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A big thank you to our Facebook fans who participated in the "Picture Education!" photo contest. We received 205 entries from around the globe. The twenty winning photographs can be viewed on our online edition by end of November. Congratulations!

— Ed
Academic institutions have an invaluable role to play in strengthening the work of the United Nations. From research laboratories to seminar rooms, from lecture halls to informal gatherings in cafeterias, the search for innovative solutions to global challenges often begins on campus. Moreover, the principles that characterize scholarly enterprise—equal opportunity, mutual understanding and open inquiry—are also at the heart of the UN’s global mission of peace, development, and human rights. The academic world and the world Organization are already good, close partners, but there is great scope to go further still. That potential, as well as ten universal principles encompassing human rights, dialogue, sustainability and much else, underpin a new initiative: the United Nations Academic Impact.

Much has been written and said about corporate social responsibility. Today we are also seeing the emergence of a stronger culture of “intellectual social responsibility.” That is the spirit the UN Academic Impact seeks to embrace and encourage. We hope to help educate young people about the complex, transnational issues of our time, and cultivate a global mindset and a keener sense of global citizenship. We want to empower students and faculty to take their learning beyond the classroom—and to their friends, families, and communities. We want to bring the ideas and proposals generated by institutions of higher learning into the global arena, including the UN system. We want, in short, the UN Academic Impact to promote a “movement of minds” to engender change.

The United Nations continues to open its doors to new partners, and we are especially excited about how the scholarship and engagement of the academic community can benefit our work for human well-being. I welcome the more than 400 institutions in more than 80 countries that have joined the initiative and have shown such enthusiasm about supporting United Nations objectives. I look forward to the contributions this scholarly partnership can make in our efforts to build a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world for all.

Secretary-General

The United Nations Academic Impact

Ban Ki-moon
Preparing the Next Generation to Join the Conference Table...
...Fulfilling the United Nations Promise

By J. MICHAEL ADAMS

The United Nations Charter represents the most ambitious attempt in human history to unite across borders, secure peace, promote social progress, and forge solutions to the most critical problems facing humanity. As US President Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, “The United Nations represents man’s best organized hope to substitute the conference table for the battlefield.”

As noble as its goals are, though, and as determined as the peoples of the United Nations may be, the Organization remains a mere conference table. It is only as strong as the people who come together at this global conference table. The United Nations can achieve nothing unless people who work across borders have an understanding of the history of different nations, an appreciation for diverse perspectives, and an awareness of the interconnected nature of humanity and today’s most important global challenges.

H.G. Wells once wrote, "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." The enemies are ignorance and intolerance. The path to avoiding catastrophe, the path to achieving the aspirations—the promise—of the United Nations, lies in education. And to match the universal goals and global alliances represented by the United Nations, we need to offer students around the world a global education.

Those who want to join hands across the table, those of us who aspire to be world citizens, must have a new skill set beyond mere diplomacy. We must have an understanding of the past, but always with a view toward the future. We must understand the complexities, challenges, and risks associated with decision-making in the twenty-first century.

The United Nations was formed from the ashes of two world wars, and its greatest success has been preventing a third global conflict. Today, the importance of the United Nations has grown even more significant as the world becomes more interdependent. With increasing globalization, finances flow freely across continents, as do goods, services, and ideas. Unfortunately, though, major problems like terrorism, pandemic diseases, and environmental calamities also cross borders at will. No nation can protect its citizens against ideas or problems that do not stop for passport control.

In some ways, globalization has outpaced our ability to comprehend what’s happening. Thomas Friedman wrote, “Global integration has raced ahead of education. Thanks to globalization, we all definitely know ‘of’ one another more than ever, but we still don’t know that much ‘about’ one another.” Education must catch up to globalization. Education must catch up to the United Nations.

Through global education, we must prepare world citizens who understand the interconnected nature of our planet and who are willing to act on behalf of people everywhere. We each must spend more time learning about other cultures and...
The path to avoiding catastrophe, the path to achieving the aspirations—the promise—of the United Nations, lies in education.

Two individuals might look at the same thing, but each sees something different—and neither is wrong. At the conference table, understanding this concept changes the game.

A global education considers the world as a whole, with a rich interplay of nations, cultures, and societies. Teachers must regularly bring the world into the classroom and link classrooms to the world. Students must learn to make global connections and understand that actions around the world can affect them and that they can have a global impact. A global education should break down boundaries, expand horizons, and introduce learners to the breadth of human achievement and diversity. Most importantly, a global education should emphasize what all peoples share in common.

