensitive Education

Education is also a means by which social and cultural values are transmitted from generation to generation and depending on the values concerned, these may convey negative stereotypes or encourage attitudes that explicitly or implicitly condone violence or generate conflict. Research by Bush and Salterelli (2000) documented how education may become 'part of the problem', for example, through segregated education that maintains inequality between groups, unequal access to education or the manipulation of history and textbooks. A number of studies have highlighted aspects of education that have implications for conflict by fuelling grievances, stereotypes, xenophobia and other antagonisms (Smith & Vaux, 2003; Buckland, 2005; Tawil & Harley, 2004). This has led to the development of the concept of 'conflict sensitive education', that is, the provision of education in a way that is sensitive to the dynamics of conflict in the context in which it operates and in a way that does not exacerbate conflict (does no harm).

The research literature on linkages between education and conflict has increased significantly in the past decade. Most of this literature involves qualitative research and case studies and so it is not possible to be definitive about causal relationships or the direction of causality (for example, whether certain forms of education provision fuel conflict, or are a consequence of conflict). However, the prevalence of similar concerns (for example, about the control, form and content of education) across many different social and cultural contexts suggests that there is good reason to pay attention to the role of education in conflict-affected situations. There are a number of key areas that require careful attention to policy and practices so that education is conflict sensitive.

The Role of Education in State Building and Citizenship Education

It is important to distinguish between 'state building' and 'nation building'. The two are often conflated yet can represent very different ideologies. Concepts of nation building often refer to the development of a state where citizens share the same social, cultural, religious background. Indeed, concepts of the nation often transcend state boundaries and include diaspora that can have significant influence on state development, so identity is a central concept in nation building. However, increasing globalization, trade and movement of people means that the concept of the homogeneous nation state is being challenged, partly through the emergence of regional and supra national entities such as the European Union, and partly due to the increasing diversity of citizens within states. This means that it is no longer tenable to define citizenship solely in terms of ethnic, religious or cultural identity. The concept of state building places more emphasis on equal rights and responsibilities of all citizens irrespective of their ethnic, religious or cultural identity. Education and schooling therefore becomes a key instrument in terms of which of these ideologies is taught (identity-based, nationality or rights-based, citizenship) and which is most dominant.

In many societies civic or citizenship education is an explicit and formal part of the school curriculum. Gulalp (2006) provides case studies from Europe and the Middle East that address the question of citizenship and ethnic conflict from the foundation of the nation state, to the current challenges raised by globalization. An examination of six countries (Germany, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey) suggests that ethnic or religious identity lies at the core of the national community, ultimately determining the state's definition and treatment of its citizens. Forms of citizenship education may range from traditional civics programmes that often take a country's constitution or independence as the starting point to then explain the institutions of government and how they operate. More recently there is also a trend towards enquiry based curricula that investigate what it means to be a citizen and this approach may be more appropriate in pluralist and conflict-affected societies since it frames citizenship in terms of common rights and responsibilities rather than identity factors such as ethnicity, religion or culture. Pedagogies also vary from didactic approaches, often through learning facts from a textbook to more active learning through community-based projects. Even where there is no explicit civics or citizenship programme, other parts of the curriculum such as history and social studies may carry strong messages about the nature of the state. Such messages socialise children about who may be regarded as a citizen, attitudes to various groups and regions within the country and those who come from elsewhere. In addition, the informal curriculum may also carry strong messages about the relationship between peoples within the state and the relationship between the state and its citizens. For example, in many countries education is one of the main ways that citizens are encouraged to develop loyalty to the state through the daily routine of singing the national anthem, raising the national flag, display of leaders' portraits or celebration of national days. Such practices may contribute to a sense of national unity, but can also be particularly problematic in conflict-affected countries, especially where the legitimacy of the state is being challenged. Irrespective of whether citizenship education is explicit or implicit, school curricula also carry messages about the state and militarism, for example, whether conscription exists or if citizens are expected to undertake military service or some other form of national service. A study of citizenship education in Israel and the USA by Ben-Porath (2006) suggests that, at times of war patriotic forms of citizenship dominate in order to secure national unity, whilst democracy and critical debate in the public discourse are constrained. Another study by Ichilov (2004), however, suggests that more liberal teachers have the greatest impact on the political socialization of Israeli and Palestinian youth through citizenship education.

The centrality of citizenship education to the formation of national identity means that it is particularly important to consider how citizenship education is functioning in conflict affected and post-conflict countries and whether it contributes to peacebuilding. In Rwanda, for example, an attempt is being made to remove ethnicity from the concept of citizenship,

'Conflict and reconciliation in Rwanda are closely tied to the public discourse on citizenship. After independence, the notion of citizenship was employed to divide the polis by reducing citizenship to ethnic Hutu identity, entailing the exclusion of all Tutsi, while today, after the genocide, citizenship is based on 'Rwandanness' and all ethnic references are eradicated in the public discourse.' (Buckley-zistel, 2006, p.101)

Whilst, in post-conflict Northern Ireland where children grow up in communities that define themselves as either British or Irish, the citizenship curriculum focuses less on the concept of one common nationality and more on questions about diversity, equality and human rights within a divided society emerging from violent conflict (Smith, 2003). A recent evaluation indicated that pupils developed more positive attitudes towards inter-group relations, accompanied by a decline in trust in political institutions.

Governance of the Education System

Aragon and Vegas (2009) highlight two distinctive aspects to definitions of governance. The first concerns who has political control of a system and the context this creates, 'governance is defined mainly in terms of the process of policy-making (e.g. how the rules of a political regime provide the context in which policy-making is carried out)'. The second aspect refers more to technical capacity and the ability to implement policies. It is the former of these that is most likely to be contentious, particularly in conflict-affected countries since it can give rise to charges of bias and discrimination, although lack of technical expertise and capacity can also lead to grievances over inequalities due to poor implementation and policy outcomes. In addition, government preoccupation with security responses to terrorist threats may lead to increased, unchecked authoritarianism, particularly where 'special powers' are introduced that limit the right to freedom of expression or the suspension of normal legal processes (Carrión, 2006). In such situations governments may feel even more need to control state institutions such as the education system and educators may feel constrained to engage in critical enquiry of state policies and actions.

The existence of conflict inevitably raises questions concerning the views of government and non-state armed groups on the purpose of education and the extent to which education is seen as a tool for political or ideological purposes. Involvement in operational matters, such as education appointments, deployment of teachers, determination of the curriculum etc., may provide some indication of the extent to which education is being used for highly political purposes. In many circumstances political elites are likely to want to use education to benefit their supporters and strengthen their own power base. Where there is conflict this suggests an even greater need for systems and structures that protect the education sector from political bias, potential corruption and interference in operational decisions. At all levels of the education system governance is a crucial issue. The arrangements that are in place for representation and participation in consultation, decision-making and governance may be potential sources of conflict, or they may be opportunities for inclusion and the resolution of grievances. Arrangements for transparency and accountability also reflect the system's capacity to accept and address inequalities that can otherwise become sources of conflict.

Decentralisation of education systems has generally been regarded as a means of bringing about more accountability and ownership of schooling. In the case of conflict-affected countries the situation may be more complex and context dependent. For example, in analysing post-conflict reconstruction of education in Central America, Marques & Bannon (2003) state, 'One has only to look at the conditions in which education services were (or were not) being delivered during the period of hostilities to see the importance of decentralizing functions, authority, funding, management and decision-making capacity to schools.' They cite the EDUCO programme that built on *Escuelas Populares* in El Salvador and the National Program of Community-Managed Schools for the Advancement of Education (PRONADE) in Guatemala as positive examples of post-conflict

decentralisation in education. However, decentralisation may not always be so positive in other contexts, particularly during internal conflicts where government may have concerns about losing control of schooling to secessionist movements, for example, in regions of Columbia, Indonesia, Nepal or Sri Lanka. Even where decentralisation is introduced as part of post-conflict peace agreements, as for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, fragmentation may strengthen control of the education system by local political interests and reinforce ethnic divisions if it is not moderated by strong institutions at the national level. The Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) introduced boundaries that became the basis for decentralization of political control in subsequent years. Responsibility for education in BiH is devolved to two entities (BiH which has 10 Cantons and the Republika Srpska) and the District of Brčko. State government therefore has a limited role in education policies. The Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH does not have substantive responsibilities in education, nor authority vis-à-vis the cantons, so there is no strong central authority. This means that the education system is highly fragmented with 14 ministries of education. The impact on education was not considered at the time, but the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education identified 'two main issues which affect the enjoyment of the right to education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the excessive fragmentation and politicization of the education system; and segregation between ethnic groups and assimilation processes based on ethnic motives.' (United Nations, 2007, p. 54).

Conflict-sensitive governance of education systems may therefore require fine judgements to be made about the balance between central control and devolution of authority to regional interests. Politicisation at the central level may be mitigated through protective mechanisms such as differentiation between functions such as policy-setting, policy advice, support to schools and service delivery. For example, a central Ministry might retain overall responsibility for setting policy, but create specialised agencies with responsibilities for planning, teacher education, curriculum and examinations etc. with governance arrangements that make them less susceptible to political interference. At the local level the arrangements that are in place for representation and participation in consultation, decision making and school governance may provide opportunities for inclusion of diverse interest groups that are more conflict sensitive.

Segregated or Separate Schools

A recurring theme in conflict-affected countries is the relationship between conflict and separate schooling based on identity factors such as language, ethnicity or religion. Identity factors are important for understanding conflict, partly because they may be mobilised to generate or escalate conflict, rather than being fundamental causes. Stewart (2000) refers to differences between identity-based groups as 'horizontal inequalities' to distinguish them from 'vertical inequalities' based on economic status and access to power, although these often map closely on each other and the potential for conflict may be greater. This means that it is difficult for education to be perceived as 'neutral' in conflict-affected countries, particularly where institutions such as schools are organised around identity factors. The evidence on the impact of separate schooling is contested and highly context-dependent. Gallagher (2010) provides some comparative examples of shared and separate schooling in divided societies and states that 'many mass education systems had assimilation as an overt aim'. He suggests that 'The distinction between segregated systems, in which minorities are obliged to use their own schools (such as apartheid South Africa, or the southern states of the U.S. prior to 1954), and separate systems, in which minorities run their own schools as a matter of choice, is important', but goes on to say that 'whether schooling systems are segregated or separate, there is evidence that such systems can have a detrimental impact on social cohesion', citing the detrimental impact on Arab-Israelis of the decision in the 1950s to formally divide schools in Israel. Drawing on the cases of Brazil, Britain, Canada, Israel, Malaysia, Netherlands, and the USA he concludes that the influence of schooling arrangements may be better understood as a combination of 'the structure of schools, the content of the curriculum, and the routes and opportunities available to young people'. This is consistent with the view that the impact of separate

schooling needs to be considered in context and depends on whether such schools are perceived to be reinforcing assimilation, separate or shared development. Where mixing or integration takes place consideration needs also to be given to the nature of teaching and learning in the sense of whether identity factors are avoided or addressed explicitly.

Although few would argue that separate schooling is a fundamental cause of conflict, the prevalence of separate schooling based on identity factors in conflict-affected countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Sri Lanka suggests that the linkage is not just a coincidence. One possible reason for the prevalence of separate schooling in conflict-affected countries is that the institutional structures reflect and replicate the political, social and cultural divisions within broader society. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, many commentators point to the greater integration that existed within schools before the war. The impact of ethnic cleansing and displacements of populations has meant that parents are wary of the security of their children returning to their former schools. This is reflected in research by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that highlights how parents will avoid their nearest school and travel some distance to enrol their child in another school associated with their own 'national identity'. In other situations children from different national backgrounds might attend the same school, but often at different times and being taught different curricula. Children have separate breaks, teachers have separate rooms and there may be little cooperation between separate administrations. UNICEF (2008) found that parents with children at 'two schools under one roof' were the most concerned for their safety. The situation in Brčko is more encouraging in that it has been possible for children to attend integrated schools. However, in many other conflict-affected countries there are examples of programmes that promote integration, often initiated by parents overcoming community divisions. The rationale for such programmes is that, whilst education may not have caused conflict, it can make a positive contribution towards peacebuilding by educating children together.

Faith Based Schooling

There are many historical reasons for close links between religion and schooling, not least because many churches provided schooling long before states were sufficiently organized to undertake this function. Grace (2003) suggests that, 'Much of the political and public debate about faith-based schooling is conducted at the level of generalised assertion and counter assertion' and that conclusions about the existence of faith-based schooling in conflict-affected societies such as Northern Ireland 'represent an ahistorical, decontextualised and oversimplified view of the causes of such conflict'. He refers to the example of 'about 120,000 Catholic schools serving almost 50 million students in a wide range of socioeconomic, political and cultural settings worldwide' and then cites a review of empirical research by Greeley (1998) to support arguments that children who attend faith-based schools in the USA are more tolerant than those who attend public schools. Short (2002) also challenges the notion that secular schools are better placed to promote tolerance in the UK. On the other hand, others such as Lawton (2005) argue that 'the benefits to the individual from a religious point of view are off-set against any potential impact on social cohesion.'

The United Nations Special Rapporteur recommends mixed-religion and mixed-race schools as the best way of combating intolerance and discrimination and suggests that faith-based schools 'can provide a prime and fertile terrain for lasting progress with respect to tolerance and non discrimination in connection with religion and belief' (UNHCR, 1995). A particular concern is that children should be protected from proselytisation according to Article 1 of the 'Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief' (freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom to manifest one's religion or belief). From a rights-based perspective this may reflect a tension between parents 'prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children' (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), originally to protect against indoctrination by the state, and the child's right to education in

'preparation for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.' (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Art 29). Concerns about proselysation and indoctrination have taken on added significance since the attacks of 9/11 with considerable attention being focused on the role of madrassas in central and south Asia. However, there is little consensus about the evidence on links between madrassas and recruitment to international terrorism. According to Grare (2007) the growth of madrassas in Pakistan was partly due to the state's failure to provide basic educational facilities since madrassas do not charge fees, but 'they became the main breeding grounds for sectarianism.' The International Crisis Group (ICG) claims that, 'Jihadi extremism is still propagated at radical madrassas in Pakistan', but there is fierce debate about the number of children who actually attend madrassas and the extent to which any of these religious schools are linked to terrorist activities' (Hasan, 2005). A study by Billquist & Colbert (2006) found 'little evidence to connect madrassas to transnational terrorism', but they 'do have ties to domestic and regional violence, particularly Sunni-Shia sectarian violence in Pakistan'.

It is clear then that the evidence about the relationship between conflict and faith-based schooling is disputed, heavily context-dependent, and where there are concerns about faith based schooling in conflict-affected countries there is no conclusive evidence about causality, that is, whether the existence of separate faith-based schools fuels divisions or whether the demand for separate faith-based schools is a consequence of lack of confidence in government, lack of trust between groups within society or fear of assimilation. Overall, arguments for faith-based schooling tend to emphasize the right of parents to choose the type of school their child attends based on freedom of conscience and belief; a close inter-relationship between church, school and home; the potential for faith-based schools to promote values of tolerance and respect for difference and, in some cases, arguments that faith-based education relieves the state from some of the burden for school provision. Arguments against faith-based schools tend to emphasize that they may reinforce economic and ethnic divisions and that faith development should be the responsibility of the churches not the state. Despite lack of consensus, the prevalence of debate about faith-based schooling in conflict affected countries suggests that this is a policy area that requires careful consideration. From a conflict perspective, in any context, it is important to address two key questions about the role of faith-based schools within an education system. Firstly, what is the relationship between the state and faith-based schools? More specifically, is this relationship likely to be used as a justification for conflict. Policy-related questions include whether the position of the state should be secular, or accepting of faith-based schools. If faith-based schools exist should they be funded independently, partially funded or fully-funded by the state?

Secondly, what is the relationship between faith and teaching in schools? For example, if religious education is part of the school curriculum (even in schools that are not faith-based), is this comprised of religious instruction in a particular faith or a broader education about different religious faiths? What provisions are made for children of other faiths or none? Does the inclusion of religious education in the curriculum affect fair employment and who may be recruited as a teacher in faith-based schools? Arrangements for faith-based schools are likely to reflect power relations that exist within any given society, so for example, it may be that the dominant faith in a country will receive funding for its schools, but minority faiths are not permitted to establish their own schools, or do not receive state funding. In broad terms faith-based schools may institutionalize separate development in conflict affected countries, but they can also play a role in promoting values and practices that respect difference.

Language of Instruction

A UNESCO Position Paper on 'Education in a Multilingual World' identifies language as 'an essential element of inter-cultural education to encourage understanding between different groups and respect for fundamental rights.' (UNESCO, 2003). It supports mother tongue as a means of

improving education quality, but also advocates 'bilingual and/or multilingual education as a means of promoting social and gender equality and a key element of linguistically diverse societies'. Many ethno-linguistic minority groups face a language barrier in education. Almost 70% out-of-school girls belong to the ethnic, religious, linguistic, racial and other minorities (Lockheed & Lewis, 2007). A World Bank report states that '50 percent of the world's out-of school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home' (World Bank, 2005). Rationales often used for monolingual and elitist language policies include: economic factors (multilingualism is costly), national unity (many languages fragment the population), power (to maintain central control). Some myths are that several media of instruction confuses students; use of mother tongue delays learning of national, official or international languages; and parents want a national or international language only. However, research indicates that mother tongue language of instruction results in (i) increased access and equity, (ii) improved learning outcomes, (iii) reduced repetition and dropout rates, (iv) socio-cultural benefits and (v) lower overall costs (Bender et al., 2005).

From a conflict perspective, the significant issue is that there are examples where language policies have been used in ways that exacerbate conflict. These include repression of mother tongue languages as part of political conflict in Spain (Shabad & Gunther, 1982); how overt bilingual and covert monolingual language policies fuel tensions with Uyghur nationalists in Xinjiang, China (Dwyer, 2005); how language policies in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were used as a means of dominating access to education by particular groups (Rösel, 2009); and difficulties even where there are attempts to use bilingual education as 'an approach to conflict resolution and the improvement of intergroup relations in Israel' (Amara et al., 2009). These issues are extremely complex in practice. The challenge from a conflict perspective is to develop language policies for education that contribute towards peacebuilding rather than exacerbate conflict. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education organisation (SEAMEO) has links to policies, case studies and good practices in mother tongue as the language of instruction in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (Kosonen & Young 2009). Promotion of mother tongue as the medium of instruction can be the bridge to learning national, official and international languages. Multilingual policies may provide protection against conflict resulting from the exclusion of minorities from education or the use of language to reinforce unequal power relations between groups.

