Integrative Paper

Developing Countries and Countries in Transition: Gender Inequity, Corruption, Inadequate Conditions, and Suggested Implementation for Effective Change in Education

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Abstract

This paper highlights the social significance of education in developing countries and countries in transition by specifically addressing pronounced problems, such as gender inequity in schools, inevitable educational corruption, and inadequate conditions for teachers and students. In addition, I have included a review, critique, and summary of related theories and research in the present or recent educational systems of select cultures. This paper also presents an outline of the literature covered in three courses, which significantly influenced my learning and proposed practice.

To clarify the difference between the terms “developing countries” and “countries in transition”, I have defined these terms. According to the GlobalEDGE (2009), developing countries are “Countries that are in the process of becoming industrialized. Average national income must be below $9,265 for a country to be classified as a developing country”. According to Wikipedia (2009), countries in transition are “The countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union... emerging from a socialist-type command economy towards a market-based economy”. However, for the purpose of this integrative paper I have used the term “underdeveloped countries” which defines both developing countries and countries in transition.

Statement of the Problem

Education in underdeveloped countries has attracted significant attention in recent years from educational policy makers throughout the world, as it is considered a key social factor for understanding social equity among the people of a given culture. Educational well-being serves as a foundational cornerstone for cultural development and a main route to economic prosperity.

Even though researchers and practitioners have made a tremendous contribution to the educational policies of underdeveloped countries, a lot of foundational work still has to be done. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) statistics (2008) state
that currently 121 million children, including 65 million girls, are not enrolled in schools, despite the right of all children to have equal opportunities to study regardless of their sex, socio-economic status, and religion (Federal Ministry for Economic cooperation and Development, 2008). As Chimombo (2005) points out, “there are far too many children who do not have a chance to go to school, and far too few who complete the bare minimum of schooling needed to become permanently literate and numerate” (p. 1).

Lack of education has had a dramatically negative impact in these countries as their children are their future. Harbison and Hanushek (1992) state that a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people, that is unable to utilize them effectively in the national economy, will be unable to develop anything else. Therefore, a commitment to solving educational problems in underdeveloped countries is an extremely important prerequisite for professional research and project implementation.

This paper includes references to scholarly agreements and disagreements on gender inequity in education, corruption, and inadequate conditions for teachers and students in underdeveloped countries and personal experience of teaching in an underdeveloped country. It can be useful for current and potential researchers, practitioners, and policy makers interested in development in the field of educational international level.

Review of Related Literature

In this literature review, first consideration is given to the socioeconomic texture in developing countries and countries in transition. Economic profiles of these countries effectively serve as the contextual link to inadequate education. I draw together the results from several papers which primarily discuss educational gender inequity, corruption in the educational sector, and lack of adequate conditions for both teachers and students.
Educational Gender Inequity

Economic factors contributing to educational gender inequity in developing countries and countries in transition. Even though the purpose of education is to empower all individuals, male and female, with necessary tools to accomplish their goals and live successfully in our changing world, gender inequality in education is still one of the most significant factors negatively affecting all members of developing societies (King & Hill, 1995).

Females living in underdeveloped countries are unable to achieve personal goals because their society and system put them at a disadvantage by placing their needs and interests below those of males. Educational gender inequity is particularly prevalent in Muslim countries, such as Bangladesh, the Middle East, India, Pakistan, and North Africa, where socioeconomic context is inextricably bound with predominant religious principles. UN statistics show that, in these countries, of the 130 million six to eleven-year-old children not in school, 60 percent of those children are girls (UN Statistics Division, 2008).

According to King and Hill (1995), in developing cultures that expressly favor men as providers, boys in families are treated differently than girls because boys are considered the main economic supporters in the future. Because girls belong to other families after getting married and cannot support their parents, parents are generally not willing to contribute to their daughters’ education. This is especially true when economic conditions ensure that the family does not have enough financial resources to cover schooling of all its children.

Eloundou-Enyegue and Stokes (2004) examine associations between teenage fertility and female educational attainment using demographic and health survey data from 38 countries. They find that besides the pregnancy-related and culturally-related issues of female drop out rates in school,
there is a significant economic factor. Due to adverse economic conditions, families favor boys over girls because families expect better economic returns from boys.

