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by Robert Cannon and Colum Graham

5 October 2012

Education First' initiative: has the Global Partnership for Education been sidelined?

The Education First initiative of the UN Secretary General, launched last month during the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly, combines advocacy and fundraising. (Report available here.) Another UN panel of eminent persons has been announced to head it.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has welcomed the UN initiative, but there is clear overlap. GPE, which itself has only been established in the last few years, used to be able to claim that it was the only "multilateral partnership" for school education and that it had "fundamentally transformed international cooperation in education." The GPE also seeks to attract private sector funds, and combines advocacy with fundraising.

Australia, which is GPE's second largest supporter, has also pledged support for Education First. Prime Minister Julia Gillard was named one of 10 Champions for the initiative.

Education aid effectiveness reviewed

Abby Riddell, *The Effectiveness of Foreign Aid to Education. What Can Be Learned?* World Institute for Development Economics Research, United Nations University. Working Paper No. 2012/75, 2012.

This paper reviews what has been learned over decades of aid to education. It discusses what works and what does not. It shows the most positive contribution

that aid has made to education is to expanding enrolments in basic education. The least successful has been capacity building, failures in which "have continued to be manifested in projects as well as in SWAps, in pooled funds and in budget support programmes." (p.27) Overall, the paper concludes that we need to proceed with more humility, given that we cannot agree on what works in our education systems at home.

Recent Development Policy Centre Blogs on Education

The progressive education fallacy in developing countries, by Gerard Guthrie: a review

Robert Cannon, September 24, 2012

Guthrie's book, *The Progressive Education Fallacy in Developing Countries, In Favour of Formalism*, (Springer, 2011) is primarily about Papua New Guinea and includes a chapter on Chinese education in support of the author's thesis. The book focuses on the merits of formalism – also described as teacher-centred, traditional or didactic teaching – in developing countries, and the risks associated with the false premise that progressive, enquiry-based methods are necessary to promote intellectual enquiry skills among non-western school children. This premise, common among aid agencies, Guthrie labels the "progressive education fallacy".

'The State of Education' 2012 Indonesia Update

Colum Graham, September 28

The Indonesia Update has occurred annually at the Australian National University for the last thirty years. This year, there were 315 attendees for the two-day Update held on 21 – 22 September on education as its special theme. Speakers, including former Vice Minister for National Education, Fasli Jalal, considered a broad range of educational issues from all levels of education. Teaching and quality of education were among the themes. Other speakers placed the Update within the broader context of strategic, political and economic considerations. It is hoped that draft papers and presentations will be placed online ahead of the publication of a book next year.

AusAID education news

Philippines President approves Australian assistance

The Manila Standard Today (25 September, 2012) reports that Philippines President Benigno Aquino III has formally approved a package of Australian assistance for a six-year program to upgrade the education of children in the

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Australian assistance involves improving management and teaching capacities, and the construction and repair of classrooms and other facilities including toilets and related facilities.

Nauru's youth go back to school

AusAID reports that Nauru has made significant progress in education with almost 100 per cent enrolment and a full complement of qualified teachers.

Australia's assistance helps improve quality of education in Laos

AusAID reports that its education assistance in Laos' three most northern provinces has lifted primary school enrolment rates from 73 per cent in 2006 to 91 per cent in 2010-11.

TSEP: A new nation-wide education project in Sri Lanka

Australia is supporting a new nation-wide education quality and access project, the Transforming School Education Project (TSEP) in partnership with the World Bank and the Sri Lankan Government.

$85 million boost for education in the Pacific

Australia has committed $85 million to strengthen tertiary education across the Pacific. Priority will be given to improving the quality of courses in engineering, construction, maritime transport, education and health, and to improving connectivity.

AusAID evaluation and education reports

AusAID's evaluation reports are among a wide range of publication available here. Among the reports of interest to those working in the education sector are the *SMERU Independent Completion Report,* the *Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools (LAPIS) Independent Completion Report,* and the *Pacific Executive (PACE) program – Final Independent Progress Report.* AusAID also provides further access to a comprehensive resource of education reports and resources here.

School-Based Management in Indonesia: Three Recent Publications

Decentralization and school-based management in Indonesia. Agustinus Bandur. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educational Development*, Volume 1, No1, June 2012: 33 – 47.

This article examines recent developments in the decentralized education system with reference to the implementation of school-based management (SBM) policy and programs. It was found that SBM is an effective way of enhancing participatory decision-making, budgetary transparency, and community participation.

Teacher training and transitions in rural Indonesian schools: a case study of Bogor, West Java. Thomas F. Luscheia and Ida Zubaidah *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, Volume 32, Issue 3, 2012: 333 – 350.