The Role of Curriculum and Textbooks

Every area of the curriculum carries values with the potential to communicate implicit and explicit, political messages. Language, literature, history, geography and the place of culture and religion are just some of the areas that often get drawn into controversy. Such areas are sometimes referred to as 'national subjects', in many instances tightly controlled by governments and regarded as essential tools for nation building. The teaching of history is an important concern in relation to conflict. Issues include epistemological issues about the impact on conflict of single narrative histories versus multiple perspectives approaches. This is also bound up in issues of whether education systems are driven by content and syllabuses or by skills and learning outcomes. In contested societies, arguments over textbook content can also become political and ideological battlegrounds. For example, there is a critique that education reconstruction in Afghanistan did not address attitudes of intolerance in school textbooks that have been reprinted using international development assistance (Spink, 2005). Part of the education reforms in Bosnia has involved the removal of 'offensive material' from history textbooks and such a process raises sensitive issues about the judgment of what is considered offensive and by whom, about who should be involved in such a process, and how it is implemented. Textbook review processes have a long history. For example, there were joint initiatives on French-German textbooks during the 1920s; German-Polish cooperation following the Second World War; a US-Soviet textbook project in the 1970s; more recently China and Korea have raised concerns about the treatment of WWII in Japanese textbooks (Höpken, 2003). 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 also arise about who controls or benefits from the production of textbooks and about their content. The production of *single textbooks for different linguistic communities* also can present difficulties. For example, textbooks produced by Sinhalese authors in Sri Lanka were 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 led to demands for greater involvement of Tamil authors in textbook production (Wickrema & Colenso, 2003). Attention to many of these areas may go some way towards ensuring that the content of education provision does not exacerbate conflict, but there are also arguments that education should not merely do no harm, but contribute to building peace within conflict affected societies.

Education and Peacebuilding

In 2006 the UN secretary General established a new UN Peace Building Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). From 2006 until February 2009 the PBF received pledges from 45 donors amounting to \$319.3 million and is currently supporting more than 100 projects in 15 countries. This raises a number of questions about the way that education might engage more strongly with UN peacebuilding. In situations where peace processes are underway, education may also be a means of contributing to conflict transformation, for example, through reforms to the education system itself and by educating people about new arrangements for political representation, justice and policing. Education is the fundamental tool that makes institutional change in other sectors possible by educating personnel currently in post or those who will shape future institutions. Education is also the most powerful tool to develop the economic and social skills necessary to generate sustainable livelihoods for successive generations. The UN Secretary-General suggests that,

“The immediate post-conflict period offers a window of opportunity to provide basic security, deliver peace dividends, shore up and build confidence in the political process, and strengthen core national capacity to lead peacebuilding efforts. If countries succeed in these core areas early on, it substantially increases the chances for sustainable peace - and reduces the risk of relapse into conflict” (2009, p. 1).

Two areas of particular relevance for the role of education in peacebuilding concern research related to ‘youth bulges’ and the role of education in truth and reconciliation processes. Research by Thyne (2006) found that the higher school enrolment rates (the primary enrolment rate, secondary enrolment rate, and the male secondary enrolment rate), the lower the probability of civil war. The male secondary education enrolment rate was found to have the strongest effect. A more recent study by Barakat & Urdal (2009) found that a large proportion of young males in the population is likely to increase the risk of conflict in societies where male secondary education enrolment is low. The research suggests the risk is greater when these factors are present in low and middle-income countries. The implications are that education programming in crisis and conflict-affected environments should pay particular attention to male secondary enrolments and youth engagement programs beyond formal education. However, there are also problems with programming that simply characterises young males as a risk to security. Critiques form part of broader concerns about links between aid and security. The GMR (2011) identifies twenty-one developing countries that are spending more on arms and the military than on primary schools and presents evidence that the amount of aid to certain countries may be driven more by global security concerns rather than poverty and need. There is controversy surrounding the use of education as part of counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan and in programs related to ‘youth radicalisation’ as part of counter terrorism strategies (Novelli, 2011). The main challenge would therefore seem

to be the development of education programming that promotes genuine social, economic and political engagement without demonising youth.

In societies that have experienced violent conflict, education also has another important role in longer-term, post-conflict development to help successive generations understand the violent conflict that took place within their own society and potentially contribute towards future peacebuilding. One aspect involves the role of history in teaching about a violent past. Another concerns concepts of truth and reconciliation. These are not necessarily linked, but often are. Cole (2007) indicates how 'the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up as part of the negotiated transition from white majority rule to democratic governance in South Africa as a way to create a public record on the abuses of the apartheid era through public testimony'. She provides an insight into the complexity in working with such concepts, for example, whether 'truth' is objective, subjective or inter-subjective; and whether people are more interested in establishing truth in order to seek justice rather than reconciliation. In addition, even a simple definition of reconciliation as 'a process that brings estranged persons or parties into friendly relations' raises questions about whether it should operate at inter-personal or inter-group level, or even whether groups in conflict have ever had 'friendly relations' at any previous point in their conflict. Despite the dilemmas, Cole suggests that reconciliatory processes must reach beyond macro-level processes involving the legislature, judiciary and military and at some point 'become part of people's lives, and also part of the midlevel and grassroots institutions, such as schools whose workings relate more closely to the lives of average citizens'. She points to the lessons learned from the more positive relations that Germany has built with its neighbours since World War II and the role played by the reform of history education and textbooks.

Further studies have examined the extent to which education has a role in contributing towards reconciliation following recommendations from more recent TRCs. Oglesby (2007) indicates how schools in Guatemala are beginning to incorporate some of the findings from the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission. Paulson (2010) highlights how despite commitments to introduce textbooks that dealt with recent conflict in Peru, changes in government can influence whether these are actually used. Buckley-Zistel (2009) examines how the Rwandan government approach was to place a moratorium on the teaching of history after the genocide and the use of *ngando* camps to promote national unity by promoting a narrative that omits any reference to ethnicity. Paulson (2006) documents how 'the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SLTRC) included children's testimony and children guided the development of the children's version of the commission's report'. These research studies also highlight the need for further research into the ethical issues for educators; the role of education in relation to remembrance and commemorative sites and events; and better understanding of the nature of intergenerational learning. It is common, therefore, in countries that have been affected by conflict to point to a role for education in promoting longer-term reconciliation as a means of preventing recurrence of violent conflict. This underlines the fact that peace is often insecure, relapses are frequent and that the main purpose of education interventions at any stage in such cycles is to promote a peacebuilding trajectory.

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GLOBAL CURRICULAR LEGACIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT: *The intention of this paper is to examine the evolution of what has become a near global and conventional school curriculum, the forces behind its development and the purposes of education, its sponsors and controllers espouse, and to set it against the massive and urgent challenges of the 21st century. This century looks to be a unique one in that it could be the tipping point between human and environmental survival, and disaster on a massive scale. The argument is that this near global view of the purpose of education is misconceived and dangerous unless there is rapid and fundamental change in the purposes of educating the young. Those older than 10 are mostly already 'lost'. In search of a more appropriate purpose and structure of curriculum, the work of a prominent few who are not yet 'lost' is drawn upon, especially that of George Martin, founder of the Oxford Martin School. The purpose of education must now, and urgently, be the survival of the human species and the planet, not only in basic terms but also in terms of controlling increasingly powerful and sophisticated computer technologies known as the Singularity that could spiral out of control.*

KEYWORDS: *legacy, curriculum, 21st century, survival, future*

What is Curriculum?

It is self-evident that education systems are extremely comparable as between the 200 or so that exist across the globe. This can be explained by their evolution; a process of cultural imperialism that has long been recognised and documented (Carnoy, 1974). This in turn is due to the fact that formal education has long been controlled and delivered by political forces, namely governments and religious organisations (Brock, 2007). Indeed, these two forces have often operated in tandem, especially with regard to schooling and colonialism. This discussion will not, however, be confined to schooling, partly because conventional curricula have derived from the influence of universities, and also because of the likely greater influence of non-formal and informal modes of education.

This brings us to the crucial issue of the definition of 'curriculum' for the purposes of this discussion. It hinges naturally not only on the view of the writer, but also the spatial and temporal parameters of the title, namely 'global' and 'twenty-first century' respectively; that is to say the changing context over time.

It is customary when seeking definitions to defer to the words of that much respected dictionary of the English language the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This states that 'curriculum' is: 1. 'the subjects in a course of study', or 2. 'any programme of activities'. Despite its august parentage, there is, curiously, a problem with this definition when applied to education. With respect to the word 'education' the same dictionary gives three definitions: 1. 'systematic instruction', 2. A particular kind of or stage in education', and 3. 'development of character or mental powers'. It is instructional also to consider the same dictionary's definition of the word 'educated': 1. 'having had an education, especially to a higher level than average', or 2. 'resulting from a 'good' education', or 3. 'based on experience or study'.

In view of the significance of the aforementioned changing context over time, the third option of each of these latter two definitions becomes increasingly realistic. That is to say: 'the development of character and mental powers', and 'based on experience or study'. The inclusion in the second definition of the word 'activities' is also preferred by the writer, for as by Belth (1965) states:

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In addition to the innumerable unconscious absorptions which occur, whatever modes of thinking the student may use are made available to him by the curriculum which is woven about him in the activities of education' (p.261).

My preferences are based on what is increasingly happening in the respective influences of the three modes of education (Brock, 2011). That is to say, the on-going day by day relationship between formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning. For most of recorded history all three have been operative, but with the formal mode increasingly dominating as political control increased. Such control was, *inter alia*, territorial. Bodies of organised religion, and in particular the Christian variants, established political geographical parameters such as parishes and diocese(s). Emerging nations established and contested territories, so that, as in the case of Europe, as Dodgeson puts it: 'leaders ruled over people through their rule over territory, not over territory through their rule over people' (1987, p.137).

Europe as a scale of reference is important because of the interplay between religious and political on medieval and renaissance schools and universities (Brock, 2010), and the rapid and widespread expansion of the 'European idea of education' (Mallinson, 1980) on an almost global scale (Taylor & Flint, 2000).

The nature and content of early European schooling was laid down by the universities, themselves under the control of the Christian churches, trading cities and emergent states. The formal curricula of both universities and schools were the product of a combination of Graeco-Roman culture and Christianity. Both exhibited urban and male-oriented elitism to the virtual exclusion of majority rural populations, and females in general. It is only in the last 150 years or so that schooling has become gradually and differentially available to girls and women. Indeed, in the less economically developed regions of the world the continued widespread dominance of patriarchal kinship systems still works to the disadvantage of female participation in education (Brock & Cammish, 1997). It is in medieval and renaissance Europe that the roots of the majority of school curricula in the world lie, namely conservative, discriminatory and, in general, selective in purpose and function (Hopper, 1968). Early courses of study comprised mainly the classical languages and philosophy, mathematics, history, theology and music. Towards the end of this period European colonisation was broadening through the so-called 'age of discovery'. But with the exception of the use of the vernacular, pioneered by the Lutheran reformation (Dickens, 1984), and the emergence of geography (Elliot & Daniels, 2010) there was little change in what comprised a 'proper curriculum' for a minority of selected boys. Even the technological advances associated with the agricultural and industrial revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took a very long time for 'science' to be accepted as a normal component of that curriculum. Likewise modern European languages as illustrated by the Leeds Grammar School case of 1806 in England. Leeds emerged as a prosperous city of the industrial age and its merchants wanted to employ the products of its leading school in trading in mainland Europe. They were thwarted by an edict of the Lord Chancellor in London to the effect that the curriculum of Leeds Grammar School should remain a classical one with the pursuit of intellectual excellence as its sole objective (Lawson & Silver, 1973). Only in the formative decades of the USA, with its decentralised system safeguarded by the Constitution from the clutches of a national elite, was there a radical approach with the emergence of the community-based open school movement in Boston. But this non-elitist model did not begin to influence European education until a century later assisted by the upheavals associated with the World War of 1914-18 and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Yet within the curriculum of the elitist schools science had begun to take its place during the nineteenth century, and some of these schools were now for girls. Three of the four natural sciences became part of the experience of this selected minority, biology, chemistry and physics, but not except in very rare cases, geology. This significant omission, still obtaining nearly everywhere, will be a key feature of our twenty-first century discussions later.

So, as universal primary and secondary education came of age in the twentieth century, the firmly embedded and conventional view of the curriculum as a course of study had taken root. But it is not the writer's view either of what it actually is, or should be, in the interests of the purposes of education in the twenty-first century with its unprecedented challenges. Rather it is the result of a convenient conventional wisdom of those controlling and delivering formal education almost everywhere: a collection of subjects.

What are Subjects?

'.....it is impossible to teach a given body of knowledge as a series of ultimately true assertions. Quite the reverse. Whatever knowledge and beliefs prevail in the society about us should serve as the materials to be shaped into the subject matter for any curriculum. This does not mean that they are already organised to serve that function' (Belth, 1965, p.277).

Belth, an American educator, made this prescient observation nearly half a century ago. It challenges the kind of school curriculum that has emerged over hundreds of years, always behind the times and dysfunctional in terms of the challenges of those times. He doesn't mention subjects as such but talks of shaping the subject matter comprising a curriculum in relation to the knowledge and beliefs in the society around us. Yet what we have in the world today are many societies, many times more than the number of nations and territories. The answer to the curriculum conundrum must emerge from within each of them. That is part of the challenge of the twenty-first century to which we will return later. But first, what is conventionally meant by a 'subject'?

The word 'subject' in English has a number of meanings but the one relevant to this discussion is the second of six in the range offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, namely: 'a field of study (*his best subject is geography*)'. It is a curious coincidence that this renowned dictionary happens to select geography as an example of a subject because it is in fact a composite discipline. It may reasonably be said that all disciplines may be subjects but not all subjects may be disciplines. That is to say that some subjects seem to have clear parameters within the total stock of knowledge. Some, however, while having a clear identity, are in fact dependent of others for substantial proportions of their content. In the case of geography its essence or identity has been defined elsewhere by the writer as 'the spatial and locational analysis of the earth's surface phenomena' – the earth's surface being the layers from the outer edge of the atmosphere to the lower layers of the lithosphere (Brock, 1992, 2011, 2013). Diagrams in those sources show geography to comprise a number of sub-disciplines each dependent on other subjects or disciplines as follows:

Geography: a Composite Discipline

Physical Geography and Climatology: supported by geology, physics and cartography.

Biogeography: supported by biological sciences, geology and cartography.

Historical Geography: supported by history and cartography.

Economic Geography: supported by economics and cartography.

Political Geography: supported by political science and cartography.

Behavioural /Humanistic Geography: supported by psychology and cartography.

Cultural and Social Geography: supported by social anthropology, sociology and cartography.

Population Geography: supported by demography, statistics and cartography.

Applied Geography: supported by operational research, planning and cartography.

It is clear that cartography is fundamental to geography in that it is capable of giving precision to locational and spatial analysis and embodies the key component of *scale*, a vital yet neglected element of the study of education itself!

Although geography is perhaps the most obvious of the subjects in the conventional school curriculum to exhibit its interdisciplinary dependency, many of the same connections may be found

in its close curricular relative, history. Indeed the two are fundamentally interdependent (Mackinder, 1913), for as Baker (2003) comments: 'I start as a geographer from the complementary premise that geography is not intelligible without history' (p. xi). There is of course political history, social history and economic history to say nothing of geological history (Zalasiewicz & Williams, 2012). Then there are social psychology and physical and social anthropology. On the science side there are, for example, physical chemistry and bio-chemistry and so on and so on. All this reminds us of the Platonic wisdom that knowledge is one and indivisible; one of the legacies of the classical inheritance that has eluded school, and until recent years university, curricula.

So how is it that the conventional school curriculum has rendered knowledge divisible? As indicated above, part of the reason is that in the formative stages of the (European) curriculum it was devised for a male elite for very limited and selective purposes. Additional subjects in effect forced their way in as the interests of the elite changed and society progressed from feudal to industrial in terms of political economy. And there they still are as 'tablets of stone' and bastions of a conventional wisdom beset by inertia.

Hunt (1969) refers to this stranglehold as '*The Tyranny of Subjects*'. He contrasts the learning context of young pre-school children, that is to say the learning of skills through play, including for most some level of reading, with the transfer to formal schooling, where:

Reading has become a subject. You see it as 'work', something separate from your normal play activities. Soon other subjects are added. By the time you reach secondary school, you are confronted by a bewildering array of them. They take up most of your day and they tend to come in forty-minute slabs. You are expected to be equally interested in all of them. But not too interested because soon the bell will go: "Put your books away and get ready for the next lesson" (p.45).

Hunt concludes that 'the tyranny of subjects is still firmly established'. That was in 1969 but he would still be right today, despite intermittent effort and successes by some schools and teachers. For it is a prime purpose of formal education, especially in its compulsory stages, to act as a mechanism of social and political control in the interest of the state and its elite. So we need to examine the purposes of education.

The Purposes of Education Today

Formal and non-formal education have evolved over the centuries, indeed over more than one millennium, according to the purposes laid down for them by the powerful interactive forces of control: religious, political and economic. In the view of Richard Aldrich (2010) these forces have operated differentially, but also to a degree individually, to operate two purposive phases to date: a) education for salvation and b) education for economic development. In sequence, though overlapping, the prime force has been religious, then political, then economic. All three are still operational and influential, but to different degrees in each of the countries of the world. To these we may add 'territories' with their own education systems that are, at least to some degree, separate from nations as such. They may be, for the purposes of education, quasi-independent internal components of a nation such as the states of the USA or the Lande of Germany. Or they may be dependent territories of a metropolitan power.

