

Reflective Exercise

Chapter 1 Education and International Development

Reflective Exercise from page 15

- In your own words, define development. What does it mean for a society to be developed? Is education necessary for development, and is it sufficient to ensure development?

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Reflective Exercise from page 20

- Did education lead to development in Nepal and Zambia? What does their experience say about the relationship between education and development?

Reflective Exercise from page 21

- What does it mean for a country or society to be 'developed'? Form groups and come up with a list of characteristics or qualities that you think a country should have to be considered 'developed'. Then take a critical look at each characteristic and try to find exceptions: are there countries that are considered developed that don't meet these criteria? Conversely, are there countries often considered 'developing' or 'Third World' that do meet the criteria?

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Chapter 2 Redefining Development: Education for All

Reflective Exercise from page 29

- Do you think the EFA goals reflect the priorities of development donors, or of developing countries or both?

Reflective Exercise from page 32

- It appears that the 2015 goals of education for all will not be met. Where does responsibility for this lie – on international organizations, on donor countries or on national governments?

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Reflective Exercise from page 35

- Consider the following official policy statements on access to education, spanning over 350 years and much of the globe:

'It is therefore ordered, yet every township in this jurisdiction . . . shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by ye parents or masters of such children', Massachusetts Law of 1647 in the English Massachusetts Bay Colony.

'There shall be provided . . . a sufficient amount of accommodation in public elementary schools, available for all the children whose elementary education . . . efficient and suitable provision is not otherwise made', the 1870 Education Act in England and Wales.

'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine', India's Constitution, written in 1949.

'By 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling', the UN's Millennium Development Goal #2, ratified in 2000.

Discuss why the education of all children has proven to be such an enduring goal for societies around the world. Do you believe that one day all children will attend school? How would this affect social and economic development?

Chapter 3 Critiquing Education and International Development

Reflective Exercise from page 42

- How can the right to basic education through formal schooling be in conflict with the right to maintain one's cultural and linguistic traditions? How should this tension be addressed in development work?

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Reflective Exercise from page 45

- How are issues of poverty and development portrayed in the media? How does this reflect upon the international development sector as a whole?

Reflective Exercise from page 47

Consider the following three hypothetical scenarios, all of which relate to the right to education:

1. A girl in a rural village in Pakistan has dropped out of secondary school. Staff from an international development organization visit her house to encourage the parents to allow her to attend again. However, her parents say that it is against their cultural traditions for girls to go out the house unaccompanied at that age, and that her help is needed at home, they also point out that the girl herself does not want to attend.
2. A family has stopped sending their son to primary school. They are part of an ethnic/linguistic minority in their country, and point out that secondary schooling is only available in the national language. They are worried that if their sons keep attending school, their mother tongue will die out. They also don't feel a secondary education is relevant to their agricultural lifestyle.
3. A family in a poor, rural area take their second oldest boy out of primary school. They point out that times are very difficult, and unless this boy works in the fields, they will not be able to feed their other four children. Teachers point out that he will have no future if he leaves school, and that education is compulsory according to the law.

In each case, do you think the child in question should be required to attend school? Reflect upon whether age, gender or other circumstances (e.g. culture, family needs) influence your answer.

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Chapter 4 Education in Conflicts and Emergencies

Reflective Exercise from page 56

- Is education a vital aspect of humanitarian relief? If so, should it receive equal funding to other aspects of relief work? What if this came at the expense of funds for food, shelter or medical aid?

Reflective Exercise from page 58

- Do you think that policymakers in Nepal could have averted the conflict through educational reform? Is there any way they could have foreseen the outbreak of conflict?

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- If education is not 'inevitably a force for good' (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000:54), but also a contributing factor in the outbreak of conflict, does that mean that the 2015 target of EFA should be reconsidered or delayed? Are there contexts in which expanding access to education might not be a good idea? If so when, and why?

Chapter 5 Conceptualizing Globalization and Education

Reflective Exercise from page 63

- What images does the term globalization bring to mind? Does it have positive or negative connotations?

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Reflective Exercise from page 71

Schooling is arguably the most global institution in the world. Schools can be found in virtually every country, and every government provides education to its citizens. Despite vast differences in countries' histories, languages, cultures and economies, schooling is always done in very much the same way: trained teachers work in classrooms to deliver a curriculum divided into the same subjects. Why has education become standardized in this way around the world? Was it through force or consensus? Is this form of schooling the best model of education for all societies?

Reflective Exercise from page 76

Meyer et al. (1997) ask 'If an unknown society were "discovered" on a previously unknown island' what changes would occur? They predict that the following would happen:

- the island society would become a nation-state, with a government like other nation-states
- it would join international organizations, beginning with the United Nations
- international organizations would collect data about the society, which would be used to plan its development
- the island's government would provide education and other services to its people
- the concepts of progress and development would take hold.

Do you agree with this? If not, what do you think would happen differently? Is there anything they have missed? What do the changes to this hypothetical island society say about the processes of globalization?

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Chapter 6 Education and the Global Knowledge Economy

Reflective Exercise from page 88

- Do you think international achievement tests are useful? If so, for whom (teachers, parents, economists, curriculum writers, policymakers, etc.), and why?

Reflective Exercise from page 91

Reflect on the following set of questions relating to education and the global knowledge economy:

1. Do you believe that a country's economic success and the well-being of its residents are tied to how well its education system performs in relation to other countries?
2. Is education a human right, a public service or a personal investment? Which of these views most closely fits the 'knowledge economy' discourse and why?
3. Should information be treated like other types of property (e.g. clothing, cars)? What are the implications of this for students, educators, the private sector and the general public?

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Chapter 7 International Discourses on ICT in Education

Reflective Exercise from page 99

- Do you think ICT can be used to expand access to education and improve educational quality? Can ICT contribute to poverty alleviation? If so, how?

Reflective Exercise from page 102

- To date, the use of ICT has not produced the improvement in outcomes that many predicted, nor has it spread as quickly as they hoped. Why do you think this is the case?

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Reflective Exercise from page 103

Review the passage from the WSIS Tunis Commitment quoted below. Do you agree or disagree with its arguments? If you agree, where is the evidence to support these claims? If you disagree, why do you think that the authors of the Tunis Commitment believed this?

ICTs have enormous potential to expand access to quality education, to boost literacy and universal primary education, and to facilitate the learning process itself, thus laying the groundwork for the establishment of a fully inclusive and development-oriented Information Society and knowledge economy which respects cultural and linguistic diversity (World Summit on Information Society, 2005).

Chapter 8 Globalization and Higher Education

Reflective Exercise from page 110

- Do you think that global university rankings are reflective of academic merit?

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Reflective Exercise from page 114

- Do you think that GATS has been a positive development in global higher education?

Reflective Exercise from page 116

Do you agree with following proposition:

Individuals, not governments benefit most from higher education, and, therefore, individuals should pay for it.

In reflecting on this, you may want to consider the following:

- the importance of higher education in the 'knowledge economy' (see Chapter 6)
- the problem of 'brain drain' in low-income countries
- globalization of higher education and the new possibilities it creates
- the value of university degrees, and the intellectual autonomy of universities

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Chapter 9 Conclusion

Reflective Exercise from page 120

- Do you think that global connectivity, integration and convergence will continue to increase in coming decades?