Buckminster Fuller, the twentieth century philosopher, described the Earth as a spaceship, and he wrote that all humans are really astronauts sharing residence on a planet travelling 60,000 miles an hour. He believed, “We are not going to be able to operate our Spaceship Earth successfully nor for much longer unless we see it as a whole spaceship and our fate as common. It has to be everybody or nobody.”

This is exactly the underlying philosophy that propels the United Nations. Unfortunately, modern educational systems were not built with such a global attitude. Instead, they have been designed first and foremost to develop loyal, national citizens. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with celebrating national heritages and traditions, however, there must also be significant attention devoted to sharing stories from other nations. Schools should help further national goals and interests, but they also must enable us to understand the whole world and our role in it.

The first declaration in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations affirms the desire “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” Simply put, wars are cultivated by dehumanizing the “other” and exaggerating the differences between “us” and “them.” This is much harder to do when we have learned about our fellow astronauts and appreciate and understand their viewpoints and their common humanity. Gaining that appreciation and understanding has never been more necessary than today.

Having a global education and being a world citizen is the key element for peace and for all elements of progress outlined in the UN Charter. Indeed, that is the foundation for the necessary new skill-set at the conference table. Being able to look at the problems through the eyes of others reduces fears and misunderstandings that breed conflict and confusion. We must learn to work together; we must learn more about each other; and we must come to the table with resolve to solve those problems no single country can address.

Notes
3 T. Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree (1999), 127.
Rising to the Challenge

EDUCATION FOR ALL

Rising to the Challenge
Imagine a school that changes location every forty-five days—a school that comes to the child, instead of the other way around. This is happening on the steppes of Mongolia where the government provides mobile tent schools for nomadic herder communities.

Further north, in the extreme conditions of Siberia, or further south, on the hot, dusty plains of Kenya, other nomadic children are enjoying more educational opportunities than their parents ever did. These tailor-made approaches are the answer to reaching children who continue to miss out on learning, ten years after the international community committed to achieve Education for All by 2015. The six goals adopted in Dakar at the World Education Forum, two of which are also Millennium Development Goals, cover the whole educational spectrum, from early childhood, primary and secondary education, through to vocational programmes for youth and literacy programmes for adults.

For millions of children and youth, these goals are making a genuine difference. In one decade, an additional forty-two million children have entered primary school, with girls benefiting in ever greater numbers. South and West Asia more than halved its number of out-of-school children and sub-Saharan Africa reduced the figure by 28 per cent.

This has happened because governments have made education a national priority. They have abolished school fees, recruited teachers, built classrooms in rural areas, supplied midday meals—often the only one a child will get in a day—or provided subsidies to children from the poorest families. They have levelled the playing field for girls by introducing scholarships, running community campaigns, deploying female teachers in rural areas, and installing separate sanitation facilities in schools. Countries such as India have also reinforced their legislation to ensure that education is a basic, free, and compulsory right.

These advances are proof that the goals are realistic and achievable. They are initiatives we must encourage, share and replicate. But it will take much bolder action to meet the 2015 targets.

Some seventy-two million children who should be in primary school are not. Another seventy-one million adolescents of lower secondary school age are missing out—a figure that translates into low skills, youth unemployment, and social exclusion. Illiteracy affects a staggering 759 million adults—16 per cent of the world population. Without access to learning opportunities, these adults face a lifetime of disadvantage.

Unless we act now by setting strategic priorities, sixty-nine million children will still not be in school in 2015 and 796 million adults will remain illiterate. We cannot let this happen. More forceful advocacy, stronger political will, better planning and sounder policies are required to hoist education to the top of the development agenda.

The evidence is uncontested—education has a direct impact on health, nutrition, employment, and citizenship. Education drives the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals because it equips people with knowledge

**By IRINA BOKOVA**

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and skills to break the cycle of poverty and shape their future life chances.

I see three major priorities that governments and international institutions must urgently act upon.

1 Inequality is one of the foremost challenges to reaching education for all.

It is not by chance that some children do not enjoy their right to education. We cannot claim success when girls in the poorest 20 per cent of households are over three times more likely to be out of school than boys. Nor when disability, gender, minority status, language, and emergency situations remain causes for exclusion from learning. Today they are. The place to start is to identify each and every child who is missing out and understand why. Is schooling affordable? Are schools located close to marginalized communities? Are programmes flexible enough? In Bangladesh and Cambodia, stipends for marginalized children have played an important role in narrowing gender gaps and increasing the transition to secondary schools. In Bolivia, cluster schools have increased access to education among indigenous children. Everywhere equity must be a policy priority and a measure of accountability and success.