The nature of education for salvation may be a dwindling purpose in the Western world, except in private schools run by religious bodies such as the parochial schools of the USA, but is a dominant force in some parts and countries of the world such as in Iran which is in effect a theocracy. Elsewhere in the Islamic world there are often *madrassas* especially for young children that impart a detailed knowledge of the Koran as a cornerstone of education for salvation.

In general, however, education for salvation as a prime purpose of formal schooling has long been overtaken by education for economic development as the predominant objective. In the

place of religious rivalry, even of an inter denominational or inter-sect variety, we mostly now have national competition as a prime factor, even purpose, of formal education. Consequently we need to acknowledge and understand nationalism as a prime purpose of contemporary education.

Nationalism and Education

The emergence of nationalism in Europe necessarily affected the evolution of formal education and of the school curriculum that was to become a near global model. Before the emergence of the earlier nation-states of Europe the parameters of hegemony were already set as what Carr (1983) terms 'the medieval unity of Empire'. This hegemony had been achieved in association with, first, the Roman Catholic Church and then also the Protestant denominations emerging from the Lutheran Reformation. He sees a gradual but disparate impact of the agricultural and industrial revolutions, largely in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries producing a 'democratisation of nationalism' that was secular. This led to the gradual liberalisation of school curricula, contested throughout by the resistance of classical traditionalists, and still within the firm grip of the governments of individual nation-states.

That grip was of course part of their security and survival, for as List in his 1904 publication *The Nation al System of Political Economy*, and quoted in Held (1983) indicates: 'The nation stands between the individual and entire humanity, and in all nations exists the impulse of self-protection' (p.174).

Hobsbawm (1992) describes how this imperative finds expression in one of the purposes of schooling:

Naturally states would use the increasingly powerful machinery for communicating with their inhabitants, above all the primary schools, to spread the image and heritage of the 'nation' and to inculcate attachment to it, and to attach all to country and flag, often 'inventing traditions' or even nations for this purpose (pp.91-2).

He goes on to explain that exercising this purpose of state schooling as a mechanism of social and political control requires mass literacy in a selected national language, which in turn makes the 'mass development of secondary education almost mandatory' (ibid, p.93). The reaching of this stage of compulsory schooling provision occurred differentially across the nation-states of Europe, North America and Australasia, with England and Wales coming last through the 1944 Education Act which was not fully implemented until about 1948. Such a kaleidoscope of European curricular legacies was inevitably distributed differentially across the colonial territories that several of the metropolitan powers had acquired. If one includes those powers themselves then by 1950 very few areas of the world were unaffected, notably parts of West Central Asia, plus Thailand, China and Japan (Taylor & Flint, 2000).

Thailand has its own very distinctive story (Watson, 1980), while both China (Zhong, 2013) and Japan (Suzuki, 2013) turned to western models of formal schooling and university provision in the late nineteenth century, leaving notably Afghanistan (Baiza, 2013) and Iran (Levers, 2006) to follow by the mid-twentieth century.

The period since the 1939-45 world war has witnessed rapidly increasing modernisation world-wide, including the proliferation of new national systems as numerous colonies of the metropolitan powers gained political independence. As they did so they were faced with the same controlling imperative as had the elites and governments of the older systems, that of creating mass literacy through language policy. As Hobsbawm (1992) explains:

Both the direct administration of vast numbers of citizens by modern governments and the technical and economic development require this ([a national language](#)), for they make universal literacy desirable and the mass development of secondary education almost mandatory. It is the scale on which the state operates as well as its need for direct contacts

with its citizens that create the problem. Thus mass education must, for practical reasons, be conducted in a vernacular, whereas education for a limited elite can be conducted in a language not understood or spoken by the body of the population, or, in the case of classical languages like Latin, Classical Persian or classical written Chinese, by anyone at all (pp. 93-4).

The oldest post-classical polities, England, France and Russia, together with the later emergent USA and Germany, have been compared by Greenwood (1992) in her massive work: *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. As these nations moved through technical innovation and industrialisation towards modernity different levels of literacy occurred as between diversifying social structures. This could and did lead to conflicts over knowledge in view of its potential power.

In England the bible became, in effect by default, a massive resource for popular literacy, being 'not simply a book they all read, but the only book they read' (Greenwood, 1992, p.54). The encouragement of creative culture in the sixteenth century coincided with the establishment of the Church of England as the creature of the monarchy. As such it sought to restrict and even destroy a flowering empirical trend encouraged by the non-conformist dissenting academies which were challenging the moribund monopoly of higher education in England that comprised only two universities, Oxford and Cambridge. When Joseph Priestley, an ordained non-conformist priest and scientist worked towards the discovery of Oxygen at the banned Warrington Academy, the institution was destroyed and his life threatened. King George III even intervened stating that Priestley should 'now feel the wickedness of democracy that he was propagating' (O'Brien, 1989, p.133). But the momentum of reform was under way and in 1828 a secular university was founded by the Utilitarian movement led by Jeremy Bentham. This was University College, London, termed by Lawson and Silver (1973) 'the middle class university' (p.258), but the Church of England responded immediately with two new universities of its own, King's College, London in 1831 and Durham University in 1832. The battle between the social and largely Anglican political elite of England and the largely secular professions, including science and technology, is ongoing in England to this very day and evident in the constraints it places on, for example, the popular acceptance of climate change, an issue of vital concern for humankind in the twenty-first century.

That situation contrasted sharply with France where the nobility, not the bourgeoisie, was the liberally educated class before the revolution. This survived the social and political upheaval, so that subsequent political and social elites have relied on the 'Ecoles Superieurs' for their own professional and technical training. To some extent likewise in Russia where first Peter the Great (ruled from 1682-1725), and then Catherine the Great (ruled from 1762-1796), encouraged the development of both technical and higher education to the extent that the popularity of Moscow University, founded in 1755, led to what Greenwood has described as the 'enoblement' of 'aristocratization' of higher education (1992, p.214).

Unlike the well-established and relatively stable territories of England, France and Russia the 'German Realm' of pre-industrial Europe comprised hundreds of small princely states. There was of course an intellectual elite but the noble and ruling elites sponsored universities in order to train their own clergy, technicians and civil servants as a counter to the educational influence of the Roman Catholic Church. In practice this meant higher education and thereby the strengthening of the middle classes. This may at least be a contributory cause of the greater recognition of technical and vocational learning in Germany than in most other Western European states, and a factor in the nature of the structure and curricula of the contemporary school system.

To some degree this concurs with the experience of the other emergent power of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the USA, born of the American colonies of Britain that were its precursor for over 150 years. Here, the generally high literacy level of the formative immigrant population, the lack of a noble political elite and the practical problems of colonising a new terrain, albeit with an indigenous population, placed a high priority on practicality. Basic schooling was imperative within each small settlement (Daniels, 1979) and democratically operated. Open opportunity and competition led to a proliferation of colleges alongside a few more colonially established elite institutions. In contrast to the more intellectual traditions of learning in the 'old country' Greenwood

states that, in what became the USA, the 'attitude was uncongenial to imaginative and speculative writing but it fostered empirical study' (1992, p.464).

So, with respect to the formation of school curricula during two centuries of modernisation, it is clear that there are both convergent and divergent forces at work as between the nations that formed what has become, in effect, the global curriculum. Their purposes may be divergent in detail, but with the modernisation of the twentieth century came increasing competition.

Modernisation, Culture, and International Competition

There has always been competition between states, from the wars of the early city states of Classical Greece to the Israel/Palestinian conflict of today. Until the mid-nineteenth century these were largely about territory and physical resources. Current tensions in Ukraine relate in part to such factors but have also to do with language, culture and national identity. Education is culturally embedded though, in terms of formal modes, largely politically controlled and delivered and has become an increasingly significant factor in terms of international competition.

Education became a key issue from the mid- nineteenth century. In 1851 Britain organised the 'Great Exhibition' which was 'Britain's demonstration of her manufacturing supremacy, challenges to which only began to cause anxiety from the late sixties' (Lawson & Sliver, 1973, p.268). By that time it had become evident that France, Germany and the USA were in process of overtaking. The American Civil War of 1861-1865 temporarily damaged economic progress there but it also prompted innovation. Most significantly it confirmed the USA as a single nation with a single currency, the \$US. Almost contemporary, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 was a step on the way to Prussian supremacy and the formation of a unified Germany.

All of these events had important educational implications especially to increase the pace and purpose of schooling. This was the beginning of Aldrich's phase of 'education for progress, meaning national economic development. The younger, more instrumentally-oriented curricula of Germany and the USA were more tuned in to this objective than those of the older three firmly established states, England, France and Russia. England in particular did not institute the regulation for universal primary education until education until 1870, and did not achieve it until the turn of the century. The logical follow on of universal secondary education was strangled at birth by the Cockerton judgement of 1901, a decision reminiscent of that affecting Leeds Grammar School a century earlier! Britain was still the wealthiest nation and the greatest global power at the time, but in so far as education had anything to do with it, it was the leadership ethic of the private boarding schools for boys, known perversely to this day as 'public schools'. Massive wealth had accrued from colonial exploitation, but when the country was bankrupted by the 1914-1918 war, universal secondary education was still a quarter of a century away!

As already mentioned China and Japan embarked on a western model of schooling in the late nineteenth century in the interests of modernisation. Deep cultural roots prevented Japanese colonial attempts to recast curricula in areas they colonised in China and Korea, while such roots also prevented attempts by the powers occupying Germany to effect curricular reforms in their own image. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and despite the creation of international and multinational bodies such as the United Nations Agencies, the World Bank Group and the European Union, the purpose of compulsory education has remained nationalistic and competitive with the twin objectives of serving economic growth and political control.

Such further and intensifying competition contributes to the near universal nature of school curricula in the interests of comparability. Attempts to create league tables of national success in schooling are made feasible by this global curriculum, attempts such as TIMMS and PISA. The latter claims to be predictive of future national economic growth on the evidence of tests of young teenagers in a limited range of subjects. It is as if other aspects of the educational experiences of people such as non-formal and formal further and higher education, to say nothing of the massive influence on every individual of informal education, have no influence at all! The emergence of International University

Rankings has similarly fixated politicians in all countries, further concentrating their attention on research ratings and related funding rewards. Irrespective of the deep deficiencies in the methodology of these comparisons, are they helping or hindering the purpose of education for survival that must be the objective in the twenty-first century? The 'good money', as the saying goes, must be on the latter.

The Massive Challenge of Twenty-First Century Survival

For at least three decades perceptive scientists have become aware that the human species is capable of destroying its habitat, planet Earth, and in doing so, itself as well. This not in dispute, except of course by politicians around the world, whose main preoccupations are with nationalism and their own careers.

At the core of the concern of scientists about the twenty-first century is *The Gaia Principle*, set out by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in the 1970s. Gaia sees the Earth, from the outer atmosphere to, and including, the lithosphere, as a self-regulating complex of organic and inorganic forms that maintains the balance of all forms of life to survive. Successive Gaia Conferences in 1985, 1988, 2000 and 2006 increasingly illuminated both the critical issues that will arise in the 21st century and how they might be addressed. The extraordinary way in which planet Earth has so far managed to sustain itself and its life forms has become known as *The Goldilocks Effect*. This means, in simple terms being 'not too hot and not too cold', as in the children's story from which it takes its name. The principles of Gaia and Goldilocks have found applications in many disciplines across the spectrum of human knowledge. They have also given rise to immense concern. So much so that James Lovelock published his book *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth is Fighting Back – And How We Can Still Save Humanity* in 2006. In the same year James Martin emphasised the significance of the 21st century in his book *The Meaning of the 21st Century: A Vital Blueprint for Ensuring Our Future*.

So it is clear that the challenges faced by the current near universal 'global curriculum', as it has developed in association with nation-states have already been overtaken by new international challenges that have so far been largely ignored by both politicians and the majority of human society. Significantly they have not been ignored by millions of so-called lesser species of life that continue to operate within Gaia principles!

What are these urgent challenges and their implications, and what can education do to help meet them? Education is beginning to be recognised, and being identified as a kind of panacea to bring the human species to its senses before it is too late, but what can education do to meet these challenges? In his book James Martin (2006) lays out seventeen (17) 'Challenges of the 21st Century' (pp. 227-236) and indicates what needs to be done to meet them. To paraphrase:

1. *The Earth*: stop actions leading to climate change, polluting rivers and lakes, breaching the ozone layer, wasting fresh water. On the plus side we have massive new super-computer models and could learn more from science and good teaching.
2. *Poverty*: all nations need to reach a 'decent literacy rate' and adequate levels of employment.
3. *Population*: overpopulation needs to be curbed by raising the educational levels of women. 'The goal of improving lifestyles equates to the goal of lowering population'
4. *Lifestyles*: 20th century lifestyles cannot be sustained, but technology has the potential to support new comfortable lifestyles in keeping with sustaining the environment.
5. *War*: 'The existence of weapons capable of ending civilisation makes this a very different century from any before'. Weapons control and eradication is essential for survival.
6. *Globalism*: This is already here but must be adjusted to allow unique cultures to survive because localism is vital to sustainability. The global /local link is fundamental.
7. *The Biosphere*: 'Global management of the biosphere is essential': must make a computer-inventoried knowledge of all species soon.
8. *Terrorism*: All grade uranium and plutonium must be locked. The reasons why people become terrorists must be eradicated, including the mutual respect of all religions for each other to prevent their perversion.

9. *Creativity*: Current and future technology can support massively increased creativity in the interests of innovative interventions to progress sustainability, human and environmental.
10. *Disease*: Increasing potential for pandemics (including terrorist generated) must be resisted by appropriate defences.
11. *Human Potential*: Most people today 'fall outrageously short of their potential' Digital media need to be devised to develop the capability latent in everybody in all human societies.
12. *The Singularity*: This is the chain reaction of computer intelligence. It needs to be controlled to enable appropriate education of young people to cope with self-evolving technologies that will become 'infinite in all directions'
13. *Existential Risk*: These are risks that could lead to the termination of the human species. Martin says that 'the most dangerous time will probably be just ahead of us, when we argue about whether we should control science'. We must, because at present the best estimates give us only a 50/50 chance.
14. *Transhumanism*: Nanotechnology connected to the brain will 'change human capability in extraordinary ways', but will create an increasingly wider gap between rich and poor. It will enable increasingly advanced civilizations in all aspects of life.
15. *Advanced Civilization*: 'Any civilization of the future will permeate cyberspace' and decisions made in the 21st century relating to the management of planet Earth. Martin quotes Lord Rees as follows: 'the prime concern of the 21st century is that we should survive it'
16. *Gaia*: 'Gaia does its own thing and we must learn to live within its constraints'. If not, Earth will become a 'roasted planet' with few surviving only at the poles.
17. *The Skill-Wisdom Gap*: 'Science and technology are accelerating furiously but wisdom is not'. Wisdom depends on synthesis but is challenged by the capacity of science to create wealth quickly. We need more inter-disciplinarity. Corporate greed and corruption could destroy us and the planet. 'We need to set out very consciously to foster and nurture the wisdom the 21st century will require'

Implications for Education and Curricula

James Martin concludes his concern about the crucial role of wisdom with regard to homo sapiens surviving the 21st century by stating that: 'This should be a task for our greatest universities' (2006, p.236). He also comments that the potential for Advanced Civilizations could be as big an influence on human history as the Renaissance. We need to remember that it was the curricula of the renaissance universities of Western Europe that controlled the curricula of schooling as the European nation-states developed. Now, in 2014 and well into 21st century does it look as if the universities of today will help in the way that James Martin regards as essential? Not according to Nicholas Maxwell of University College, London who states in a letter to *The Guardian* newspaper of October, 2013:

Of course universities should invest in the future. The problem is they don't. Climate change, population growth, mass extinctions and other global problems mean that we are heading towards disaster. If we are to make progress towards as good a world as possible – or at least avoid the worst of disasters – we need to learn how to do it. That in turn requires that our institutions of learning are rationally designed and devoted to the task...The key crisis of our times is the failure of our universities to help us learn how to make progress towards a better world.

There has, as Martin acknowledged, been some recognition of the imperative of greater inter – disciplinary enquiry, teaching and research, but the cult of specialism still dominates both funding and individual promotion. So we must here be more concerned with school, especially secondary school, curricula. This has become locked into a conventional individual subject model on the basis of which universities select their undergraduate intake. The fact that the majority of the world's

secondary school leavers do not proceed to post-secondary or higher education seems to have been overlooked or, even worse, disregarded. Most politicians in most countries experienced elite secondary schooling and subsequent university education. They have little or no experience of the realities of the lives, including the schooling, of most people in their respective countries. As King and Crewe (2013) point out in respect of incredible policy disasters, in their word 'blunders', by UK governments over the past 30+ years, that most ministers and top civil servants had no ideas as to the realities of most people's lives and circumstances in the United Kingdom. This is likely true of most governments and administrations. King and Crewe also show that failure to understand technology has been behind many of the policy disasters in the UK: 'One of the most remarkable features of successive governments' ventures into the field of Information Technology (IT) is that they have gone on and on making the same mistakes. They never seem to learn' (2013, p.184). And as we have seen from Martin (2006): 'science and technology are accelerating furiously' (p.235), and that there is an urgent need to understand and control them in the interests of surviving the 21st century.

It is popularly imagined that technology and education will save us! But clearly we need to develop forms of education that will save us from unregulated technology, which also includes regulation in the wrong way. In any case Emmot has clearly shown in his 2013 book *10 Billion* that 'on today's evidence technologizing our way out of this does not seem likely' (p.167) 'so...the only solution left to us is to change our behaviour, radically and globally at every level' (p.168). Such a change of behaviour would require massive educational change at all levels for both adults (non-formal and informal education) and for those of compulsory schooling age. There would also need to be radical reform of funding, style and above all, curricula.

What Kind of Curricula to Meet the Challenges?

For the purposes of this section of the paper it must be assumed that governments revise their views as to the prime purpose of education, and very urgently. Otherwise it will be too late. Sadly this assumption must for now be theoretical as governments everywhere, not to mention their populations, show no signs of appreciating the problem or its urgency. As Martin (2006) has indicated 'Because humankind underestimated the fragility and complexity of nature, it also had various grand-scale misconceptions about its own supremacy' (p.25). Emmott (2013) concludes his perceptive contribution to the debate as follows:

As I said at the beginning, we can rightly call the situation we're in an unprecedented emergency...We urgently need to do - and I mean actually do - something radical to avert a global catastrophe. But don't think we will (pp.195-6).