Religious factors and the economic context. Daun (2000) points out that both economic and religious factors impact on gender inequality in similar ways. However, religious factors are sometimes stronger than economic ones. He compares Christian countries with Islamic countries and concludes that there is a lower female school enrollment rate in Islamic countries because of specific beliefs.

Moheyuddin (2005) supports the same point of view. In his article he refers to Dollar and Gatti (1999) who find that Protestant religions that support civil liberties also support girls’ education; Islamic and Hindu religions do not. There are positive coefficients of Shinto and Latin American variables as well. The Latin American variable is significant as a regional indicator only. Moheyuddin concludes that gender inequality in education reflects both religious and regional preferences.

All these findings point to the fact that the relationship between economic and religious factors certainly varies from region to region. Research findings are widely diverse, generally accountable in the core beliefs, which have been ingrained by religious conviction or by unique conditions of experience. Shultz (1993) demonstrates that there are isolated instances where one country may radically confute the trends of its region. For instance, he discovered that in Cote d’Ivoire, West Africa, an isolated culture in which living conditions are historically unique to the area, the projected economic return on girls’ education was 28.7% compared to 17% of male return, evidence of a pro-female cultural value that is contrary to other cultures on the West African region.

Jah (2006) points out in her study that regional and contextual differences are one of the main reasons why international communities are not sufficiently successful in reducing educational inequality in underdeveloped countries, despite their greatest efforts.
Relationship of fertility and mortality to gender inequity and economic development. The interaction between economy and gender roles is very complex (see Figure 1). Klasen (1999) finds that gender gaps in education prevent economic development in a country both directly and indirectly. They do so directly through a negative impact on investment and population growth, and indirectly through the distortion of incentives, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Klasen (1999) also notes, “The analysis shows that gender inequality in education prevents progress in reducing fertility and child mortality rates, thereby compromising progress in well-being in developing countries” (p. 2).

Dwyer and Bruce (1993) note that money earned by women is usually allocated to attain a better life for their children. They also refer to the study conducted in Kerala, India which found that the nutritional well-being of children correlated positively with the size of their mother’s income.

Additionally, Thomas (1990) points out that women who earn money have more rights in their families in decision how to spend that money. When women earn money, they allocate a greater amount of money to child health. According to Thomas, the impact on child survival is 20 times greater when the mother is responsible for family income.

Furthermore, Dollar and Gatti (1999) examine the links between educational gender inequality and economic development. They attempt to explain five-year growth intervals and control for endogeneity between education and development. They find that gender equality and economic development are mutually beneficial to the quality of life. In addition, improved female education contributes to national income; higher national income leads to more gender equality in education, as well as in other spheres.
Lloyd (2005) also notes that by providing opportunities for education and training, and by encouraging a delay in marriage and childbearing, young women in underdeveloped countries are enabled to discover and develop their full potential as individuals.

Just as Lloyd (2005) finds a positive impact of education, King and Hill (1993) make an important conclusion from the analyses of data taken from various countries: when fertility decreases and life expectancy and quality of life increase, not only do families benefit, but communities benefit as well. The results demonstrate that when a country does not support female education, it imposes a considerable cost on its development since it suffers from slow economical growth and reduced income.

Corruption

The negative effect of corruption. Hallak and Poisson (2002) define corruption as, “The systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services” (p.16).

The negative effect of corruption on the economic and social development of countries is relative to the accepted vision of a nation’s future. Nathaniel Leff (1964) noted that corruption is “An extralegal institution used by individuals or groups to gain influence over the actions of the bureaucracy. As such, the existence of corruption per se indicates that these groups participate in the decision-making process to a greater extent than would otherwise be the case” (p.8). His opinion is that, in underdeveloped countries, corruption is an essential mechanism to influence policy choices and promote growth, because business groups contribute to economic growth more than the government does.

Klitgaard (1988) argues that corruption as an essential mechanism in a society is “Referred to the benefits from specific corrupt acts, not from systematic corruption pervading many or most
decisions” (p. 33). Even though corruption may be beneficial in a few particular cases, its cumulative effect is adverse to national development.

Cheryl and Kaufmann (1998) discuss why corruption is more widespread in underdeveloped countries than in developed ones. They point out that conditions in developing countries and countries in transition are ripe for corruption. For example, because of the lack of an economic stability, the motivation for people to acquire money by any means is very strong.