2 Education quality is the second major challenge.

In too many schools, the basics are missing: desks, blackboards, pens, textbooks, electricity, sanitation, and running water. Most importantly, qualified teachers—the most important education resource in any country—are missing. The result is that far too many students are not acquiring basic reading and numeracy skills after more than six years in school. Here again, inequality comes into play—parental income and education, home language, and other factors are strongly associated with disparities in learning achievement. The answer lies in targeted programmes to improve learning among children who are being left behind, bilingual and intercultural education for those from ethnic and linguistic minorities, and more inclusive learning environments for disabled children. Teaching, meanwhile, has to be turned into the job of the future through adequate training, pay, career advancement, and professional support, because some 1.9 million new teacher posts are required just to achieve universal primary education by 2015.

3 Financing is the third priority, a key to unlocking the crisis in education.

Clearly the economic and financial crisis has altered the whole environment in which governments are operating. It could force countries to cut their spending on education and parents to remove their children from school or simply to not send them at all.

National governments remain the largest source of financing and many can do more to increase resources available to education. But these will not be enough to meet the challenge, especially in countries where education systems are rapidly expanding. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates the financing gap to reach Education for All in low-income countries at $16 billion annually.

Development is a partnership. Ten years ago in Dakar, rich countries pledged that no country committed to achieving Education for All would be allowed to fail for want of finance. But aid to basic education stands at $4.3 billion, way below what is needed annually.

Times of crisis call for solidarity and innovation. Since taking office nearly one year ago, I have consistently advocated for greater support to education within the United Nations and with Heads of State and Government from around the world. I have supported the 1 Goal campaign that has rallied millions of advocates worldwide around education. I have strong hopes that the G-20 Seoul Summit taking place in November 2010 in the Republic of Korea will recognize education as crucial to the development agenda, and to economic recovery.

As South African President Jacob Zuma affirmed at the FIFA World Cup Education Summit on 11 July 2010 in Pretoria, “The most important investment in the future of any nation is education.” Education is UNESCO’s top priority. As the UN agency charged with coordinating Education for All, we are committed to assisting countries in developing high-quality education systems and to seizing every occasion to raise the profile of education on the development agenda. Where there is political will and the right policies, barriers to education can, and do, fall. According to a wise Chinese proverb, “If you are planning for tomorrow, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.”
Unlearning Intolerance
Towards a neutral vision of ‘the others’ through Education

By SALEH HASHEM MOSTAFA ABDEL-RAZEK

The call for a “dialogue among civilizations” has become one of the critical features of the twenty-first century. The term itself has been used to substitute and rethink the “clash of civilizations,” proposed by Samuel P. Huntington and adopted by some Western educators following the end of the cold war between East and West.

Many international organizations and bodies in both the Islamic world and the West have supported initiatives emerging out of the call for a dialogue among civilizations. These initiatives focus on the importance of eliminating disparities through in-depth, extensive knowledge and investigation of stereotypes in order to erase negative connotations and prejudices often promoted by the media and some political and civic organizations who considered “the others” as a threat or as the enemy. The need was to concentrate on educating the media, drafting school curricula and by using information technology and modern communication to achieve a more realistic and neutral vision of the habits, thoughts, behaviours, and practices of others.

As a religion and as a civilization, Islam is against the centralization of a dominant culture. On the contrary, Islam encourages that the world become a forum of civilizations that interacts and cooperates to strengthen universal values.

In its spirit and essence, Islam guarantees freedom of religions. In fact, the Qur’an requires Muslims to believe in all the prophets, and forbids the belief in some and not others. Thus, the Qur’an clearly accepts the plurality of religions, their different laws and ways of life, and treats life as a challenge for humanity to coexist in tolerance, thereby strengthening the forces of peace and moral order which are much more fundamental than differences of faith and devotion. The teachings of the Qur’an in no way adopt a hostile attitude toward other religions.