However, what hope there may be lies in the younger generations of today if they are provided with a rapidly radically reformed educational experience. Young people now at secondary school are, in general, a lost generation, as most will leave formal education before any radical curriculum change could be effected. So at best we are talking about today's primary school pupils, and then only the youngest because of the time it would take governments to effect radical reforms, if they ever do! But we must try to convince them. A radical reform is required not a 'tweaking' here and there because the existing curricular structure has slowly emerged to support numerous nationalisms. So a logical place to begin is to relate Martin's seventeen (17) 21st Century Challenges to a new curricular scheme. Some can be conflated but none can be ignored, nor can the fundamental requirement of sufficient levels of literacy and numeracy.

Curriculum Cluster A: Communication

Literacy, command of language, and numeracy, command of numbers and symbols should be seen as one, the command of communication. This must, by definition, include information

communications technology (ICT) in view of the aforementioned and absolute need for human beings to understand *'the Singularity'*. Without such understanding, homo sapiens will lose control of computer technology and everything will be destroyed. This would include transhumanism and advanced civilisations. Mathematics (numbers and symbols and logic) is currently seen as belonging only with science which has been a huge mistake even though it is essential there too.

Curriculum Cluster B: Gaia and the Biosphere

This needs to be understood and fully enabled to survive. It would require an integrated, though basic, understanding of the natural sciences: biology, chemistry, geology and physics. Within this cluster geology, together with physical geography, needs to come to the fore together with atmospheric physics. This, so that the whole range of the earth's 'layers' from the outer edge of the atmosphere to the inner edge of the lithosphere can be comprehended as an integrated whole. Geology is usually absent from school curricula at this level which means that the crucial interplay between rocks and the atmosphere that creates soil is neglected. The fundamental but simple process of photosynthesis, on which all life on land depends, also needs to be a central theme together with the tropical rain forests and the oceans. Accepting and understanding climate change, as outlined in *The Goldilocks Planet: the Four Billion Year Story of Earth's Climate* (Zalasiewicz & Williams, 2012) at this level of schooling is essential and perfectly feasible, likewise the ecological balance between humankind and nature. As Sir Ken Robinson indicated in his celebrated TED lecture of 2006 *'Do Schools Kill Creativity'*, if all insects were exterminated all life on earth would die, but if all humans were exterminated all other forms of life would flourish. Crucial issues such as the massive significance of bacteria must be included in the interests of health and survival.

Cluster C: Poverty and Population

There are far too many people on earth already and the overall rate of increase is increasing. Despite the fact that in the most affluent countries the number of births is now insufficient to renew the population at its current number, the overall global increase is a threat to us all. To understand this means engaging at a simple level with demography, economics and the other social sciences. Basic facts and concepts from all of these: sociology, anthropology, economics and politics, together with aspects of human geography, history and psychology, can be used to illustrate key issues of poverty and population. This gives a chance to being prepared to meet the 21st century challenges of transhumanism, advanced civilisations and the lifestyles that will enable them. There will still be rich and poor relative to each other but the gap between them would become manageable, without which conflicts will likely escalate in number and severity. A key issue within this is population mobility, already a key political challenge to nation states.

Cluster D: War and Terrorism

Violent human conflict is an obvious deterrent to the survival of both humankind and the environment. Homo sapiens is by far the most destructive species ever to exist and almost unique in its violence towards itself. This has traditionally been driven by tribalism, nationalism, religion and other issues of identity. Weapons of mass destruction make a global war less likely than before, but smaller local and regional conflicts are innumerable and increasing. To most people, including the young, war and terrorism appear to be almost normal features of modern society. Films and television shows involving violence, especially murder, are widely popular as are novels of the same genre. Some recent governments have been little better, invoking violent intervention in the territory of others without necessarily being attacked themselves. Appropriate content in the study of politics, religion and identity in relation to war and terrorism should be part of this curriculum, which should also encourage mass participation in democratic politics in the interest of avoiding elective dictatorships which are almost the norm today.

Conclusion: From Curriculum to Syllabus

There will of course be predictable criticisms from traditionalists who will say that students in the four or five years of secondary school need to learn the basics of individual subjects before relating them to others. They will also say that students at this stage should cease to study some subjects in the interests of preparing for specialisation at the post-compulsory stage. But we cannot afford that luxury even if it were desirable. The key concepts in the clusters outlined above are capable of relatively simple explanation. This especially so if combined with non-formal and informal learning that will be going on outside the school anyway in the media and in the community. Such a conflation of the three forms of education is illustrated in *Education as a Global Concern* (Brock, 2011, p.145). This localisation of learning, in harness with the global, is exactly what Martin (2006) is advocating when he stated ‘...globalism should be designed to allow unique cultures to thrive and be protected. The right balance between what is global and what is local needs to be achieved’ (p.25). In Brock (2010, p.145) the universities are shown as participating fully in reaching this objective, thus also meeting Maxwell’s criticism of them above.

We have to consider how the secondary school curriculum clusters suggested above can be operated in the form of a syllabus.

The preceding primary years would need to be strongly focussed on *communication* in the forms of literacy, numeracy and ICT, the last-named increasingly becoming the medium of learning and creativity. This can be achieved by relating the three facets of communication to practical issues of simple human and environmental ecology, geological history (dinosaurs and other extinct fossils), social history and creative and performing arts. In the compulsory secondary four to five years the syllabus could be split more or less evenly between integrated studies based on the curriculum clusters above and individual subject studies. Obviously the two approaches would need to be co-ordinated by careful planning and timetabling. Computers will be increasingly able to handle that if programmed appropriately, and not so far into the future, as the *Singularity* approaches, they will be able to generate suitable syllabuses on their own.

For any of this to happen, nationalism and corporatism that have been the drivers of the conventional global syllabus in the interest of their purposes of education – political and social control and blind economic growth – must not be allowed to hold the power they have now: power that is fossilising the curriculum. If we do not want to become fossils ourselves any time soon we must make – and rapidly – the kind of radical curricular changes advocated above.

Education in itself cannot save us but it might be able to save us from the excesses of computer technology because ‘the capability for handling the *Singularity* will be distributed globally, particularly among appropriately educated young people’ (Martin, 2006, p.231). This article has attempted to point towards what would be appropriate in curricular terms to serve that new purpose of education in contrast to that nineteenth and twentieth century purpose of nationalism and competitive economic growth that needs to die, and soon.

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DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION POST-2015¹

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the implications of the post-2015 education agenda from an aid perspective. It does so by analysing how Western European and North American countries have been referred to in the main strands of the post-2015 literature relating to education; how current priorities in the post-2015 education proposals might affect future development aid; how the donors have responded to Education for All (EFA) and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since 2000; how the changing aid landscape and wider range of aid providers could impact on the financing of education post-2015; and finally how there could be improved allocative efficiency in development assistance.*

KEYWORDS: *Education Post-2015; aid/development assistance; financing gaps; aid providers; emerging donors*

Educational Aid in the Post-2015 Development Literature: Implications for Western Europe and North America

We have argued in previous papers (King & Palmer, 2013a; 2012) that one of the reasons for the preoccupation with post-2015 in many Western European and North American countries is precisely its perceived close connection with development assistance. Within the education sector in particular, future support to new versions of the education-related MDGs, to specific EFA Dakar Goals, or even to education beyond EFA, are seen to be intimately connected to how education and skills development are presented in any final post-2015 agenda. There is an acute awareness also that, in general, aid is falling towards the end of the fifteen-year period since 2000, not least because of the post-2008 economic crisis in so many Group I countries. The current funding gap (both external and domestic) of \$26 billion to reach even three of the six Dakar Goals by 2015, in just 46 countries (discussed in more detail later on) is well-known; but less frequently are there calculations of the costs of moving from, for instance, merely ‘*expanding and improving* comprehensive early childhood care and education’ (existing EFA Goal 1) to making EFA Goal I truly universal as in the recent UNESCO proposal - ‘equitable access to and completion of at least 1 year pre-primary’ for all children (Objective 1 of UNESCO, 2013a, para 37. *Emphasis added*).

Similarly, the figures of 57 million children out of school, 69 million adolescents not attending secondary, or 250 million children of primary school age not able adequately to read and write, despite some years of schooling, are equally well-known; but the costs of addressing the quality challenge of the 250 million are likely to be much more ambitious than only dealing with the access challenge of the 57 million. In other words, dealing with the quality demands of the present EFA Goal 6 has not yet been factored into the stated funding gap for reaching EFA by 2015, let alone the much wider concerns with quality and learning outcomes appearing in so many of the post-2015 aspirations and proposals.

If finishing the job on the existing EFA agenda would be a huge additional challenge for educational aid and domestic funding post-2015, the implications of what may be called an expanded EFA agenda are much more dramatic. This would involve, for instance, moving from merely ‘*expanding*’ or ‘*achieving a 50% improvement*’ in the present goals for early childhood and

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adult literacy respectively to universal coverage. There would be massive further costs by including universal lower secondary in the funding calculations as is proposed by the High Level Panel (HLP, 2013).² However, there have been calls for 'Education beyond 2015' to go beyond lower secondary, and not least in document 37 C/56 discussed in the General Conference of UNESCO on 7th November 2013. Objective 2 of this document proposes that 'Equitable access to quality upper secondary and tertiary education is ensured' as one of the possible objectives of the post-2015 education agenda (UNESCO, 2013a, p.9). There are also calls in the HLP for the post-2015 agenda 'to go well beyond the MDG focus on primary education', since the crucially important utilisation of technologies 'requires universities, technical colleges, public administration schools and well-trained skilled workers in all countries' (HLP, 2013, p.17). The Open Working Group (OWG), too, covers a wide landscape for the post-2015 agenda, and sees the need in increasingly knowledge-based societies for 'greater emphasis on secondary school and even tertiary attainment' (OWG, 2013, para.82). Two final examples come from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) which has a whole series of recommendations 'that would support an expansion of higher education' (SDSN, 2013, p.80), and from the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda Issues Brief on Education and Culture which suggests that 'all youth and adults ...access post-secondary learning opportunities' (DESA-UNDP, 2013b, p.5).

By no means does all the education literature connected to 2015 and post-2015 assume an expanded, post-secondary vision of education for all. Not surprisingly, the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) is concerned with the trade-offs between aid to basic education and aid to post-secondary education. For several years it has drawn attention to the fact that around three quarters of direct aid to post-secondary education is in the form of imputed student costs and scholarships in host countries. For instance the top four donors to this form of aid in 2010 were Germany, France, Japan and Canada (UNESCO, 2012, p.219). The same focus on EFA at primary and lower secondary would be true of the Global Education First Initiative, with its firm commitment to putting every primary child in school and also the out-of-school post-primary youth, and ensuring that both get access to quality learning (GEFI, 2013a).

It might be thought that the majority of the international NGOs (INGOs) or national NGO coalitions would support a focus on the original EFA agenda of Jomtien and Dakar, as it is particularly the poorest children, marginalised, disabled, affected by conflict or child labour who make up the 57 million out-of-school pupils at primary level. This is certainly the case with the US Basic Education Coalition (BEC, 2013), and also with Save the Children's powerful, and research-based statement about *Getting to zero: How we can be the generation that ends poverty* (Save the Children, 2013). There is a strong awareness of the role of domestic resourcing, but equally it is anticipated that both innovative financing and traditional official development assistance (ODA) will be vital. A parallel approach to this is sponsored by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) with a firm emphasis on the right to education (and not just schooling) and powerful support to adult education and adult literacy (GCE, 2013a). An equally powerful case was put forward by 22 like-minded civil society organisations on the 'Right to education in the post-2015 development agenda', and again the right to education also covered adult literacy and adult education (Civil Society Joint Statement, 2013). Both these statements about education post-2015 consider it as crucial for national governments to allocate at least 20% of their annual budgets to education, and for 'all bilateral donors to allocate at least 10 per cent of their aid to basic education' (Civil Society Joint Statement, 2013, p.4; GCE, 2013a, p.2).

Beyond the approaches of finishing existing EFA and expanded education beyond 2015, there is a further approach that can be identified in the post-2015 literature which may be termed a one-world or North-South approach. This argues that the post-2015 agenda should no longer be primarily for the developing world, as it has been for the last 23 years since Jomtien. Rather, any new development framework should be universal and relevant to all countries, including any education goal or targets. These should speak equally to both North and South. Such an approach

may be illustrated in the two targets of Education International which not only cover ‘a full cycle of continuous, free quality early childhood, primary, lower and upper secondary education’ but also specify that by 2030 ‘all young people and adults have equitable access to quality post-secondary education and lifelong learning’ (Education International, 2013).

A very strong statement of such a one-world approach is also adopted by the Danish Civil Society Organisations. Their statement of five fundamental principles includes the position that ‘the new global set of goals shall not only apply to developing countries, but must commit all world countries’; furthermore, in aid terms, they state that there must be legally binding sources of finance for development, including a minimum of 0.7% of GNP for all rich countries, and that Denmark should return to its former 1% of GNP (Danish Civil Society Organisations, 2013, p.2&8).

The Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF) also adopts a global, one-world approach to their set of recommendations, and although the countries that have expressed an interest in working with the LMTF in their current implementation phase are primarily from the Global South, there is the possibility of South Korea and of a number of US States participating also in different dimensions of this process. With LMTF, too, there is a firm commitment that ‘the education community, and donors in particular, must ensure that no country is precluded from measuring learning due to the costs associated with purchasing and administering tests’ (LMTF, 2013, p.32).

In concluding this section, it may be important to make two rather different points about the financing of actions on such global targets as may be agreed. First, there is recognition that there is a literacy problem with many millions of both youth and adults in the OECD countries; indeed the EFA GMR 2012 acknowledged, in a policy focus, the importance of strengthening adult literacy in rich countries. Some 160 million adults are estimated to be at risk with only poor literacy skills. And the costs of dealing with these large numbers would be high, even if the funds do not come from ODA budgets (UNESCO, 2012).³ Second, there is a strong message in much of the literature on education and skills post-2015 that the schooling of millions of young people in the developing world is being jeopardised by aid reductions.

Putting specific numbers on to the amounts of ODA from particular sources is critically important, rather than presenting national governments and development agencies with gross figures such as US\$26 billion of a funding gap. This is the value of the EFA GMR calculation of figures such as \$5.3 billion which could be secured if those nations which had already committed to reach the 0.7% for their ODA actually did so (UNESCO, 2013b, p.8-9). Arguably, for donors to be able to translate the goals into very specific financing targets is a high priority. But hopefully we have shown in this section that this cannot be done without clarity on what precisely is the realistic coverage of the education goals and targets in any global development agenda.

Impact of the Current Post-2015 Debates on Development Assistance to Education and Skills

Having examined just a little of the complexity of the education and skills themes in the current post-2015 debates, it may be premature to estimate their likely impact on patterns of development assistance. It will not be until 2015 that the shape of the final text of any educational goals and targets will be almost clear. But a few things can be said with a degree of certainty even now.

The surest outcome of the present debates about future priorities is that quality in basic education will be pursued. Pressure for ODA to address this has become almost unstoppable with the evidence discussed above that 250 million young people have basically failed to learn despite being in school for up to four years. Consequently, most of the formulations of new education goals for post-2015 have included the word ‘quality’. Thus the illustrative education goal of the HLP was ‘Provide quality education and lifelong learning’, and similarly no less than three of the five ‘Objectives’ of UNESCO’s 37C/56 document on Education beyond 2015 (UNESCO, 2013a) make use of the term quality.

But the real challenge will be the operationalisation of quality in practice. Many of the proposals being discussed focus on literacy and/or numeracy as basic skills which all students should acquire. Thus the HLP talked of 'every child...able to read, write and count well enough to meet minimum learning standards' (HLP, 2013, p.49), while UNESCO's 37C/56 document more broadly mentioned 'good quality with recognised and measurable learning outcomes based on national standards' (UNESCO, 2013a, p.7). The danger could be, however, if quality gets turned into one or two easily measurable learning outcomes of literacy or numeracy in the early grades. The temptation will be to pursue what could be called the 'quantification of quality' through assessments that are easy to administer. This could be damaging for the key role of teachers in encouraging critical thinking and creative, innovative approaches even from the earliest years.⁴

While early grade reading and maths assessments have been one approach to the measurement of learning (and of learning goals) in primary schools, a rather different approach has been the elaboration specifically for developing countries of an adaptation of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA for Development (PFD), supported by aid, will, over the next three years, be trialling instruments at age 15 which will be adapted to local contexts but must still be robust enough to maintain comparability with the international PISA scales (OECD, 2013a).⁵

Another of the priority themes that has been evident in so many of the proposals is 'inequality'. This became a key cross-cutting theme in the HLP across all the illustrative goals to ensure that everyone 'irrespective of household income, gender, location, ethnicity, age or disability' has access to key services (HLP, 2013, p.24). But what such an approach means in practice for development agencies and NGOs is a 'data revolution' in which results are 'disaggregated by income, gender, ethnic, religious, rural/urban, regional, age and disability groups' (Save the Children, 2013, p.vi). However, like quality, translating this very proper concern with equity and inequality into practice could require putting systems in place for the collection of data that are reliable, comparable and disaggregated. For weaker countries, this could have considerable implications for future aid to capacity building in educational planning and statistics.

The emphasis on the crucial importance of 'skills' or 'skills development' by the EFA GMR in 2010 and 2012 (UNESCO, 2010; 2012) and also by many development partners and national governments has secured their place in the discussions related to post-2015 proposals. However, as we shall mention in more detail below, 'skills', like quality and equity, is a very slippery term. So it is one thing to propose to 'develop skills and competencies for life and work' (UNESCO, 2013a, p.9) as a post-2015 objective, but translating these into instruments that can be used in the many different locations of formal and informal training could be a massive undertaking, as many countries are recognising (see for example, King, 2012).

But even 'access' will be affected by the new proposals around post-2015. The bald numbers of 57 million out-of-school children at primary level, or 69 million adolescents at lower secondary, will also need to be disaggregated, in terms of the categories just mentioned for equity, including the acknowledgement that many of these young people live in fragile states.