*Reasons for corruption.* Hallak and Poisson (2006) reveal some important reasons why there is educational corruption in underdeveloped countries; one of which is low salary brackets for teachers and public officials. In developing countries and countries in transition, salaries of people working in education are very low in comparison with per capita income. Therefore, they often either take bribes, disregarding professional honesty, or leave their positions because they cannot survive on their salary alone (Hallak and Poisson, 2002).

According to the Anti-Corruption Resource Center (2008), the importance of adequate salaries in combating corruption should not be underestimated. The fact that sufficient payment contributes to honest civil service has been widely recognized. The academic discussions on the importance of salaries to eradicate corruption in education revealed that poorly paid teachers and public officials may find it more attractive to accept bribes than educators and officials who receive a fair salary. It was also found that low salaries in public service could attract only incompetent or even dishonest applicants.

Miralidharan and Sundararaman (2006) believe that salary is a great incentive, which they illustrate with the following example: the Indian state Andhra Pradesh decided to provide additional payments of 3 per cent of their annual pay to teachers of rural schools based on the average improvement of their students' test scores. This was done to see how it might improve student
achievement. The results showed that the teachers were more encouraged to work and, consequently, their students performed significantly better on tests than they did before. Moreover, the performance pay “might not only increase effort among existing teachers, but systematically draw more effective teachers into the profession over time” (Miralidharan & Sundararaman, 2006, p.4). However, Daniel Kaufmann and his colleagues at the World Bank Institute (1997) argue against the importance of salaries to combat corruption. They believe that more attention has to be given to external variables, such as public participation and transparency.

When the education budgets lose transparency, it generates corruption. According to the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (2008), “Transparency means clearness, honesty, and openness. Transparency is the principle that those affected by administrative decision should be informed, and the duty of civil servants, managers, and trustees to act visibly, predictably, and understandably”. Unfortunately, stakeholders (students, parents, local communities) in developing countries often do not have access to information regarding how resources are spent. Therefore, transparency is considered an essential key to increasing the democratic control of the budget flow.

Lack of transparency is a major reason why donors do not contribute to education: they do not trust the management of a country’s financial system. As a result, a potentially significant amount of money fails to appear in the education budget of many countries (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 2008).

The Civil Society Organization notes that public participation is one of the most important ways to solve this issue. Governments use public resources to finance education programs; therefore, it is important for the public to participate in the process of deciding how those resources will be used (The Commonwealth Education Fund, 2008).
Consequences of corruption. Corruption leads to significant deterioration of education. One of the most serious consequences of corruption is propagation of a culture of corruption among the younger generation. It contributes to a decrease of quality of education and increase of social inequity. Young people may think that bribery is an acceptable way to obtain a career: in other words, they do not need to put forth effort or work hard to achieve something. This effect is that corruption impedes the main educational aims, such as fairness, equity, and social justice (Hallak and Poisson, 2006).

Rumyantseva (2005) points out misallocation of talents as one of the most negative results of corruption. She gives examples of discrimination in Russia and Ukraine where employers of educational institutions accept only graduates from certain universities even though policy indicates that positions have to be open for everyone. This suggests that graduates from less preferred universities who are not given equitable opportunities for employment may resort to bribery in order to be accepted.

Paulo Mauro (1998) notes that corruption has very negative effects on private investment and economic growth. His research shows that “A country that improves its standing on the corruption index from, say, 6 to 8 (0 being the most corrupt, 10 the least) will experience a 4 percentage point increase in its investment rate and a 0.5 percentage point increase in its annual per capita GDP growth rate” (p. 12). Furthermore, cross-country analysis shows that corrupt governments spend much less on education and health.

These findings suggest that adequate salaries, transparency, and accountability, are the crucial principles in the eradication of corruption. If all these principles are applied by governments of underdeveloped countries, the chances for corruption will be significantly reduced.

Inadequate Conditions for Teachers and Students
Another reason for the poor quality of education in underdeveloped countries is inadequate conditions for teachers. The most widespread problems at schools are overcrowded classes, teacher absenteeism, and lack of material resources and adequate physical facilities (Das, 2005).

