

Education Buzz (Aug 3): a new education in development collaboration

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A new education in development collaboration

A successful [Education Effectiveness and Collaboration Forum](#) was held at the Australian National University on 13 March this year, co-hosted by the Development Policy Centre, Save the Children Fund and AusAID.

Discussions at the Forum led to the idea of establishing a network of people involved in the education sector of international development assistance. It has been agreed to begin by encouraging contributions about education to the *Development Policy Blog* and initiate a monthly *Education Buzz* – of which this is the first. The Buzz will summarize and draw together Devpolicy blogs on education and also draw on other materials such as news, reports, reviews of books and journal articles, information about conferences and provide links to other education networks.

Given the wealth of experience, skills and ideas in the region, we want to involve you and as many others as possible in discussions about education in development. Please consider writing a blog, signing up for regular monthly updates, or contacting us via email. And tell your friends and colleagues.

A deep or surface approach to development – what can learning research teach us?

[Robert Cannon](#), June 19, 2012

In [this post](#) I propose the idea of deep and surface development. Borrowing from the field of learning research, I suggest that the deep and surface concepts used to describe approaches to learning have parallels in development. It is possible to observe donors and beneficiaries adopting distinctive approaches to development. These approaches are strongly influenced by the context that may include local culture and values, education qualities, community involvement, leadership and policies, and the developer's implementation strategies. The effect of the context is to influence perceptions of the demands of that context that culminate in deep or surface approaches to development.

Using education aid to disrupt the Pacific

[Richard Curtain](#), June 28 & 29, 2012

Inequality between countries is due to the differences in political and economic institutions rather than to differences in geography, culture, or access to knowledge and skills, according to Acemoglu and Robinson, the authors of *Why Nations Fail*.

In [Part II](#) (for Part I see [here](#)) of his book review, Richard Curtin considers the relevance of the book to Timor-Leste and the Pacific. He argues that Australia needs to foster “disruptive change” to produce inclusive institutions and therefore more growth in the region. And he puts education at the heart of his proposed strategy, arguing that we should “set targets for a share of educated young people from each Pacific island country and Timor-Leste to find work of their choice in another country in the region. This requires, for example, that the Australia Pacific Technical College focus on producing graduates for employment outcomes in Australia and New Zealand rather than for limited domestic labour markets, as at present.”

(For more on the failure of the Australia Pacific Technical College to promote labour mobility, see this [short post](#) by Stephen Howes)

Can policy and educational knowledge cross borders?

Alan Luke, Generalizing across borders: Policy and the limits of educational science. *Educational Researcher*, Volume 40, No. 8, November 2011, 367–377.

Alan Luke, Professor of Education at Queensland University of Technology, asks two questions in this 2011 Distinguished Lecture to the American Educational Research Association: First, when people, capital and information cross borders at unprecedented rates how well does policy cross borders? Second, what are the consequences of attempts to move educational innovation and educational science from one context to another, such as from one nation to another? Alan’s analysis suggests that policies do not always travel well. In fact, too often, selective versions of educational science and selective pickings from educational research are undertaken in the service of particular economic and ideological interests. And, on the subject of policy borrowing, he concludes that effective educational policies in one place are not approaches that can be wrenched out of their context and applied with assured success elsewhere.

Progress in reducing out-of-school children has stalled

According to the latest UNESCO [research](#), the number of children out of school in 2010 was unchanged from 2009 levels: 61 million. See [this](#) useful summary by Brookings.

DFID’s education aid performance

The new Independent Commission for Aid Impact has [found](#) that DFID education aid to Africa is “not performing well.”

DFID has focused on expanding access to basic education and has succeeded in boosting enrolment substantially. There has, however, been a lack of attention to learning outcomes and to the trade-off between increasing access and ensuring quality.

Its [assessment](#) on UK education (and health) aid to India is much more [positive](#): “More children are in school and learning achievements have seen improvements.”

Education Networks and Newsletters

- **Australian Council for Educational Research, *International Update***. Issue 3 of International Update contains many items of potential interest including on: expertise and networks from Australia to PNG; comparing school learning outcomes internationally; and innovative international assessment communities Available [here](#) [pdf].
- **Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training (NORRAG)**: a forum for the analysis of aid in international education, training and development policy, with a bi-annual newsletter, the most recent of which was on the theme: *Value for Money in International Education: A New World of Results, Impacts and Outcomes*. Membership free (see [here](#)).

Upcoming conferences, 2012

- **School Improvement: What Does the Research Tell Us about Effective Strategies? The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)**, 26–28 August 2012, Sydney Convention Centre, Sydney, NSW. The ACER Research Conference 2012 will highlight recent research and practice that identifies not only WHAT schools can do to improve outcomes for students but also HOW they can do it most effectively. Further information [here](#).
- **Evaluation in a Changing World, Australasian Evaluation Society (AES)**, 27-31 August 2012, Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, SA. This theme provides an invitation to highlight and examine new developments in evaluation methodology and technologies. It also invites participants to trial some innovative sessions, approaches, and technologies. The Conference provides specialist streams on methodologies, international development and education, among others. Further information [here](#).

News

- **Australia supports education in Sri Lanka.** An Australian [grant](#) of \$37 million spread over four years will help more students access quality education, reduce regional imbalances, and promote social cohesion and inclusive education. The World Bank will manage the program on behalf of AusAID.
- **Improving school safety in Nepal** Australia has made a [one-off](#) \$3.9 million technical assistance contribution to the Asian Development Bank's School Sector Reform Program. A new component in this program is school safety.
- **Australian teachers visit Indonesia** A group of teachers is [visiting](#) Indonesia on a program to improve their understanding of their northern neighbor.

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