These are just a few examples of how the new post-2015 education and skills proposals could affect the character, delivery, and monitoring of development aid projects and programmes. There would be other illustrations from the new requirements of learning in adult literacy or in early childhood care and education. But enough has perhaps been said to suggest that the new goals are likely to put more demands both on countries and their many different development partners.

Many of these assessment approaches and technologies are already in place in Western Europe and North America, but they are the responsibilities of national ministries of education or of qualification authorities or skills councils. Securing some of this existing expertise for the parallel national development agencies and their partners in LICs and LMICs will be crucial.

We shall return to some aspects of these challenges later on, but we move now to consider what have been the financial dimensions of donor engagement with the EFA goals and with the education MDGs.

Donor Responses to EFA and the Education-Related MDGs

Broad Trends

At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 there was agreement that ‘no country seriously committed to education will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources’ (World Education Forum, 2000). While aid to education increased over the period 2002-2010, as noted below, this has since declined and donor governments have failed to deliver on the Dakar promise.

In the decade following Dakar, total aid to education increased steadily from US\$6.7 billion in 2002 to US\$14.4 billion by 2010, with aid to basic education⁶ increasing from US\$3 billion to US\$6.2 billion over the same period (Fig. 1). It is interesting to note the very high levels of aid to post-secondary education (Fig. 1) long after the Jomtien and Dakar agreements. This increase in aid to education more than mirrored increases in total ODA, which rose from US\$ 97 billion in 2002 to US\$139 billion in 2010.

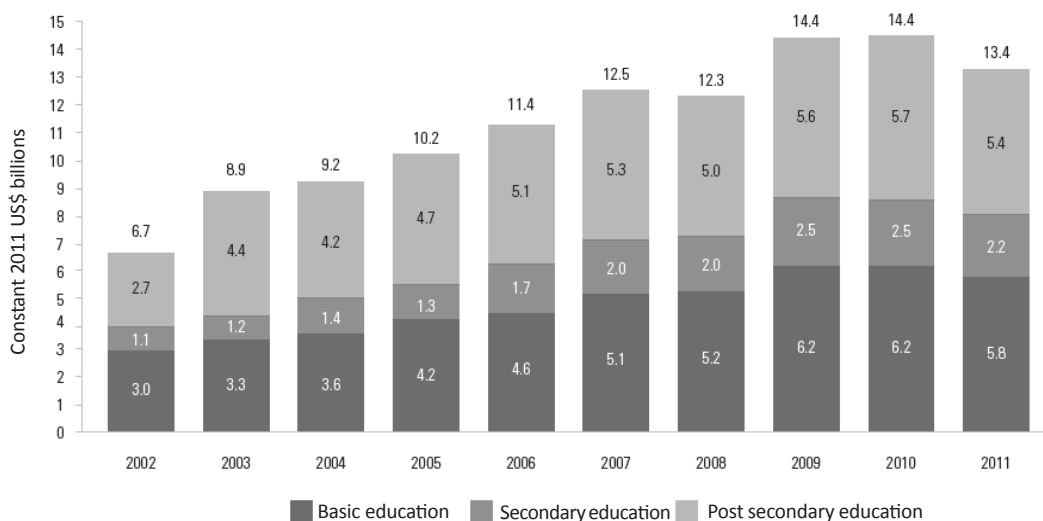


Figure 3: Total aid to education disbursements by US\$ billions, 2002-2011

Source: UNESCO (2013b) using OECD Creditor Reporting System data

However, since 2010 there is concern not only that overall levels of ODA are declining (by 6% in real terms 2010 to 2012 – DESA-UNDP, 2013a), but that levels of aid to education (and basic education) are declining. Between 2010 and 2011, total aid to education declined by 7%, with aid to basic education declining by 6% - from US\$6.2 to US\$5.8 billion (UNESCO, 2013b).

Six of the ten major bilateral donors to basic education (Canada, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States) reduced their aid to basic education between 2010 and 2011 (UNESCO, 2013b, p.6). However, other donors (Australia, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom) increased their aid to basic education over the same period (*ibid*), which slightly compensated – but this was insufficient to prevent an overall decline in aid to this level.

With regard to multilateral support for basic education, there is evidence that it is ‘slowing compared to other sectors and to bilateral donors’ (Rose & Steer, 2013, p.1-2). For example, between 2010-2011, the European Union ‘decreased the amount given to basic education by almost one-third’ (UNESCO, 2013b, p.6).

What is additionally concerning, from the perspective of any increased focus on post-basic education in the post-2015 agenda, is that ODA to both secondary and post-secondary education

also fell, but at different rates,⁷ between 2010 and 2011. Meanwhile, as noted above, UNESCO has proposed that the post-2015 education agenda should ensure 'equitable access to quality upper secondary as well as tertiary education' (UNESCO, 2013a, p.7).

Aside from the trend of decreasing ODA to education, another trend among DAC donors is the need to demonstrate more clearly how ODA contributes to development outcomes (European Report on Development (ERD), 2013) which has led them 'to focus more on results, transparency and value for money'⁸ (Greenhill & Prizzon, 2012, p.9), and to be selective about the countries they provide aid to.

Financing Gaps

There remains an annual \$26 billion financing gap to achieve basic education⁹ in 46 low-income countries (LICs) and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) (UNESCO, 2013d). If achieving lower secondary education is added, the financing gap grows to \$38 billion in the same countries. If the post-2015 ambitions extend beyond lower-secondary, which looks likely, and if we were to cost in the financing gap for the remainder of middle- (and even high-) income countries, the global post-2015 education financing gap will be very considerable. And this is without calculating the very substantial costs of the widespread emphasis on quality in most post-2015 education proposals.

There is no realistic way that we should expect such a large financing gap to be covered by ODA alone (Greenhill & Prizzon, 2012). Domestic financing will continue to be the major source of funds for education (Rose & Steer, 2013), but other sources, including from non-DAC donors, the private sector and innovative mechanisms, clearly need to be adopted even for the post-2015 basic education agenda to be realised.

Shortfalls Regarding Financing Priorities

However, ODA to basic education is not being prioritised to countries that are furthest from achieving EFA (GCE, 2013; UNESCO, 2013a; 2013b); in 2011, only one-third of aid to basic education was allocated to low-income countries (UNESCO, 2013b, p.7), and 'only three of the ten countries in the world with the highest numbers of out-of-school children are among the top ten recipients of aid to basic education: Ethiopia, India and Pakistan' (ibid, p.8).

The Education MDGs have narrowed the focus of ODA to primary education and gender equity (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2012, p.9). Nonetheless, over the past decade, several bilateral (France, Germany and Japan) and (more recently) some multilateral agencies (e.g. African Development Bank) have provided significant amounts to students studying in donor countries (which is no longer considered country programmable aid by the OECD); and they have widened their support to a whole sector financing approach (Rose & Steer, 2013; UNESCO, 2012).

It has been widely claimed that not only has priority been accorded to primary education, but narrowing the education goals has also resulted in a priority being given to educational access, while quality improvements and learning outcomes were much less prioritised. Within 'quality', as mentioned above, there has been a focus on its 'quantification' by mechanisms such as those associated with Uwezo and the early grade reading assessments.

Lastly, there are more general shortfalls with regard to governments' financing priorities; massive sums are allocated to military spending versus to education and other services. For example, global military spending reached US\$1.75 trillion in 2012 (SIPRI, 2013); if just 1% of this were reallocated to education spending, an extra US\$17.5 billion would be available.

Shortfalls Regarding Financing Modalities

The shift in the years following Dakar, away from project-based education aid, to sector-wide approaches and budget support seems to be reversing in the last few years. The majority of the Paris

Declaration aid effectiveness targets were not met (UNESCO, 2012), and greater risk aversion appears to have affected financing modalities, especially with regard to general budget support (Greenhill & Prizzon, 2012). Several traditional donors, most notably USAID, have long favored project-based aid to education and this does not appear to be changing; if anything, more donors appear to be returning to this modality. Perhaps as a result of the national audits of sector and general budget support.

The Global Partnership for Education has been through reform¹⁰ over the last couple of years, but is still finding it hard to engage with the new multi-stakeholder financing reality (especially with regard to getting contributions from emerging donors, the private sector or innovative financing), or indeed to raise much finance (Sachs & Schmidt-Traub, 2013). For example, donor contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria between 2001-2011 totaled US\$22 billion, 'around ten times as much as those made to the Global Partnership for Education over a comparable time frame' (UNESCO, 2012, p.153). Further, while private partners around the world are making commitments to achieve the targets of the UN Global Education First Initiative (GEFI, 2013b), they are not channeling these resources via the Global Partnership for Education but largely through their own mechanisms which tend not to be aligned with EFA objectives. Some have suggested that the Global Partnership for Education could evolve into a new Global Education Fund (Brown, 2012; Sachs & Schmidt-Traub, 2013).

Since Dakar, financing modalities for EFA have not been able fully to reach the poorest and most marginalised people or countries, including girls, children with disabilities, rural populations, emergency and conflict situations (UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013b).

Traditional aid to education may be at a turning point. In most recipient countries, ODA to education is declining both in absolute terms and as a proportion of national education budgets, the traditional grant focus of some donors is giving way to greater focus on blended financing options (see below). ODA is still very important, especially for fragile states (OECD, 2013b), and will continue to be over the period to 2030. But those countries that have failed to fulfill earlier ODA commitments need to make good on their promises. However, ODA may begin to become more useful as a catalyst for development or as a means to leverage additional funding from national governments and the private sector, and in funding global public goods connected to education (e.g. education data, research). While some suggest that in future ODA 'should be targeted entirely to low-income countries' (Sachs & Schmidt-Traub, 2013), it may be that it is more useful to look at it on a country- (or intra-country) specific basis and also to look at the type of ODA modality used and its purpose.¹¹

Even if ODA is not currently well targeted at the countries furthest from EFA, it can still amount to a significant proportion of education budgets in some of the poorest countries. But ODA financing modalities for these countries may need to focus more on grants than loans for example (ERD, 2013). In other countries, we may see less grants and more loans, or else new funding modalities such as blending ODA with private or non-concessional financing (Ibid; Greenhill & Prizzon, 2012).

The main instrument the MDGs incentivized was ODA from traditional donors, with MDG 8 (on global partnership) perpetuating a 'donor-recipient' type of relationship (DESA-UNDP, 2013a). By contrast, the post-2015 framework needs to incentivize development finance,¹² regardless of source. It needs to be emphasised again that domestic financing will be the make-or-break of education post-2015 ambitions and will remain the largest source of education financing in most countries. The EFA GMR is proposing that the post-2015 education goals include a financing goal that contains commitments for governments, donors and others (UNESCO, 2013c); one vital lesson from EFA/MDGs is that it cannot be taken for granted that resources will be available to meet international commitments, despite the pledge given at Dakar.

Financing Education Post-2015: Emerging Partners and the Private Sector

In the last decade the development landscape has broadened considerably. While the EFA and education MDGs were more about incentivizing ODA and linked more to a donor-recipient approach

(Jones, 2012), the development financing opportunities that now exist go well beyond this. The financing of the post-2015 education agenda needs to also account for this new financing reality that includes emerging donors, private sector financing (foundations, NGOs, large corporations, enterprises and private individuals), new mechanisms for traditional donors, as well as innovative financing approaches. We deal with emerging donors next and then the private sector below.

Emerging, Non-Dac Donors

There has been a growing interest in the role of the non-DAC donors in the last few years, but so far there has not been much attention accorded to their engagement with education and training, or with their involvement in the debates around the post-2015 education agenda (King, 2013a; 2013b; NORRAG News 49). Their preferred aid discourse is captured in the term South-South cooperation (SSC). This stresses collaboration between Southern partners in many different domains. Development assistance is only one dimension of SSC, which ‘often combines loans, grants, trade, investment and technical cooperation’ (ERD, 2013, p.114).

While there continues to be a lack of official figures to allow the isolation of ODA in SSC, it is estimated that currently some \$15 billion in aid is provided each year through SSC and that this could rise to \$50 billion by 2025 (ibid, p.115). The best estimate of the much discussed Chinese aid is provided by Brautigam, and would total \$10.5 billion, covering \$2.5 billion of official aid, and \$8.00 billion of concessional foreign aid loans (Brautigam, 2013).

As far as the main non-DAC donors are concerned, their modalities of education cooperation are also framed in a South-South mutual benefit discourse, and their emphasis is largely on higher education, scholarships, teacher training and short term tertiary level training rather than on the EFA agenda and education-related MDGs of many traditional donors. There is some non-DAC donor support (e.g. China) to school building but this is tiny compared to that of Japan, for instance. As an important part of the discourse of non-DAC donors is that training should provide direct exposure to their own recent, successful experience of rapid development, it should not be surprising that short-term training in the non-DAC donor countries is a very high priority. Indeed along with Japan and Germany, India and China are now two of the four largest providers in the world of such short-term training.

Africa is the site for a good deal of the higher education cooperation of India, China, Brazil, and of course South Africa which subsidises thousands of students from the rest of Africa in its own universities and colleges. It should be noted that the education ministers of the BRICS countries met on the side of the UNESCO General Conference on 5th November 2013, and ‘agreed to establish a mechanism at the “highest political and technical level” to coordinate and implement collaboration, especially in higher education’ (Lee, 2013).

Although the ministers did also emphasise the importance of collaborating with UNESCO to ‘hasten progress towards achieving Education for All – EFA – goals, and also to shape discussions on the post-2015 agenda’ (ibid), it should be noted that until recently China, India and South Africa have paid little attention to this last. This is beginning to change, with a recent high-level ‘Workshop on the post-2015 development agenda on post-school education & training’ in South Africa on 30th October 2013 (DHET, 2013). In the case of China, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs published ‘China’s position paper on the development agenda beyond 2015’ just three days before the UN General Assembly debated this issue in September 2013 (MOFA, 2013).

Private Sector

While basic education is seen largely as a ‘public good’ (Brookings, 2012, p.67), which should mostly be publicly financed at the national level, the pressure on ODA means that many are increasingly looking to the private sector as a potential source of finance for education (UNESCO, 2012). The private sector certainly has an important role to play in financing education post-2015 –

and not just in financing provision, but also ‘to catalyse innovation, advance policy reform and address the education needs of marginalised populations’ (UNESCO, 2012, p.164; 2013e, p.1; UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013a). Below we examine briefly four types of private sector financing: Philanthropy/private grants and NGOs; Private multi-national corporations; Private enterprise at national levels; and, Private education and training providers.

Philanthropy, Private Grants and Ngos

Key foundations based in DAC-member countries spend US\$135 million on education in developing countries (UNESCO, 2012; van Fleet, 2012); this is equivalent to only about 1% of education aid from DAC donors. About 90% of education support from these foundations comes from just five organisations which are based in USA (ibid.).¹³ These figures, however, are likely to be underestimates as they don’t include comparator organisations in emerging economies such as the Qatar Foundation and Dubai Cares, nor do they include the Aga Khan Foundation. Of course, from the proposed post-2015 perspective of universality (to both developed and developing countries), these figures also don’t include expenditure by private foundations on education in developed countries, including for example the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation spending on education in the USA.

The delivery of funding from such philanthropic organisations is ‘generally the most comparable to aid from DAC donors... [They] rarely run their own projects but instead channel their funds to other organizations, usually local or international NGOs’ (UNESCO, 2012, p.165). However, foundations (more so than traditional donors) ‘have also taken on more risky ‘venture capital’-style investment, and tend to have a strong focus on innovation and scientific research’ (Greenhill & Prizzon, 2012, p.12).

Non-governmental organisations’ contribution to education financing is also significant; NGOs get their financing both from ODA, but also from their own fund-raising activities.

Private individuals are also increasingly becoming involved in directly financing development, including education, through such mechanisms as social impact investing and peer-to-peer giving and lending.

Private Multi-National Corporations

Private corporations based in Western Europe and North America provide an estimated US\$548 million per year to support education in developing countries (UNESCO, 2012; van Fleet, 2012); this is equivalent to about 4% of education aid from DAC donors. Most of these companies are in the energy and ICT sectors. The motivation behind such involvement ‘differs widely in terms of how closely it is tied to core business activities’ (UNESCO, 2012, p.165). There are broadly three types of such giving (UNESCO, 2012):

- a) ‘corporate giving’ - contributions towards education in developing countries through grants to NGOs or international organisations
- b) ‘social investments’ - in sectors such as education as a form of corporate social responsibility.
- c) ‘supply of goods and services’ – for example via a partnership with a government.

There is some concern that private multi-national corporations tend to focus more on some countries and some sub-sectors of education rather than others, and are not necessarily aligned with government policies.

Private Enterprise at National Levels

Corporate involvement in education at the national level should also be recognized as part of the post-2015 education financing matrix. Such involvement may include grants to national education initiatives as part of their corporate social responsibility. But private enterprises are much more directly involved than this. When it comes to skills training, for example, many enterprises, both

formal and informal, large and small, are engaged in enterprise-based training, including through apprenticeship arrangements, or they might be contributors to national or sector industry training funds. Private enterprises at the national level also have a key role to play in helping education and skills planners understand changing labour market demand and skill needs (UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013a). This all has obvious links back into EFA goal 3, but also to the wider discussions on skills for work as part of the post-2015 agenda.

Private Education and Training Providers

At the level of the provider, private institutes and schools – both for- and not-for-profit – have a role to play in financing education now and post-2015. The role that, for example, low-fee private schools are playing in EFA – and might play post-2015, is contentious.¹⁴ In almost every country there are also many examples of for-profit and non-profit schools and training centres that provide education and skills training, as well as the very widespread ‘shadow’ school systems which offer private provision to students who have already had a full day or week of public schooling.

In conclusion

Within Western European and North American countries, there is a wide range of development actors, at international, national, sub-national and city levels, including national and international NGOs, think tanks, corporations, foundations, private sector providers, philanthropists and consultancies. We have only been able to refer to a sub-set of this very diverse constituency in their involvement in post-2015 debates and proposals. Not only is there a multiplicity of providers, but even within the limited field of possible education and skills development goals and targets, there is a substantial range of different approaches. Any viable post-2015 framework for development cooperation in education will need to recognise the distinct roles of different types of cooperation actors.