Overcrowded classes. According to the Survey of Employment Conditions (1991), the population continues to grow; a result of the high birth rate in underdeveloped countries. The growth of population in developing countries significantly increased from 1970 to 1985, especially in Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. Consequently, the number of children at school also increased, especially at the primary level. However, national education budgets do not have enough financial resources to cover rapid increases in school enrollment. Teacher training colleges also cannot keep up with the demand to prepare more specialists for schools. Therefore, teachers in underdeveloped countries have to work with extremely overcrowded classes. Consequently, a lot of teachers have left their professions for other careers where conditions and financial returns are much better.

Employment of unqualified teachers as a result of teacher shortages is a common practice. According to Harbison and Hanushek (1992), in the Northeast part of Brazil in the early 1980s, 60 percent of primary school teachers had not completed their education. The reason unqualified teachers were hired was because no qualified teachers available. In other countries, the situation is even worse. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for instance, students who were older and more advanced were involved in teaching younger students (The Survey of Employment Conditions, 1991).

Teacher absenteeism. Weak incentives also contribute to teacher absenteeism. Chaudhury et al. (2006) report that when the research was being conducted at primary schools in six developing countries (Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru, and Uganda), about 19 percent of teachers (in average) were absent from school without reason (see Figure 2). Moreover, teachers who were at their school were actually found not to be teaching their students.
One of the most significant problems caused by teacher absenteeism is that it prevents progress in students’ learning. For instance, the study conducted in India showed that a ten percent increase in teacher absence is associated with a 1.8 percent lower student attendance rate (Kremer et al., 2005). Also Das et al. (2005) point out that the study in Zimbabwe showed that a five percent increase in teachers’ absence reduced students’ learning by four to eight percent of average gains in English and Mathematics. Conversely, Duflo and Hanna (2005) note that teacher absence reduced from 36 to 18 percent led to a 0.17 standard deviation improvement in student test scores.

Professional promotion and disciplinary actions are considered to be very strong incentives. However, few teachers in developing countries and countries of transition can get promoted because they lack the necessary qualifications. In addition, disciplinary actions are applied very rarely because schools in developing countries, especially in rural areas, often lack professional staff. According to Chaudhury (2006), in spite of a 25 percent teacher-absence rate in India, only one head teacher in the sample of almost 3,000 government schools was fired for excessive absenteeism. The form of sanctions used in India is transferring teachers to another (less desirable) location, but less than 1 percent of teachers were sanctioned in that way.

Alca’zar et al. (2005) argue that other motivations, such as concern for the regard of peers or professional pride, can be much more productive in effecting teachers’ attendance, rather than being disciplined. They illustrate this opinion with an example: In Peru, an average of 89 percent of teachers work every day, even though rewards or punishments are not applied. They give the highest priority to professional dignity.

Additionally, teacher absenteeism has a catastrophic effect on the financial sector. Patrinos and Kagia (2007) suggest that teacher absenteeism causes greater financial losses in underdeveloped countries. For example, they range from $16 million a year in Ecuador to $2 billion a year in India.
According to the World Bank research (2006), governments of developing countries spend 80 to 90 percent of their education budgets on teachers, and they do not get the most basic of returns – getting teachers to work. Thus, teacher absenteeism has a direct negative effect on students’ achievement as well as the financial situation in a country.

_Lack of resources._ Lack of books and physical facilities at schools is a significant negative factor that affect the quality of education. Lockheed & Verspoor (1991) report that the availability of textbooks and other instructional materials has a great positive effect on student achievement in developing countries. However, the majority of schools in underdeveloped countries do not have funds for buying textbooks for students. Thus, students attend classes without textbooks, which can significantly reduce their motivation to study, as well as the quality of their studying process. Some teachers try to solve this problem by preparing handouts for their students, but not all of them are able to do so since it is time-consuming and expensive.

Vulliamy (1987) points out that this lack of textbooks in schools of third-world countries depresses teachers and impedes effective teaching and learning. Hallak (1990) also notes that “Classrooms deprived of textbooks promote little in the way of reading skills, and are obliged to content themselves with rote learning, recitation, copying from blackboards and taking lecture notes” (p. 220).

Several research projects have proved that students do better when textbooks are available to them. For instance, Heyneman et al. (1984) evaluated a program in Philippines that provided textbooks to students who previously had not have them. According to the results of the research, the program reduced the ratio of pupils per book per subject from an average of 10:1 to 2:1.