The world must shape a tolerant universal philosophy deriving its principles from different cultures and laying the basis for a non-violent resolution of controversies. Islam contains great spiritual heritage as demonstrated by the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the Islamic Council of Europe in 1981. The Declaration has shown that the philosophy of human rights does not conflict with religion, but only with fanatical interpretations of religion. Religions such as Islam and Christianity focus on and promote human dignity and, if religion is understood in a true and reasonable way, there is no contradiction between the rights of God and human rights. Therefore, intellectuals, clergies, scholars, and educators in East and West should continue to recognize differences between religions and doctrines, and aim at achieving mutual understanding through genuine receptiveness to other viewpoints. They should also work to reject intolerance and forced confrontations.

New education policies and community activities should be implemented for coexistence and mutual understanding so as to achieve our goals through a rational perspective. We need to create a society that shares the values of love, tolerance, and recognition of the others. This is where the role of our education institutions is crucial.

We need to create a society that shares the values of love, tolerance, and recognition of the others. This is where the role of our education institutions is crucial.
Can Education Be Made Mobile?

By ALEKSANDRA VUJIC

The right to education is a fundamental human right, since it is a precondition for the fulfilment of other economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights. It enables social mobility and successful competition in the labour market. Its realization means overcoming poverty and living with human dignity. Being universal, interdependent, interrelated, and indivisible, the right to an education offers equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, economic or social status.

The first attempt to promote the right to education was Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, while the Convention against Discrimination in Education, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1960, and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) were the first legally binding international instruments to incorporate the wide range of this right. Article 13 of CESCR obliged United Nations Member States to recognize the right to free, compulsory primary education available to everyone, accessible secondary education, and equally accessible higher education. It pledged states to develop a system of schools for all levels, to establish an adequate fellowship system, and to continually improve material conditions for teaching staff.

After sixty years, the UN Millennium Declaration called for States to ensure that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be able to complete a full course of primary education. Yet statistical data from 2007 indicated that “one sixth of the world’s population, approximately 760 million persons, cannot read or write.”

It was noted that rural children were twice as likely to be out of school as children living in urban areas and that “the rural-urban gap particularly affects the education of girls.” Considering the fact that many children leave school without adequate literacy, numeracy or without possessing basic life skills, Goal 2 of the Education for All initiative led by UNESCO called for good quality primary education, and Goal 6, for improving all

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The Mobile Schools project makes the entire computer lab and library mobile and independent of local infrastructure, and travels to villages at a relatively low cost.

“aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence for all, so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all.

It becomes obvious that realizing the right to education, in particular a good quality education, is a global issue demanding global responses and the joint efforts of states, policy makers and civil society. The question is, is it possible to share the advancements of the twenty-first century in education with all? Rare examples have shown that it is.

The Gyan Putra project in India, which supports Millennium Development Goal 2 on achieving universal primary education, is being undertaken in Jadan, Pali District, western Rajasthan, under the umbrella of the worldwide Yoga in Daily Life societies and inspired by Mahamandaleshwar Paramhans Swami Maheshwaranand Ji Maharaj. Employing
well-trained, qualified teachers in primary and secondary school, it comprises 53 modern classrooms equipped with computers, science laboratories, state-of-the-art sports facilities as well as a well-equipped library. The project acknowledges the need for rural and marginalized students to not just avail of free education, but to have a standard of education equivalent to that which is available to students from more privileged backgrounds. Students without financial means, including all female students, study free of charge and get free transportation, uniforms, books, and stationery arranged by the school.

Despite low educational achievements, high dropout rates, and no provision for information technology education and library facilities in rural and backward areas, Yoga in Daily Life intends to spread its activities to twenty-seven villages through the Mobile Schools initiative in village schools up to the eighth grade. The Mobile Schools initiative makes the entire computer lab and library mobile and independent of local infrastructure, and travels to villages at a relatively low cost. The highlights of the initiative are:

- The use of laptops, charged during the evening at a central location with 24 hour power supply, removes electricity constraints and gives students a chance to fulfill and aspire to greater self-learning platforms through information and communication technologies (ICT).

- By accessing software and learning programmes from the organization’s world network, the labs can offer high quality, modern learning materials to students targeting specific learning objectives.

- Quality education and excellent learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills, are obtained by a holistic programme in which ICTs are used in tandem with library and reading programmes.

- The use of media such as photography and video makes it possible for students to learn about their surroundings, hygiene, personal development, and relationships.

- High quality teaching staff with excellent classroom instruction and training improve the learning experience.

- Teaching staff, combining experts in the field with local assistants, bring the syllabus “on the ground,” increasing its relevance by giving it local context.

- Teachers are trained to deal appropriately with gender issues and encourage girls to participate and aspire to education levels equal to those of boys, and vice versa.