However, it may still be useful for these diverse actors to recall just how complex the funding and definitional issues are that derive from this discussion about post-2015 proposals:

There are several next steps or conclusions from this brief paper. They involve greater certainty about the meanings, the evidence base (see King and Palmer, 2013b) and the options involved in different post-2015 proposals.

Clarifying the meanings and practical implications of such key elements in many post-2015 education proposals as ‘quality’, ‘equity’, and ‘skills’, including ‘skills for work’.

Recognising that ‘finishing the job’, even on the specified limits of some of the 6 EFA Dakar Goals in 46 LICs and LMICs, would cost more than the estimated annual funding gap of \$26 billion (which is based on just 3 Goals, - early childhood, primary and adult literacy).

Expanding the ambition of the existing 6 Goals so that there is comprehensive coverage, not just 50% adult literacy or increased coverage of ECCE, and not just minimalist learning outcomes but real attention to quality, would increase the annual funding gap dramatically.

Expanding the range of the present EFA goals so that they incorporate universal access to lower secondary education of acceptable quality would increase the current annual funding gap even further.

Expanding ‘Education beyond 2015’ to take in ‘equitable access to quality upper secondary and tertiary education’ would make enormous demands on both domestic funding and on aid budgets even for the 46 LICs and LMICs discussed in this paper in relation to the \$26 billion.

It would nevertheless be invaluable for the development assistance community to have some sense of the differential costs of meeting these very different ambitions, with different funding scenarios, including 0.7% of GNP for those countries already committed to that target.

The development assistance community will never be able to fund these further ambitions, it should be funded even with increased domestic funding. That does not mean that DAC donors should not still aspire to the 0.7%, but that DAC ODA might increasingly be better used in other ways – e.g. leveraging additional financing from the private sector or from innovative instruments.... Or for financing global public goods in education like the data revolution, and added measurement of learning outcomes.

Notes

¹ A longer version of this paper was presented as a background paper to the Regional Consultation Meeting of the Western European and North American States on Education in the post-2015 development agenda, 5-6 December 2013.

² This was also called for by the Director General of UNESCO in her foreword to the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) of 2012: 'We can achieve universal lower secondary education by 2030, and we must' (p.i). The Report itself supported lower secondary as a global target for post-2015 (ibid, p.300).

³ The costs of dealing with some 5.7 million adult learners in the UK between 2001 and 2007 reached no less than US\$8 billion (ibid, p.103).

⁴ For concerns with the 'quantification of performance' in Tanzania, see Languille (2013).

⁵ Countries likely to be part of the PFD pilot are Cambodia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Zambia.

⁶ Basic education is defined by the DAC as covering early childhood education, primary education and basic life skills for youth and adults.

⁷ It is secondary that has suffered the most – having the greatest relative decline between 2010 and 2011.

⁸ See also NORRAG News No. 47: Value for money in international education: A new world of results, impacts, and outcomes. www.norrag.org

⁹ The financing gap that the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report team calculated in 2012 refers only to 3 of the 6 EFA Goals (related to primary, pre-primary and adult literacy). This version of basic education is different from that of the OECD DAC – see note 6 above.

¹⁰ For example, widening the focus of its work to include education in fragile states as one of its core priorities.

¹¹ e.g. Why shouldn't ODA be used in lower-middle income countries (MICs) to fund areas that are historically under-invested in, or to leverage increased domestic or private sector investment in similar countries?

¹² Development finance here refers to finance that is used for development purposes that includes, for example, financing from ODA, south-south cooperation, triangular cooperation, innovative mechanisms, and the private sector.

¹³ Ford Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, MasterCard Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Carnegie Corporation of New York.

¹⁴ For a summary of the arguments for and against low-fee private schools, see the blog debate between Kevin Watkins and Justin Sandefur at <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=11264>

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US AID TO EDUCATION IN LAOS, 1955-1975: A CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORICAL COMPARATIVE EDUCATION, EMBEDDED IN TIME AND SPACE

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ABSTRACT: *In 1951 the United States began providing economic assistance to the Associated States of Indochina, a region in which the US had previously shown little interest. This assistance grew, and in 1955 'US Operations Mission / Laos' was established in Vientiane. In 1961 both the Peace Corps and the Agency for International Development (AID) were established. The Peace Corps never operated in Laos, but the USAID programme grew rapidly after 1962, reached a peak in 1968, declined sharply, and ended in 1975. Despite the political turn of events, USAID left an enduring legacy of value, the most significant of which was probably its support for the 'Laoization' of education, supporting a system of education for all, breaking with the elitist French education culture. In January 2011, USAID returned to Laos after a 35 year absence, working mainly in the fields of health, environmental protection and conservation, and economic development.*

KEYWORDS: *history, Laos, foreign policy, revolution, USAID*

Introduction

Aims and Scope

This study is a contribution to historical comparative education. It is a story embedded in time and space – in Laos, 1955-1975. The aim is to: (i) Describe how and why the United States came to show an interest in education in Laos; (ii) Describe US support for education in Laos in the period 1955 to 1975; (iii) Show the alignment of the USAID programme with the existing Lao education systems under the Royal Lao Government and under the Pathet Lao in the Liberated Zone; (iv) Describe the political context leading to the termination of USAID support; and (v) Describe and assess some of the enduring outcomes of the American support.

Four main questions are posed:

- a) Why was the United States interested in this *small, quiet, sparsely populated, poor, remote, landlocked country* that most Americans would not have been able to locate on a world map?
- b) To what extent was American interest in Laos a reflection of humanitarian concern for the people of Laos, and to what extent was it part of a forbidden 'secret war'?
- c) What were the motivations, perceptions, understandings, and decisions of the Government of the United States?
- d) Why USAID? Why not Peace Corps?

This study represents an American perspective. There are three sources of documentation. First, the major source of documentation is the extensive AID Archives, which contains both 'public' documents from the period and documents that were classified 'Secret' or 'Top Secret' and are now declassified. Note that 'AID' refers to the Agency for International Development, with headquarters in Washington, D.C. 'USAID' refers to the field offices abroad, such as in Vientiane.

The second source is the extensive 'Pentagon Papers', a study secretly prepared in 1967 inside the Department of Defense as an 'encyclopedic history of the Vietnam War'. It was originally classified

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as ‘Top Secret – Sensitive’ and is now declassified.¹ Finally there are other documents including scholarly histories, biographies, and private archives.

The AID website contains a massive archive extending from 1954 to 1975 and beyond to the present. These documents can be freely accessed by country and chronologically.

Some notes on the references

Statistics

Caution is warranted in interpreting statistics cited here. References to numbers of schools, teachers, and students cover only those areas controlled by the Royal Lao Government (RLG), the Provisional Government of National Union (PGNU), or the Pathet Lao (PL) in the Liberated Zone at the time of data collection. The boundaries of the areas under the Government control and PL control were fluid.

Language and Values

Many writers use the term ‘Second Indochina War’ in preference to ‘Vietnam War’ (used in the United States) or ‘American War’ (used in Vietnam). That war, while fought mainly in Vietnam, also involved military action in Laos (‘the secret war’) and Cambodia. Moreover, although the demise of French Indochina rendered the term ‘Indochina’ a *political* anachronism, it is still in widespread current usage to refer to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. This study is based to a large extent on USAID documents, other US Government documents, and other documents written from a ‘Western’ perspective, and the use of the corresponding terminology is most faithful to the understandings of the actors, even as every attempt is made to maintain an unbiased and objective perspective.

As Myrdal noted, ‘The only way in which we can strive for “objectivity” in theoretical analysis is to expose [our] valuations to full light, make them conscious, specific and explicit, and permit them to determine the theoretical research’ (Myrdal, 1969, pp. 55-56).

Laos and the World, in Time and Space

Laos: The Land and the People

Geography

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia. It is bordered in the north and northwest by Myanmar (Burma) and Yunnan Province of China, in the east by Vietnam, in the west by Thailand, and in the south by Cambodia.

The Mekong River originates on the Tibetan Plateau, flows through the north-western tip of Yunnan Province, and passes over deep and unnavigable cataracts before leaving Yunnan for Myanmar and Laos. The massive Khone Falls just north of the border with Cambodia prevents access to the sea. The mountains and the river have thus served over the millennia both to protect and to isolate Laos from the world outside Southeast Asia.

In 1955 there were few all-weather airports and some airstrips accessible during the dry season, but much of the country was without roads, and most of the interior was accessible only by foot or horseback (USAID PNADX106, 1955, p. – [5]).

Demography

When US aid to Indochina began in the late 1950s, the population of Laos was about 2.0 million. In addition there were some thousands of Chinese and Vietnamese as well as a French colony of some 6,500, mostly government officials, technicians, teachers, business men, missionaries, and

their families. There were some 500 Americans, all but 70 of whom were employed by the US Government (USAID PNABI128, 1959, p.16-18 [21-23]).

Economic and Social Development

More than ninety per cent of the population were engaged in self-subsistence agriculture. Laos was seen by the US as 'underdeveloped in nearly all respects. ... Practically the entire country is still in its unchanged natural state ... lacking most classes of even semi-skilled workers and entrepreneurial leadership. ... Despite all this, the Lao continue to live unaffected and unruffled – and undeveloped, quite removed from the 20th century ways of life' (USAID PNABI128, 1959, p.4 [9]).

A study conducted in 1965 reported, 'Laos is one of the world's most backward countries. Its institutions are amorphous and its modes of thought, even among many of the elite, are pre-modern. It is difficult even to discuss its problems in our customary terminology, because the words carry an air of substance and precision ill-suited to the shadows and ambiguities of Laos' (USAID PDACR504, 1965, p.13 [30]). On the basis of such perceptions and understandings, the decisions of the Government of the United States were made.

Laos in French Indochina, 1893 - 1954

French Colonial Interests

Why was France interested in Laos? This was the Age of Imperialism: Britain and Portugal had achieved significant concessions in China, and France was not to be outdone. There were four main motivations:

- a) Exploration of the Mekong River as a backdoor to riches of China (*mission scientifique*): exploration ended in failure because the Mekong was not navigable to China;
- b) 'Civilization Mission' (*mission civilisatrice*) i.e., spreading French language and culture: French culture thrived among the governing elite in Laos until the Revolution, 1975.
- c) Revenue for France (*mise en valeur*): colonial administration of Laos operated at a loss, covered by revenue from Vietnam and Cambodia.
- d) Buffer zone between Thailand and French interests in Vietnam: buffer zone functioned until the Franco-Thai War, 1940-1941;

Post World War II French Colonial Policy and US Policy

After World War II France fully expected to restore their pre-war colonial empires, and they requested US support. US President Roosevelt, however, believed that France maintained a 'dangerously outmoded colonial outlook', and that colonial empires in the nineteenth century sense were rapidly becoming a thing of the past (PP, 2011, Part I, p. A-4 [11]; see also PP, 2011, Part V-B-2a, p. 98 [132]). After the war the US had granted independence to its own colony, the Philippines, and encouraged the European imperial powers to withdraw from their colonies.

France, seriously weakened by the war and facing growing independence movements, remained determined to re-build their colonial empire. France initially struggled alone to re-establish and maintain control of its colonies in Southeast Asia, but that was soon to change.

War and Peace and War Again

During World War II, following the principle 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend', the Soviet Union and the United States, with such profound differences in their history, culture, and political and economic institutions, became uneasy allies in the 'Grand Alliance'. Once the common enemies that united them were defeated, however, the differences that had separated them before the war became divisive once again and came to dominate both American and Soviet foreign policy.

Until almost the end of the decade of the 1940s, American and Soviet foreign policy focused mainly on Europe and the Middle East. America's position in the emergent Cold War was stated by President Truman early in 1947 (Truman, 1947):

- a) The United States must support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures;
- b) It must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way; and
- c) Help from the United States should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

This came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, and it was soon put to test as developments in Asia suddenly proved more fateful than those in Europe and the Middle East.

Timeline of a Fateful Year

August 1949: Soviet Union successfully tests an atomic bomb.

October 1949: People's Republic of China (PRC) is proclaimed.

January 1950: China and the Soviet Union recognise the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV, with capital in Hanoi).

January 1950: French Assembly ratifies the Élysée Agreement, establishing Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as autonomous states within the French Union.

February 1950: France and United States recognise State of Vietnam (Republic of Vietnam, RVN, with capital in Saigon).

June 1950: North Korean divisions cross 38th Parallel, President Truman orders US ground troops into Korea, and the Korean War begins.

The Colonial War becomes the Cold War

The Korean War, 1950 - 1953

Since US foreign policy had focused mainly on Europe and the Middle East, the North Korean invasion of South Korea caught the US by surprise. The fateful events of 1949-1950 led to a major re-orientation of US foreign policy, and Southeast Asia suddenly acquired new and vital significance. France was no longer seen as fighting a colonial war but a war against communism, supporting a struggle by a free people resisting subjugation by an armed minority and outside pressure. Under the Truman Doctrine, therefore, the US was committed to providing aid, but 'primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes'.

The First Indochina War, 1946 - 1954

Determined to restore their colonial empire, the French pressed on in Indochina, with substantial economic support but no direct military support from the US. The establishment of the People's Republic of China and the recognition by both China and the Soviet Union of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam gave strength to the Viet Minh in their struggle against the French. In May 1954 the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu, under siege for 57 days, was compelled to surrender to the Viet Minh. The Geneva Conference on Indochina led to a peace agreement with Vietnam partitioned at the 17th parallel. Replacing the French in Indochina had never been the intention of the US in the years after the Second World War, but with a few pen strokes partitioning Vietnam, the colonial war was thus transformed into a battle field of the Cold War, and the US rose to the challenge.

By 1954, the 'single battlefield' concept shown by the Viet Minh incursions into Laos and the Viet Minh victory at Dien Bien Phu had sent a clear signal to the American administration (then under President Eisenhower) that the Truman Doctrine, originally applied in Europe and then in the Middle

East, must also apply to Southeast Asia. Under Eisenhower's 'domino theory', Laos, previously an insignificant backwater in French Indochina, thus became strategically important to the US and in need of assistance. In January 1955 the first US military assistance arrived in Saigon to support the independence of the State of Vietnam, later the Republic of Vietnam.

Timeline of Another Fateful Year

May 1954: French surrender at Dien Bien Phu.

May – July, 1954: Geneva Conference on Indochina leads to peace agreement, with Vietnam partitioned at the 17th parallel.

August 1954: French troops withdraw from Laos (but leaving military advisers), granting Laos independence (within the French Union).

January 1955: First US military aid to Saigon arrives.

The Pathet Lao

In the early 1950s, the Lao revolutionary movement that came to be known as the Pathet Lao was formed.² In accordance with the terms of the Geneva Accord, which restored peace in 1954, the Pathet Lao forces regrouped in the provinces of Phongsaly, Sam Neua (now part of Huaphanh province), and Xiengkhuang (location of the Plain of Jars). Over the years of revolutionary struggle, the Pathet Lao zone or the 'Liberated Zone' steadily expanded. By the early 1960s the Liberated Zone covered about two-thirds of the national territory, and by 1974 it covered three quarters of the national territory, inhabited by one third of the population (Stuart-Fox, 1992, pp. 81-82). In this zone the Pathet Lao established the institutions and instruments for effective public administration, including a ministry of education, schools, and a teachers college.

The Second Indochina War, 1955-1975

The Cold War evolved, and in Southeast Asia the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) for Indochina was reorganised into country-specific units. MAAG/Vietnam was created in November 1955, signalling the opening moves of the Second Indochina War. American foreign policy was re-formulated by President Eisenhower in his State of the Union Address in January 1957 (Eisenhower, 1957):

- a) The United States, together with other free nations, should vigorously promote mutual strength, prosperity and welfare in the free world; and
- b) Strength is a product of economic health and social well-being. 'Consequently, even as we continue our programmes of military assistance, we must emphasise aid to our friends in building more productive economies and in better satisfying the natural demands of their people for progress.'

This came to be known as the Eisenhower Doctrine. It represented a major shift in priorities, from the primacy of economic aid to the primacy of military assistance *supported by* economic aid.

Origins of the USAID Programme in Indochina

US Aid to Europe

After the Second World War the US established two major aid programmes: the Marshall Plan for European Recovery, 1948-1952, and the Point Four Programme, 1950. These programmes had both humanitarian and security aims, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Marshall Plan and Point Four Programme, Stated and Unstated Aims

	Humanitarian Aims (publicly stated)	Security Aims (not publicly stated)
Marshall Plan, 1948-1952	Counter hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos	Block the extension of Soviet power and Communist economic and political organisation and alignment
Point Four Programme, 1950	Create markets for the United States by reducing poverty and increasing production in developing countries	Diminish the threat of communism by helping countries prosper under capitalism

Source: Acheson (1969)

US Aid to the Associated States of the French Union

Beginning in 1950, the US provided equipment, supplies, and budget support to the French Government for prosecution of the war in Indochina. Under the Mutual Security Act of 1951, the United States established the US Operations Mission (USOM) to the Associated States (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) in Saigon. In August, 1955, the United States elevated its diplomatic mission in Laos from a Legation to an Embassy and established the United States Operations Mission in Laos (USOM/L).

Peace Corps and USAID

In March 1961 the Peace Corps was established with three stated goals: (i) Provide technical assistance; (ii) Help people outside the US understand American culture; and (iii) Help Americans understand the cultures of other countries.

In November 1961, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was established with a single goal of providing economic, development, and humanitarian assistance around the world *in support of US foreign policy*.

Before American Aid

Traditional Education in Laos

The traditional cultural centre of Lao society was the Buddhist temple (*wat*). There was no 'mass education', but the monks were respected sources of learning. A rich oral tradition was the bearer of morals and culture. Most ethnic Lao boys spent several months or years as temple novices. Temple education was free and served all males, rich and poor. Literacy was highest among the aristocracy, a small corps of administrators, and urban merchants, many of whom were Chinese or Vietnamese.