While textbooks are necessary for effective teaching and learning processes, the importance of physical facilities is debatable. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) note that even though buildings,
furniture, and equipment are important and accounted for 30% of aid for primary education in the period of 1981-86, there is very little evidence that school facilities make a significant contribution to education in third-world countries. They also note that priorities differ among developing countries: Some countries need more textbooks for their schools, while others need more physical facilities. For instance, Mwamwenda & Mwamwenda (1987) found that availability of facilities produces better student performance on examinations in Botswana. They argue that this research supports the view that school facilities are extremely important for students’ achievement. Urwick & Junaidu (1991) go even further: They propose that physical facilities at schools are crucial. They conducted a qualitative study in Nigerian primary schools and found multiple links between the availability of school facilities and a number of educational process variables. First, they found that four aspects of teaching (the degree to which methods are pupil-centered, the method of organizing activities, the communication used during lessons, and the frequency of assignments and homework) were strongly affected by the provision of both textbooks and physical facilities. Second, pupil attentiveness, along with their ability to develop reading and writing skills, were affected by many aspects of the school facilities, such as water supply, toilets, classroom maintenance, space, and furniture availability. And third, effects were noted for 3 school variables: effectiveness of school curriculum, variety of extracurricular activities, and teacher morale.

Thus, availability of textbooks and physical facilities is very important for students’ performance. Even though researches argue whether physical facilities directly effect students’ achievement, their practical usefulness can not be denied. Physical facilities create a favorable atmosphere for successful teaching and learning and increase teachers’ and students’ motivation and interests.

Three Courses That Influenced My Learning and Practice
Using Research in Educational Leadership and Policy Making (ELP 7960)

One of the classes that contributed significantly to my learning and practice was a doctoral seminar entitled, “Using Research in Educational Leadership and Policy Making”. The course helped me understand what educational research is, what may improve or impede utilization of research, and who the players are in the educational policy arena. I also had an opportunity to learn more about determining policy issues and analyzing them. I learned about research designs, findings, and recommendations of research used to find solutions for educational policy issues. Moreover, I was taught how research may be used to raise awareness with respect to policy issues and help to create a positive policy change, which is very important to me as a future practitioner.

Throughout the course, I worked on the selected educational policy issue: “Educational Gender Inequity in Underdeveloped Countries”. I worked on the literature review, which included scholarly agreements and disagreements on this topic. The familiarity with the topic and knowledge of how to analyze the existing literature are crucial to me, since the educational gender gaps in underdeveloped countries is one of the problems included in the current integrative paper.

I have expanded the topic on educational inequity in developing countries in the current integrative paper. However, I used the major articles about the detrimental impact of gender inequity in education on economic development, fertility, and mortality from that course.

Program Development in Higher Education (ELP 6540)

The role of researchers, policy makers, and practitioners in the improvement of education and their collaboration of those professionals is extremely significant. In my future professional practice, I intend to apply educational policies to practice. Therefore, the course Program Development tremendously affected my development as a practitioner. I learned how to develop actual
program proposals based on theory, assessment, and evaluation of needs, and to implement various stages of those programs.

Reading about the major principles of successful program development, which can be applicable in student affairs practices as well as other public and non-profit organizations, was very valuable. For example, the article “An Effective Strategic Planning Approach” by Bryson (2004) described a strategic management process (Ten-step Strategy Change Circle), connecting planning and implementation. The ten-step process includes negotiating agreement between stakeholders, identifying organizational requirements, clarifying the mission and values, assessment of external and internal environments, identifying strategic issues, formulating strategies, reviewing a strategic plan, establishing an organizational vision, developing an implementation process, and reassessing strategies. Each step contains a detailed description and the author’s recommendations for best application.

This article can be helpful for development and implementation of educational programs in underdeveloped countries. The major issues I mentioned in this integrative paper can be successfully solved with help of well-designed educational programs.

Furthermore, the article provides the information for how to tailor the process (changing a sequencing of the steps) in order to make the program more effective in any given situation. As I intend to work in a developing country where conditions are different from those in a developed country and circumstances are often not what one would normally expect in a more developed country, I found this quite useful and interesting.

One aspect of this process which impressed me most is how the people involved are able to develop major professional and personal skills, for instance; critical thinking, decision making skills, responsibility, and integrity. “The steps are not steps precisely but rather occasions for deliberations,
decisions, and actions within a continuous flow of strategic thinking, acting, and learning: knowledge exploration and exploitation; and strategy formulation and implementation” (Bryson, 2004, p.61).