Within the context of school-based management, Indonesia faces challenges as it seeks to upgrade its teacher workforce. This challenge is more acute in remote areas, where teachers require training to work in classrooms with children of different ages and grades. Although teachers consider their training to be helpful, they receive little guidance to help them teach large multi-grade classes. As a result, pedagogical practices vary across schools in the same rural district.

Implementation of School-Based Management in Indonesia. Georges Vernez, Rita Karam, and Jeffery H. Marshall. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California, 2012. 206p.

This major study reports detailed findings on the outcomes of four main objectives: to assess the implementation of SBM; to associate 'intermediate' SBM outcomes (authority, participation, transparency) with features of the district, schools, teachers, and communities; to analyse the effects of SBM on student achievement; and to provide recommendations for policy. Findings, which are that the implementation of SBM, at least so far, has not resulted in major changes in school practices, lead to a set of recommendations that focus on increasing the capacity of all school and district stakeholders. It concludes by arguing for careful setting of priorities and the implementation of recommendations incrementally and experimentally. The value of this research is diminished by adopting a conception of SBM at variance from that used by the Government of Indonesia and by failing to disentangle the impact of any external development assistance in the various samples selected for the study.

News from ACER

International Update

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has published its September edition of *International Update*, available here. Among the 11 articles in this edition are the following: *Strengthening education in Zimbabwe; Assessment: Building? expertise in India; Financing TVET in ?the Pacific*; and *Literacy and the most marginalised children*.

ACER Research Conference: School improvement

The articles in the recent edition of ACER eNews are based on papers presented to ACER Research Conference 2012 on the theme *School Improvement: What does the research tell us about effective strategies?* held in Sydney from 26-28 August, 2012.

Education Networks, Journals and Newsletters

Educational goals post 2015

Devex has published a discussion paper on the next set of development goals here. Also, NORRAG NEWSBite is continuing its broad-based discussion about what may eventuate post-2015 when goals are to be updated. There is a welcome emphasis on learning in this discussion.

Resources for development educators and students

The Center for Global Development (CGD) provides an online resource for educators and access to syllabuses and courses, podcasts, videos and publications that cover a range of global development topics. CGD also offer free subscriptions to their weekly *CGD Development Update* and a range of topic-specific newsletters.

Researching International Education and Development

The editorial of the International Journal of Educational Development, Volume 32, Issue 6, November 2012, Pages 709–710, discusses issues of research in education and development. Links to current writing in this area are provided.

Education, Poverty and Development: Special Issue of the International Journal of Educational Development, Volume 32, Issue 4, July 2012.

This Special Issue contains a wealth of material of interest, including: Editorial: Education, policy and poverty reduction; Education, development and poverty reduction: A literature critique; The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: An analysis of a hegemonic link between education and poverty; Who gets what? Is improved access to basic education pro-poor in Sub-Saharan Africa?; Who is out of school? Evidence from the Statistics South Africa Community Survey; Why do primary school students drop out in poor, rural China?; Poverty reduction through entrepreneurship; Dropping out: Why are students leaving junior high in China's poor rural areas?; Uncertain educational returns in a developing economy (India); Disaster, civil society and education in China; Book Review: G.G. Liu, S. Zhang, Z. Zhang, Editors, *Investing in Human Capital for Economic Development in China* (2010) World Scientific Publishing Co. 424pp.

A New Journal: Asia Pacific Journal of Educational Development

This new journal is published by the National Academy for Educational Research in Taiwan, (ROC). The first edition in June 2012 contains several items of interest, including the paper on Indonesian schools, abstracted above.

Upcoming conferences, 2013

- *The Global Summit on Education 2013,* 11 & 12 March 2013, Dynasty Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The theme of the Conference is Emerging Trends For Sustainability in Glocal Education: Opportunities and Challenges. Further information is available here.

- *Education and Development Conference,* 5 – 7 March 2013, Bangkok. This Conference will address: The importance of education and its strong correlation with economic, political and democratic development, educational systems around the world, and the role of education in achieving MDGs. Further information is available here.

Robert Cannon is an Associate of the Development Policy Centre and is presently working as an evaluation specialist with the USAID funded PRIORITAS Project in Indonesian education. Colum Graham is a researcher at Devpolicy.

Author/s:

Robert Cannon
Robert Cannon is a research associate with the Development Policy Centre. He has worked in educational development in university, technical and school education, most recently in Indonesia and Palestine.

Colum Graham
Colum Graham is a Research Officer at the Development Policy Centre and PhD candidate at ANU.

Link: https://devpolicy.org/education-buzz-october-5-2012-20121005/