French Education in Laos

The French colonial administration never invested much in education in Laos. The school system they established was intended to serve the small local elite, not the broad population. Instruction was in the French language, not Lao. Teachers were usually either low-level French colonial administrators assigned part-time to teach school or French-speaking Vietnamese teachers brought to Laos for the purpose. Most Lao children never went to school and never learned to read. Children of the elite who graduated from the *Lycée* could continue their studies either in Saigon or in France.

In 1951 a law was passed by the Royal Lao Government instituting compulsory, free, three-year primary education all children within a radius of one kilometre from a public school. In 1952 a complementary law was passed requiring the establishment of a primary school (provided sufficient funds were available) in any locality where the number of children was deemed adequate. Primary

schooling comprised six grades. The language of instruction was either Lao or French, depending on the availability of instructional materials and competence of teachers. In 1954, at the time of independence, there were 679 primary schools, but most operated only three grades. There were some 33,000 primary school students (Khamphao, 1996, p. 62). This probably represented a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of approximately 3 percent.

In 1959 only some 10 percent of the adult population of Laos were literate. There were some non-government schools, including 16 Catholic, 7 French, 3 Chinese, and 4 private schools. Only six of the twelve provinces had public secondary schools to 10th grade level (*collège*). Only Vientiane had a school up to grade 13 (*lycée*). There were also public secondary-level professional schools in Vientiane, for teacher training, medicine, and public administration. Two provinces had vocational schools with instruction in drafting, wood-working, metal-working, and auto mechanics (USAID PNABI128, 1959, p. 29 [34]).

US Aid to Indochina, 1951 - 1954

Total US aid to the Associated States of Indochina, Fiscal Years (FY) 1950/51-1953/54, is shown in Table 2. Programme aid represented about one-fourth of total aid. Commercial aid (mainly import support) made up nearly half of the total. Together, they represented more than three-quarters of the total aid package. This distribution reflects an application of the Truman Doctrine. The amount allocated to Laos was approximately 7 percent, which was roughly proportional to its share in the population of Indochina.

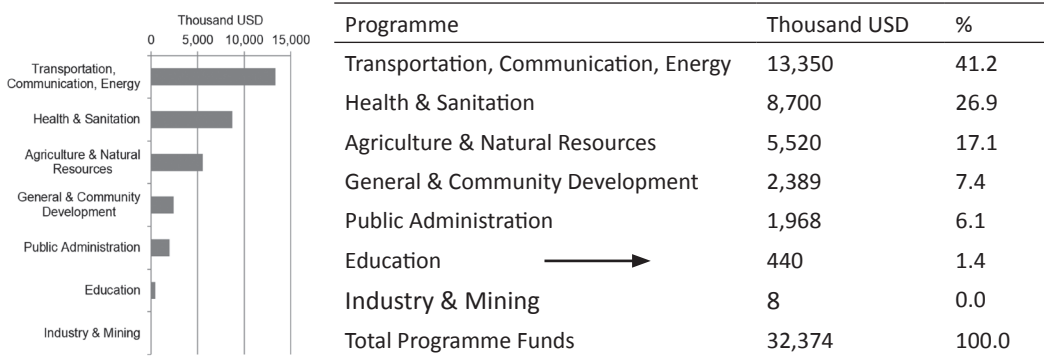
The bulk of the programme aid was allocated to transportation, communication, transportation, energy, sanitation, and health, as shown in Table 3. Education received less than 2 percent of programme aid, or less than 0.4 percent of total US aid.

Table 2: Total Aid, Associated States, FY 1950/51 – 1953/54 (Million US Dollars, USD)

Category	\$ Million	%	Country	\$ Million	%
Military Aid	30.1	24.2	Cambodia	7.1	21.9
Commercial Aid	62.1	49.8	Laos	2.2	6.8
Programme Aid	32.4	26.0	Vietnam	23.1	71.3
Total	124.6	100.0	Total	32.4	100.0

Source: PDACP819, 1955, p. 68 [80].

Table 3: Programme Aid, Associated States, FY 1950/51 – 1953/54 (Million USD)



Source: PDACP819, 1955, p. 69 [81].

The Education Programme in the three Associated States comprised six sub-programmes:

- a) Vocational education;
- b) Technical education;
- c) Professional education (*e.g.* teacher training, training for public works, and telecommunications);
- d) Adult education (Community Rural Education Centres);
- e) Construction of community schools, printing of textbooks; and
- f) School construction, repair, and reconstruction of schools damaged or destroyed by the war.

The economy of Indochina was mainly agricultural, and these countries needed to rapidly acquire the machinery and technologies to fight a mechanised war. Technical and vocational education projects included auto-mechanics, auto-electrical systems, and other technical fields of particular value for industrialisation. The programme included expanding and equipping existing facilities and construction of new facilities, including two in Laos. Professional education projects focused on teacher training, training for public works, and telecommunications (USAID PDACP819, 1955, p. 54-56 [65-67]).

The adult education programme was conducted only in Laos. By the end of FY 1954/55 plans were under way for opening 105 Community Rural Education Centres (CRECs), which villages would construct on a 'self-help' basis. Some 30 'basic education teachers' were trained and deployed in rural villages. Some 75 persons were trained as community education leaders. The CRECs later became the core of the basic education, health, and extension services to the rural population. For schools in the urban areas, science laboratory equipment, visual aids, and other instructional materials were provided. Thousands of books were provided for primary school children (USAID PDACP819, 1954, p. 57 [68]).

US Aid to Laos, 1955 – 1975

Timeline of Two Fateful Decades

November 1955: The Military Assistance Advisory Group for Vietnam (MAAG / Vietnam) is established, and the Vietnam War (called the American War by the Vietnamese) begins quietly.

February 1968, Vietnam: Vietnamese People's Army and the Viet Cong (National Liberation Front) launch the 'Tet Offensive'.

February 1968, USA: Student revolts and the anti-war movement intensify and spread loudly in the US and Europe.

January 1973: Paris Peace Accords are signed by all parties.

March 1973: Last US troops leave Vietnam, but fighting continues.

April 1975: Phnom Penh falls, Saigon falls, and the Vietnam War ends.

December 1975: Pathet Lao proclaim victory in Laos.

The Slow Start-up

The United States had a dual interest in stimulating long-term economic development in Laos (USAID PDACR504, 1965, 119 [134]):

- a) Resisting the communists and improving Lao institutions required a long-term perspective of progress; people needed to feel that their efforts would gradually result in a more modern nation and a better way of life;
- b) Supporting long-term development reflected credit on the United States. 'It shows the durability and seriousness of the U.S. commitment to Laos, and it shows that we have a more constructive purpose than merely fighting the enemy'; and
- c) The objectives were political and military in character, not economic. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the programmes was to be measured in terms of what was accomplished in the political and military areas, not in terms of the rate at which Laos approached economic self-sufficiency.

Laos was economically dependent on the United States and other international donors and was expected by the United States to remain so for an indefinite future. The aid dependence of Laos was not seen as a problem for the United States; on the contrary (USAID PDACR504, 1965, p. 120 [135], emphasis added):

Although there are idealistic Lao officials who would feel less anxious if they could see an early end to dependence on external aid, *continued Lao economic dependence gives the United States leverage it would otherwise not possess*. Economic progress in Laos is desirable to satisfy Lao aspirations and meet Lao needs for self-respect, and to demonstrate to others the positive side of our involvement in Laos. *However, this is not the time to sacrifice other objectives in favour of Lao self-sufficiency*.

Which other objectives? Whose objectives? The answer is clear. This was not about inter-cultural learning: it was not a job for the Peace Corps. This was about supporting American foreign policy goals, in particular the Cold War policy goals: it was a job for USAID. Thus while the Peace Corps operated in neighbouring Thailand beginning in 1962, it never operated in Laos.

The United States and the Viet Minh had a common understanding on one point, namely the 'single battlefield' concept: the conflicts in Laos and Vietnam were part of the same struggle, and the USAID programme was playing 'a particularly active role in resisting communist pressure'. It did things as a matter of course in Laos that would be impossible in most other countries (PDACR504, 1965, 180 [193]).

The ideal programme would maximise both political-military strength and economic growth simultaneously, but in the real world it is difficult to maximise two different things at the same time. Therefore preference was often given to programmes that gave large benefits in terms of domestic stability in Laos or impressions of US strength of purpose in the area, rather than to programmes that maximised growth rates. 'In no case should economic effectiveness be the sole criterion against which programmes are judged' (USAID PDACR504, 1965, p.120 [135]). This prioritisation was a clear application of the Eisenhower Doctrine.

From the beginning, military budget support was by far the largest post in the aid programme. Of the USD 56.8 million committed in FY 1957/58 and 1958/59 combined, 55 percent went to military budget support, while only 12 percent went to project assistance (USAID PNABI128, 1959, p. 69 [74]). Project assistance covered education, agriculture, industry and mining, transportation, health and sanitation, civil police administration, public administration, and community development. Education accounted for less than 12 percent of project assistance and less than 2 percent of total assistance. Transportation was by far the largest, accounting for nearly half of project assistance and almost 6 percent of the total aid programme (USAID PNABI128, 1959, p.69 [74]).

The US was not the only source of development assistance to Laos, but it was by far the largest. In 1958 while the US contributed USD 31.4 million, of which 63 percent was for military budget support, the next-largest contributor, France, provided USD 5.8 million, of which 41 percent was for military advisors and instructors. In 1958 Japan was preparing a multi-year infrastructure project for USD 2.8 million. The United Nations specialised agencies provided approximately USD 200,000, and the Colombo Plan provided assistance for approximately USD 50,000. Various non-governmental organisations also provided assistance, mainly for schools and hospitals or scholarships.

Total US economic assistance to Laos rose from under USD 40 million in 1955 to over USD 60 million in 1968. Total project assistance rose from 1.4 million (education USD 27 thousand) to just under USD 40 million (education USD 1.5 million), as shown in Figure 1. The big build-up began in 1962, following the establishment of USAID in November 1961. The big let-down began in 1968, following the *Tet* Offensive in Vietnam. Although education assistance was only a small part of the total it amounted to nearly USD 20 million, or approximately USD 1.0 million per year (USAID PNAAX021, 1976, pp. 332-333 [333-334]).

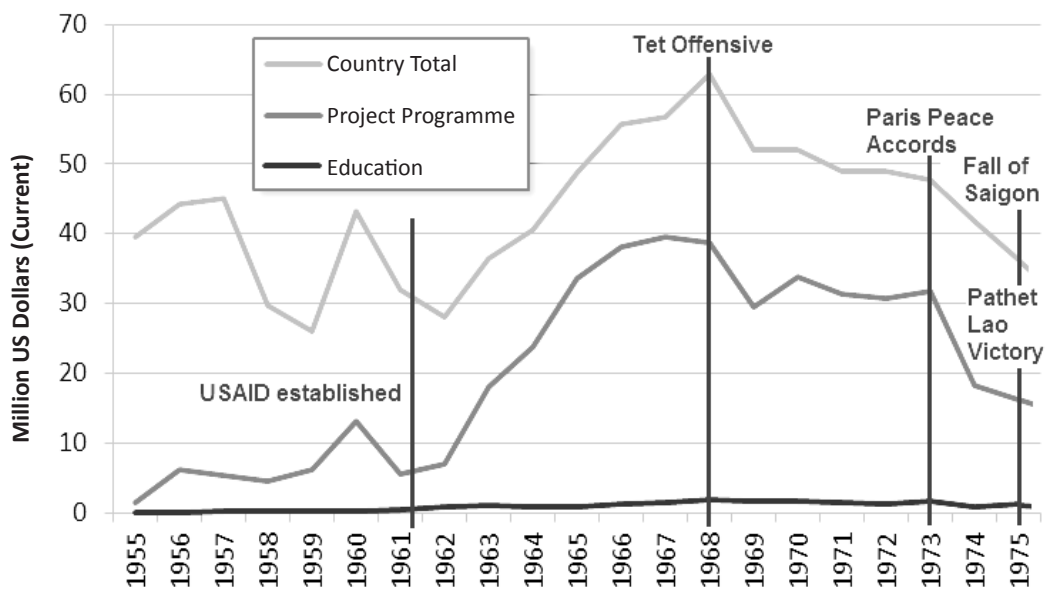


Figure 1: US Aid to Laos, 1955 – 1975 (Million USD)

The Big Build-up

The big build-up of education sector assistance began with the USOM Education Programme 1956-1961, the major part of which was for teacher training. Programme implementation in Laos began in 1956 with the building and equipping of a training facility at Dong Dok, some ten kilometres north of Vientiane, for teacher training and other training. This was part of a long-term development project for the construction and establishment of the National Education Centre and as a step toward creating opportunities for higher education in Laos. The education programme at this time was staffed to a large extent by International Voluntary Services (IVS), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) founded in 1953 by Christian pacifist churches in the US, although it operated on a non-sectarian basis and accepted volunteers regardless of religious beliefs. It placed American volunteers in development projects in developing countries, including Laos. In 1959 IVS personnel began serving mainly in the English Section of the Teacher Training College at Dong Dok and the Teacher Training School in Vientiane.

The USOM Education Programme 1956-1961 also included technician training and assistance for renovation of two technical schools, one in Vientiane and one in Savannakhet in the south. It also included development of Rural Education Centres. On a self-help basis, 155 Rural Education Centres were built, and USOM supported the cost of both teacher salaries and instructional materials.

Direct assistance to the Ministry of Education included improving school buildings, supplying instructional materials, revising and re-translating textbooks from French into Lao ('Laoization'), and training of teachers and school inspectors in the United States.

The Education Reform of 1962 stipulated the following: (i) Primary school should de-emphasise purely academic knowledge and stress what the child should know to live better and work for a better output in his community; (ii) Measures should be taken to promote establishment of rural schools built by villagers ('self-help'), with a teacher chosen or suggested by them; and (iii) Failure in the French language would not hinder admission to secondary school. Students lacking proficiency in French would be sent to a preparatory class to get intensive and practical training in the French language.

By 1965 the adult literacy rate was around 15 percent (up from 10 percent in 1959), and one-third of the school age population was enrolled in school (GER approximately 30 percent, up from

15 percent in 1959). An increasing number of children were enrolling in school, and the number of facilities was increasingly inadequate. Most schools were overcrowded and operated on two shifts. By 1965 Lao secondary schools were staffed by more than 200 French teachers and a handful of Lao teachers. It was unlikely that even the medium term goals of the 1962 Education Reform could be met with additional French teachers, but the RLG did not expect to complete the 'Laoization' process before the end of the 1970s (USAID PDACR504, 1965, p.209 [220]).

US support for primary education was creating a solid base for further advances, but the post-primary part of the education system was narrow and under French control. The narrowness of the school enrolment pyramid is shown in Figure 2 (USAID PDACP677, 1970, p.12 [12]).

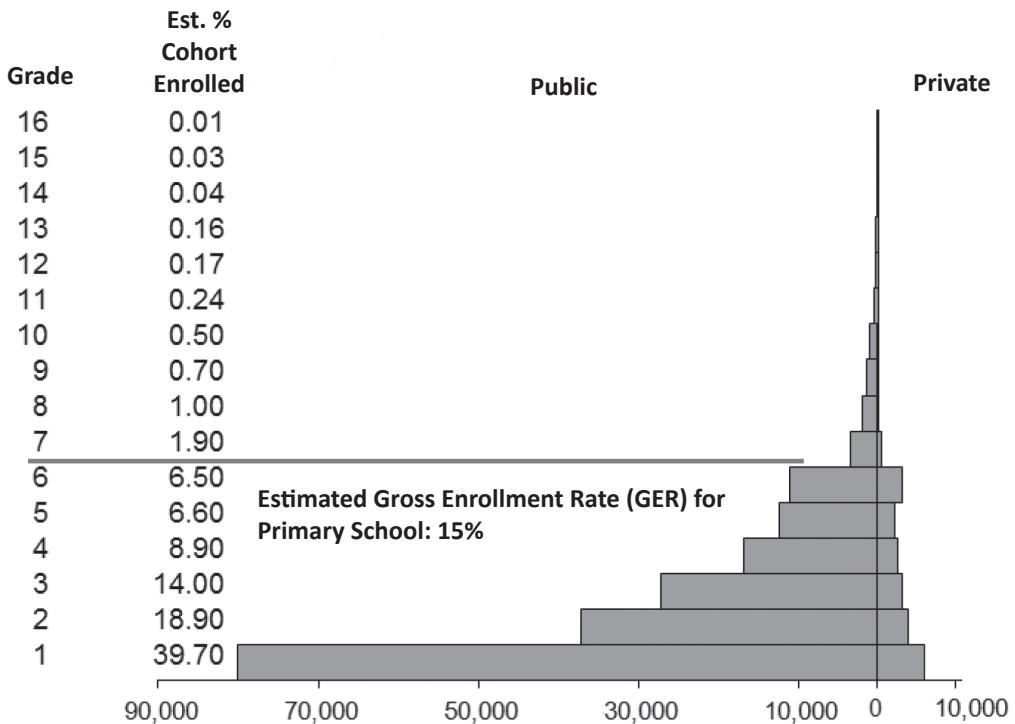


Figure 2: Enrolment Pyramid, School Year 1968/69

'Laoization' was an important part of the USAID Programme. Resistance to 'Laoization' came from several sources: (i) Lack of confidence among many Lao leaders in the possibility of developing an indigenous education system; (ii) Scepticism about relying on US educational methods, academic standards, and philosophy; (iii) The prominent role played by French advisers at all levels in the Lao education system; and (iv) French policy, which consciously oriented Laos toward France.

Finally, however, 'Laoization' won, and the US began to contribute to the development of secondary education. In 1964, US educational assistance was reorganized and expanded, and the secondary education project began in 1967 and continued until the end in 1975 (USAID PNAAX021, 1976, p.98 [90]).

Community Education

The community education programme aimed at reducing illiteracy, providing practical education for those who did not continue in school, and preparing students for further education. By 1973 the community education programme had constructed some 4,700 classrooms, mainly through self-help

schemes. This represented about 78 percent of the total. Curricula had been revised, and some 2.5 million textbooks had been printed and distributed. The national and provincial administrative structure had been developed, and teachers and administrators had been trained. Primary school enrolments doubled between 1962/63 and 1971/72 (USAID PNABI555, 1973, p.80-81 [86-87]). This corresponds to an average annual growth rate of 8.0 percent.