Since implementing a program is often impossible without funds, I paid particular attention to the other informative article from that course, “College and University Budgeting: What Do We Know? What Do We Need to Know?” by Lasher and Greene (1993). The article describes the various types of institutional budgets, the influence of economic, political and demographic factors on those budgets, and different approaches to budgeting. Lasher and Greene (1993) note that setting priorities is very important; budgets usually cannot cover all existing needs of an institution. To be more effective in terms of budget, professionals should estimate funds, establish a set of priorities, and then fund programs according to those priorities. Budget constraints are known to be much harder in underdeveloped countries than in developed ones. That article provides very useful recommendations on how to develop and manage budgets with limited resources.

Additionally, the detailed information in the article about institutional budgets and their processes potentially reduces chances for corruption. As I have noted above, developing budget literacy was recognized as the main prerequisite for engaging people in the budget process, which will in turn lead to a decrease in corruption often found in third-world countries.

*Higher Education Internship (ELP 6711)*

The other course which contributed significantly to my learning and professional development was the Higher Education Internship required for a Master’s of Education Degree. The course was divided into two parts: practical and theoretical. For the practical part, the students were required to work at the internship sites; for the theoretical part, we attended the class to get further internship guidance and discuss professional accomplishments and issues.
Developing Countries and Countries in Transition

Since I plan to work for an educational non-profit organization, aimed at improvement of education in a developing country, I served at local humanitarian non-profit organization, GlobalSoul International, as a development intern. GlobalSoul International is dedicated to nurturing impoverished communities. The organization’s mission is to stress sustainable, community-driven development programs that address issues of poverty, lack of education, and public health concerns.

As an intern, I developed and implemented an educational exchange program between a school in a developing country and an American school. The major goal of the program was to reduce educational inequality in developing countries by supporting underrepresented children and providing professional support to school practitioners.

The purpose of the program was to facilitate an educational exchange program between the local school in Kearns, Utah and a secondary school in Ethiopia, Gondar. This partnership was designed to increase cultural awareness of both American and Ethiopian students and build mutual understanding and collaboration, which is extremely important in the current era of globalization.

Hence, it was a unique opportunity for me to use the theoretical knowledge I gained during my study at the University of Utah, including knowledge of the principles of program development, budget building, assessment, service learning principles, and specifics of working for non-profit organizations.

In order to make this program more successful and better understand particularities of non-profit organizations, I read additional articles and books. One of the most interesting books was, “The Nonprofit Sector in International Perspective: Studies in Comparative Culture and Policy” by Estelle James (1989). This book discusses how the characteristics of a non-profit sector can vary from country to country, including those in Africa. It was very useful for me to know, as during my internship I worked in partnership with African non-governmental organizations, which were also involved in
developing educational programs in their regions. Additionally, the book helped me better understand the complexities and issues of not-for-profit organizations in different parts of the world might have. Some of the serious issues of Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) are cultural and ideological, and include political influence, governmental control, and lack of structure. Since I am now more familiar with the possible difficulties of working in NPOs in underdeveloped countries, it will be easier for me to find solutions.

All courses I took during my study at the University of Utah increased my knowledge and widened my world outlook. However, the courses I mentioned not only helped me develop knowledge and skills, but also shaped new values and interests for my future life and career.

Implications of the Literature

Implications for Practice

The literature review can be useful for current and potential researchers, practitioners, and policy makers interested in educational problems in underdeveloped countries, and some their negative impacts. It illuminates the seriousness of the existing educational problems and provides information about reasons and consequences of those problems.

Recommendations

Even though recommendations to solve the educational problems may vary from country to country, I will recommend general ways for practitioners (school administration, teachers, representatives of nonprofit organizations, and others) to eradicate the existing issues:

1. Organizing occupational trainings for high school girls can be very effective in order to improve the position of women in third-world countries. The economic insecurity of women as a result of lack of employment opportunities led to an increased informal low-skill labor supply. Women involved in informal labor are not paid well and they often
become vulnerable to humiliation and violence. Unemployment also contributes to other serious problems, for instance: human trafficking.

Occupational education in high schools will provide more opportunities to young females to find better jobs, protecting them and their families both economically and socially. According to the eight-year longitudinal study conducted by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Buffalo, NY (1976), there are considerable differences in the employment patterns of terminal students who selected occupational programs and those who did not.

2. There is a necessity to provide training to the public on budget analysis and advocacy in order to combat corruption. This will increase transparency as well as help people understand budgets. Moreover, it will increase public interest in budget issues, initiate relevant debates, and help the government make the process of spending money more productive. Such trainings can significantly enhance people’s capacity to analyze and understand the budget and the Government’s processes that impact the allocation and utilization of resources.

3. Governments of developing countries have to offer programs for professional development to educate unqualified teachers, and to improve the teaching skills of those who are qualified. They might consist of evening classes, week-end classes, summer seminars and various other types of courses.

I strongly believe that such courses may be very effective. I have been involved in teacher training and development in my country. I, along with other educators, conducted the annual courses for teachers at professional colleges. Our team put an emphasis on curriculum improvement, new teaching methodologies, and problems in the studying
process. The course helped us improve the qualifications of the existing staff and made the teaching process more productive.

4. In order to solve the problem of inadequate school facilities, teachers can help themselves by applying for grants to different local as well as international foundations. Administration of schools should provide more updated information about various foundations around the world which are committed to the improvement of education in underdeveloped countries.

Further Research

Research on the described educational issues has already impacted the educational policy in many developing countries and countries in transition. For instance, thanks to the research on gender inequity in education, the new school reforms in Uzbekistan have been developed. They include introducing elements of information and communication technology (ICT) into school programs for young females and the significant improvement of school curriculum in order to tackle the problem of gender stereotypes in textbooks and school materials (Asian Development Bank, 2005).

Yet, because of the complexity of these issues, many problems remain under-researched. For example, state expenditures in the educational system of third-world countries should be a main focus for further study. According to UNESCO, average developing countries spend 3.4 - 5.7 percent of gross national income on education, while developed countries spend as much as 8 percent. Budgetary allocation to education in third-world countries is very low for all levels; expenditures definitely need to be increased in order to make education more efficient (Federal Ministry for Economic cooperation and Development, 2008).

The other area for further study, which needs much more attention and effort, is the educational gender gaps in rural areas in developing countries and countries in transition. It is very
important to solve that particular problem; a rural education is usually less adequate than an urban one. Lieten et al. (2007) point out the major institutional factors that negatively impact universal enrollment and attendance of schools in rural areas:


2. Class instruction is minimal and leaves much of the learning to be done during after-school hours.

3. The wide schism between the school and the vast masses of illiterate parents.

4. The established hierarchy of power relations...” (Lieten et al., 2007, pp. 69-70).

These factors show that state expenditures for education and education in rural areas in underdeveloped countries should be viewed as the most important areas of emphasis for further research and improvement.

Conclusion

The study on the major educational issues in developing countries and countries in transition, particularly the study of negative impact on national development, is very important, especially currently, when the United Nations is implementing the Global Millennium Development Goals. These initiated in 2001 in order to respond to the world’s main development challenges. The goals promote the eradication of poverty, improvement of education, the promotion of gender equity, the reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, the ensuring of environmental sustainability, and establishing a global partnership for development.

The analysis in this integrative paper makes clear that for the world’s complex cultural challenges to be met, improved systems of education must be promoted and implemented in underdeveloped countries around the world.
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Missing in action: Teacher and medical provider absence in developing countries. (2006).


Figure 1

Chart 1: Gender Roles-Economy Interaction

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative effects of inequality</th>
<th>Positive effects of equality</th>
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<td>Economic and social inequality</td>
<td>Equal economic rights and opportunities</td>
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<td>➔ gender disparity, negative effects on women and girls</td>
<td>➔ raise status of women</td>
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<td><strong>Gender ➔ economy</strong></td>
<td>Gender inequality ➔ economic development hampered</td>
<td>More equal status of women and girls ➔ benefits for economic and social development</td>
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The chart shows negative and positive effects between gender roles and economic outcomes.

Figure 2

Chart 2: Teacher Absenteeism Rates at Primary Schools in Selected Countries

The chart shows the teacher absenteeism rates (%) in Peru (11%), Ecuador (14%), Bangladesh (16%), Indonesia (25%), India (25%), and Uganda (27%). The average absenteeism rate is 19%.

Source: Chaudhury and others (2006).