Secondary Education

The US was under pressure to provide the physical facilities in which French-style secondary education could continue, but the US could not support the elitist French system. In 1965 a solution was found: USAID could make a major contribution to US objectives by helping to make Lao educational institutions 'conform more closely to the country's economic and social needs. A bold program on the part of the United States could dramatically affect the manpower situation in Laos and have a profound impact on the social, economic, and political structure of the country' (USAID PDACR504, 1965, p.210 [221]). Without a modern secondary school system, Laos would fall further behind its neighbours and find it difficult to participate in any future regional development effort. The US, however, should not try to reproduce the American high school, which could be inappropriate in the Lao context (*ibid*). Thus was born the 'Fa Ngum High School', named after the putative founder of the Kingdom of Laos in the fourteenth century.

'The high schools we wish to develop in Laos should not be American counterparts of a *lycée*, but upward extensions of the primary school system that the US educational program has been successfully developing' (USAID PDACR504, 1965, p.210 [221]). These schools should be geared to the broader needs of the country rather than to those of a small, wealthy elite. To be fully effective these schools should be developed in the provincial centres throughout the country rather than in a single city or two.

Eight Fa Ngum high schools were to be built (five were completed by the termination of the USAID programme in 1975). The project would be completed in three years. Teaching in these schools was in the Lao language. Courses covered academic, agriculture, commercial, home economics, and industrial arts. Teachers received pre-service training at the USAID-supported College of Education at Dong Dok. In-service training in specialised fields was provided in Thailand, and training in teaching of English and school administration was provided in the US.

Teacher Education

The aim of the teacher education programme was to provide qualified teachers to staff Lao primary and secondary schools. At independence in 1954, there was one teacher training institution in Laos, with an enrolment of 106 students. Beginning in 1962, USAID assistance was broadened to include construction of teacher training institutions in provincial centres. By 1973, there were nine teacher training institutions around the country with a total enrolment of 4,076 students. In 1973 the College of Education granted B.A. degrees to the first teachers to complete university-level studies in Laos. By 1973 eight Teacher Training Schools provide two- and four-year training programmes for primary school teachers. Between 1958/59 and 1972/73, enrolment in teacher training institutions increased from 434 to 4,076 (USAID PNABI555, 1973, p.85 [91]). This corresponds to an average annual growth rate of over 14 percent.

Teacher training was an important target for 'Laoization'. Between 1962/63 and 1971/72, the proportion of Lao faculty at teacher training institutions increased from 17 percent to 77 percent, as seen in Figure 3 below (USAID PNABI555, 1973, p. 87 [93]).

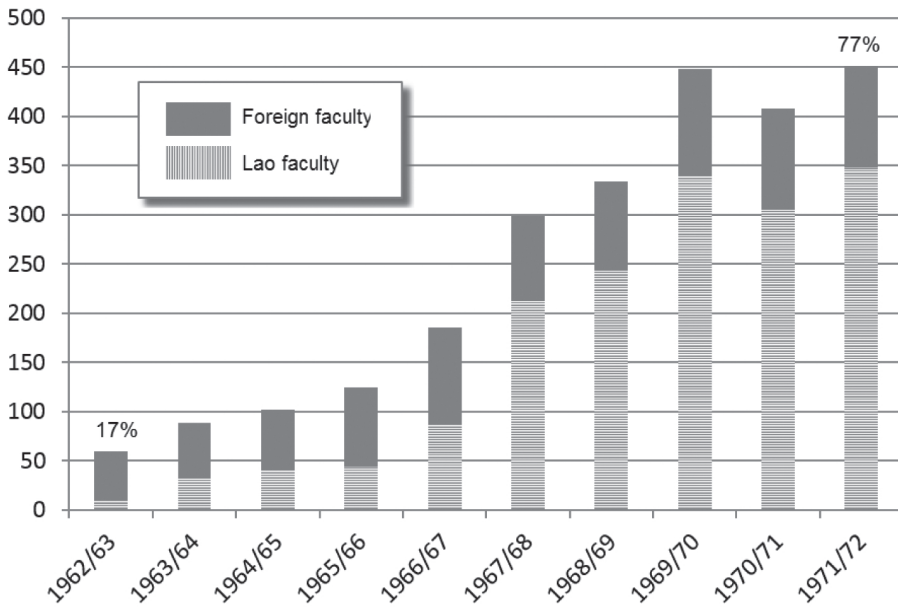


Figure 3: Lao Teacher Training Faculty, 1962/63 to 1971/72

In the Liberated Zone: A Lao Vision of Education for All

When Laos gained independence from France, there were only a few Lao teachers, there were virtually no printed instructional materials in the Lao language, and the illiteracy rate was estimated at 95 percent – the highest rate in all of Southeast Asia (Langer, 1971, p. 4 [6]; USAID PNABI556, 1971, p.84 [92]). The area controlled by the Pathet Lao under the terms of the Geneva Accord, widely referred to as the ‘Liberated Zone’, was even more educationally deprived than the rest of Laos. The upland and mountainous areas controlled by the Pathet Lao were also much less developed than the Mekong lowlands, which were controlled by the RLG.

Pathet Lao leadership placed high priority on education. Already in 1950 the Free Laos Front (*Neo Lao Issara*, a predecessor of the Pathet Lao) had established a resistance government in Huaphanh province, including a Ministry of Education, which focussed especially on primary education and adult literacy. The aim was the universal spread of at least basic literacy. Primary school comprised four grades – lower primary grades 1-3 and upper primary grade 4 (Whitaker et al., 1972, p.99). Village primary schools were built where possible, and short-term teacher training programmes were organised. In the late 1950s several schools with dormitories for secondary school students were built with a total capacity of some 1,000. Primary school textbooks were edited (Oudom, 1996, p.90-94).

Until 1968 the only prerequisite for teaching the first three grades was knowledge of written Lao, but later a four-month training course was instituted. Teachers of grade 4 were required to complete a one-year course. Teachers at secondary school had to complete a course of several years at Sam Neua city (Whitaker et al., 1972, p. 99). Most of the instruction of teachers was delivered as in-service training.

The Lao script and spelling were simplified as part of a language reform led by Phoumi Vongvichit with his *Lao Grammar* published in Sam Neua in 1967. Phoumi later became the first Minister of Education, Sports, and Religious Affairs of the newly established Lao PDR. The language reform reflected a strict interpretation of the 1949 Royal Ordinance establishing Lao pronunciation,

not etymology, as the basis for correct spelling (Enfield, 1999, p. 269; Enfield, 2007). Only Arabic numerals were used (Whitaker et al., 1972, p. 100). This became the basis of the grammar and script used in Laos today.

In Xiengkhuang province in the early 1970s three-grade primary schools could be found in almost every village, but a primary school with grade 4 could only be found near Xiengkhuang city. Students began schooling at age 6 or 7. They studied four hours per day. Because of the US bombing, school began in the early morning and finished at 9:00 o'clock. Primary school textbooks were distributed free, but notebooks and pencils had to be purchased. Graduation from grade 4 usually took more than four years, but it qualified the student for enrolment in secondary school (Whitaker et al., 1972, p. 99).³

All textbooks beyond grade 3 were direct translation of Vietnamese schoolbooks after 1966/67 when they replace the RLG textbooks. Textbooks in Hmong script were also used after 1967, but the Hmong students were required to learn Lao first. There were four secondary boarding schools providing a two-year programme. A two-year provincial college established in 1968 served students from all over the Liberated Zone (Whitaker et al., 1972, p. 99).

Education had a dual mission, namely to convey knowledge and skills and to foment a revolutionary spirit. According to one observer, however, there was no doubt about the revolutionary objectives and its adherence to Marxist-Leninist theory, but it appeared that 'for the moment [in 1971] the emphasis was on modernising rather than revolutionising Lao society, on uniting the ethnically diverse population in their sector rather than on distilling (*sic*) the purest revolutionary spirit' (Langer, 1971, p.10).

In the Liberated Zone a new image of education and society emerged. Because of the US bombing, 'To hide during the day, and to work at night was the only possibility of surviving. ... A woman was simultaneously a worker, a member of the militia, a vegetable farmer, and a student or teacher attending classes, in conformity with the motto, 'study well and teach well' (Mayoury, 1995, p.99). In the Pathet Lao education system the schedule was divided between attending courses in the morning, doing productive work (*e.g.*, fetching water and wood, construction, repair and maintenance of the school) in the afternoon, and political meeting in the evenings. 'The results were evident in the spectacular breakthroughs in the cultural, ideological and professional fields. Old men and women and all children went to school. Books were free' (*ibid*).

The international assistance that the Pathet Lao was able to receive for development of the education system (mainly Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and China) was minute compared with the support the RLG received. American bombing of the Liberated Zone began in 1964, and the air raids, especially in the late 1960s, severely disrupted all normal activity in the Liberated Zone. Because of these air raids schooling and many other normal daily activities took place in caves or were suspended. Reference to 'schools' in the Liberated Zone should therefore not be associated with the idea of solid school buildings, blackboards, and instructional materials (Langer, 1971, p.4-5[6-7]).

The Big Letdown

Timeline of Two Fateful Years

September 1973: In the Third Coalition Government the Communists have equal representation with the Right.

April 1974: The Provisional Government of National Union (PGNU) is established.

August 1974: The Lao Patriotic Front (*Neo Lao Hak Sat*) formally declares that all of Laos has been 'liberated'.

April 1975: Fall of Phnom Penh (April 12), fall of Saigon (April 30), and the Vietnam War ends; King Savang Vatthana is pressured into dissolving the National Assembly.

May 1975: Anti-American demonstrations break out throughout the country, and USAID headquarters are occupied.

December 2, 1975: The Pathet Lao announce abolition of the monarchy, and King Savang Vatthana abdicates.

December 3, 1975: People's Republic is proclaimed.

Facing the New Reality

In June and early July 1974, the US Ambassador and the USAID Director asked the Lao Patriotic Front (LPF) Foreign Minister and the LPF Minister of Economy and Planning of the new Provisional Government of National Union (PGNU) if they desired changes in the content or administration of the USAID programme. The response was that the new government needed time to organise itself, establish its own mode of operation, and set its priorities. Until then the PGNU wished the USAID Mission to continue its current programmes and operations (USAID PNAAX021, 1976, p.7 [8]).

During the late summer and fall of 1974 the PGNU stated that it wished to assume more leadership and management responsibilities for programmes assisted by international donors. The Embassy and USAID Mission viewed the statement as entirely reasonable and, indeed, desirable for a new government whose task was to unify the country and move it forward in peaceful social and economic development. In the last days of the PGNU, it was announced that the USAID Mission was too large, too influential throughout the countryside, and operated too independently of the government (USAID PNAAX021, 1976, p.7-8 [8-9]).

Public protests added to these criticism the charge that the USAID Mission was an umbrella for all US Government activities in Laos, including intelligence gathering. Anti-American demonstrations broke out across the country. In May 1975, demonstrators occupied the USAID headquarters in Vientiane and Luang Prabang, demanded an end to the USAID activities, and placed American staff under house arrest. An agreement was signed between the PGNU and the American *Chargé d’Affaires* that the USAID Mission would be terminated by June 30, 1975. American personnel began leaving immediately (Stuart-Fox 1997, p.161; Evans, 2002, p.173), and termination was completed on June 26 when the Acting USAID Director departed Vientiane (USAID PNAAX021, 1976, p.10 [11]).

Looking Back: The Politics of USAID to Laos, 1955-1975

The ‘Termination Report’ clarified the US position from the beginning (USAID PNAAX021, 1976, p.10-11 [11-12]):

US economic assistance to Laos, from its inception in 1954, was provided and justified for political purposes. It was not designed as a programme to assist Laos in long-range social and economic development. It did, nevertheless, provide basic economic assets that could in the future be exploited through planned development. ... [It] was successful in meeting the major tasks it was given in support of US policy toward Laos: maintenance of reasonable economic stability, humanitarian succour for the refugees created by the war, and maintenance of minimum governmental services within the RLG controlled portion of Laos.

A Final Audit, Embedded in Time and Space

An Enduring Legacy of Value

Despite the turn of political events, USAID engagement in the education sector in Laos, over more than twenty years, left an enduring legacy of value. Perhaps the most significant contribution was support for the ‘Laoization’ of education, supporting a system of education for all, and breaking with the French elitist education culture. Ironically the American contribution in that respect was better aligned with the education policy of the Pathet Lao in the Liberated Zone than with that of the Royal Lao Government.

This ‘Laoization’ showed itself throughout the education system: (i) Community education; (ii) Primary education; (iii) Fa Ngum high schools; (iv) Teacher education; (v) Technical and vocational education and training; and (vi) The National Education Centre, which evolved into the National University of Laos (NUOL) in 1996.

Epilogue

The United States never interrupted diplomatic relations with Laos, as it did with Cambodia and Vietnam. The United States maintained an embassy, run by a *Chargé d’Affaires* and a small staff from August 1975 until August 1992 when the *Chargé d’Affaires ad interim* was upgraded to Ambassador, and full diplomatic relations were restored. Indeed the Ambassador appointed in 1996 had served as a teacher in the USAID education programme. In 1990 the United States financed a six-year, 8.7 million USD development project (linked to an accord on anti-drug cooperation), which included road construction, irrigation dams, communication links, and extending agricultural, public health, and educational services. In January 2011, USAID returned to Laos after a 35 year absence. Today it is working mainly in the field of health, environmental protection and conservation, and economic development, the latter in support of World Trade Organization accession.

Notes

¹ The ‘Pentagon Papers’, officially titled *United States – Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967: A Study Prepared by the Department of Defense*, and classified ‘Top Secret – Sensitive’, comprised some 3,000 pages of historical analysis and 4,000 pages of original government documents in 47 volumes. Parts were leaked and published in the *New York Times* beginning in June 13, 1971. On June 29, 1971 Senator Mike Gravel inserted 4,100 pages into the Congressional Record, and the five-volume ‘Gravel Edition’ was published in 1971. The full report was declassified and released to the public in June 2011. All Pentagon Paper files were accessed March 10, 2012. The complete unredacted report can be accessed from the US National Archives at: <http://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers/>

² The term ‘Pathet Lao’ means literally ‘Land of the Lao [people]’. Since the early 1950s it has been widely used in Western literature to denote the Lao revolutionary movement as a whole, including the military forces (Lao People’s Liberation Army, LPLA), the mass organisation (Lao Patriotic Front, LPF), and the political organisation (Lao People’s Revolutionary Party, LPRP). For convenience we use the term in this broad, widespread meaning even though some would argue that in a strict sense such usage is incorrect.

³ For the experiences and reactions of one of the IVS volunteer to the bombing, see Haney (1997).

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BOOK REVIEW

Education in East Asia

by Pei-tseng Jenny Hsieh (2013), 336 pp. ISBN: 978-144-1140-09-8
London: Bloomsbury.

This is the third book in the series *Education around the World*, a collection of volumes which is ultimately designed to look at education in virtually every territory of the world. Overall, the series is edited and guided by Colin Brock who, in the first book in the series *A Comparative Introduction*, clearly sets the style for what is a group of regional studies - of which the book reviewed here is one. The reader is advised to read the specific studies in the context of the original *Introduction*, which helpfully describes the relationship between international and comparative education and provides a context for reading the subsequent books in the series.

The publication of this book is timely. The region within which the countries exist has, of course, experienced rapid economic development in recent times with the consequent influences on the provision of education in both national and international systems of school and higher education. The growing impact of such centres of excellence in the study of comparative and international education as the University of Hong Kong, several universities in Singapore, China, Taiwan and Japan, together with the relatively newly-created Centre for Research in International and Comparative Education (CRICE) at the University of Malaya, underscores the relevance of such publications as this one, on a regional basis.

The countries represented in the book are China (with Hong Kong), Macao, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan, territories which, perhaps surprisingly, share more significant features of cultural and linguistic homogeneity than may at first seem likely to be the case, with strong Confucianist undertones. Each of the chapter authors has addressed, at some level, the history and development of the education system for the individual national systems represented, together with an analysis of current trends and anticipated futures. That in itself provides a useful source of information for anyone interested in learning more about the general features of the systems of education in this region of the world. But it is in the detail provided by the writers that the reader will also be able to identify the subtle diversities which characterize the unique features of each of the education systems described and the valuable insights gained through the experience of those contributing. It will therefore form a valuable reference source for current developers and researchers.

One of the characteristics normally associated with books of this kind, which set out to present current thinking in the countries involved, is the problem of quoted statistics (employed to justify trends) becoming rapidly out of date. In a region which is growing so rapidly in social, economic and cultural terms that is particularly apposite. A particularly helpful feature in this volume is the provision of extensive references for further reading, many of which source websites which can be accessed by readers for up-to-date information; this will be a boon for researchers especially, as the current emphasis on 'big data' promotes increasing importance in global comparison and competitive studies. The compilation of what is a series of national educational vignettes requires skillful editorial management and this has been successfully accomplished without in any way limiting the individual style and content that each writer has brought to their contribution.

Issues which are explored by many, if not all, contributors include the relationship between compulsory schooling and higher education, the legacies of previous colonial powers, participation rates in schooling, admission and selection for higher education, aspects of vocational training and career preparation in relation to general academic education, language policies, parental expectations, the role of government in its determination of national education, assumptions concerning the assessment of student achievement within such highly competitive environments

arising from the expectations of parents and teachers alike, together with the relationship between national curricula and the prevailing socio-economic forces in the countries described. There is, therefore, a rich offering for readers to reflect upon, especially for those who are operating in largely Western-oriented contexts, where familiar assumptions concerning, for example, styles of learning and teaching will be challenged by the description of the prevailing approaches in the countries included.

Although not a major stated objective of this book, the locating of the valuable information and insights to be gained from these descriptions and analyses of the countries within the framework of the current internationalisation and globalization debate across education more widely, could further have extended the appeal of the book. That slight reservation does not in any way detract from this contribution to the literature from a part of the world that will certainly prove to be of interest and value to all those seeking to understand the rapid developments that are taking place in a region of burgeoning change.

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