- Girl students are given quality, modern education in the vicinity of their homes, in a safe environment. Access, safety, social integration and future benefits of any type of education are primary issues which affect parents’ decisions to educate their girls in the rural setting.

- By offering a modern, stimulating and socially relevant education experience, children will be motivated to complete a full course of primary schooling and continue their schooling in higher grades.

The Mobile Schools initiative is an exciting, simple, and effective way of improving the educational outcomes of those most in need. It is the way to bring quality education to the most isolated villages, to utilize current infrastructure, and to establish a partnership between government schools and civil society. It is a tool for improving attendance in schools in a village setting and convincing parents an education will bring tangible changes in quality of life and open new avenues for the students in the future. Giving marginalized rural students standards of education equivalent to city schools while maintaining the rural context will increase outcomes and school attendance and promote personal development.

The Mobile Schools project is a practical, viable, and economical way to fulfil the needs of rural communities, paving the way for the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. It is the way to meet the concerns voiced by Heads of State in the Doha Declaration that the current financial crisis and global economic slowdown could jeopardize the fulfilment of the MDGs, especially the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. It demonstrates how existing capacities and resources in civil society can be explored and used to the maximum.

Most importantly, the Mobile Schools initiative can be implemented and is sustainable in all geographic locations. It is a model for increasing enrolment, narrowing gender gaps, and extending opportunities for disadvantaged groups in education.

Notes

How far do we go in implementing language policies into the education system so as to integrate a nation’s peoples? Nearly all nations identify and determine at least one language as the official language, and some include another as the national language. This is necessary for the obvious reason that a common language would create solidarity and instil a sense of national identity and pride. However, in the pursuit of attaining competence in the language of “commodity” and “enterprise,” many minority languages and even cultures are sometimes sacrificed. Studies show that mothers, the primary supporters of education in most families, take pains to raise their children in the “school” language, rather than their own native tongue. This is to ensure that their children will have a head start as they enter primary or even pre-school.

Multi-ethnic Malaysia is renowned for its success in maintaining a harmonious balance among its people. Many know that the country consists of three main ethnic groups: Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Within each, there are several dialects or variations of the main language. In addition, there are dozens of minority languages spoken all over the country in the peninsula, as well as on the island of Borneo, where the two states of Sabah and Sarawak are located. These people belong to various indigenous communities which come under the Austronesian as well as the Austro-Asiatic languages.

The official and national language in Malaysia is Malay, or Bahasa Malaysia, and is “the basis for national integration.” However, the Government of Malaysia recognized the importance of English as an international language and added that “measures will be taken to ensure that English is taught as a strong second language.”

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In efforts to maintain the languages of the other two main ethnic groups, the government provides two different types of schools at the primary level: “national schools” where the medium of instruction is Malay, and “national-type” schools where the medium of instruction is either Chinese or Tamil. It would be naive to exclude the fact that this is a politically-driven move, given the fact that the ruling government is a coalition of the three major races. Still, it is a great effort to ensure the sustainability of these languages up to a certain point. Even within the three major ethnic groups, dialectal differences exist (Tamil to lesser extent). Malays, who speak no less than ten different dialects based on their geographical locations, may lose their dialects if there is no “intergenerational transfer.” As long as families use their dialects and pass them on to the next generation, there is hope that these dialects will stay alive.

The Chinese speak in different dialects—for example, Foochow, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, etc—based on ethnic origins. However, as children sent to Chinese schools learn in Mandarin, the official medium of instruction, their families start speaking to them in Mandarin from a young age, even before they go to school, so they can cope with their lessons. Mandarin is the language of choice for this group of people since it is perceived by them more and more as the mode of communication for trade and economy. No one can dispute the position of the Mandarin-speaking world as the next or current economic giant. The more these parents foresee their children as being a part of this future “world,” the more Malaysian Chinese children may lose their own language and culture.

That said, in the case of Malay, Chinese, and Tamil, the risk of total loss of language or dialect is negligible, as demographically these three ethnic groups are very stable. Out of a total population of 28.25 million, Malays comprise approximately 50.4 per cent, Chinese 23.7 per cent, and Indians 7.1 per cent. As with the Chinese dialects, the Malay dialects have been researched and documented by various academics, both locally and abroad, and there is still strong ethnolinguistic vitality among their speakers. In one study, linguists found that “the more vitality an ethnolinguistic group enjoys, the more it will be able to use its own language so as to survive and thrive as a collective entity.”

The fate of smaller language communities in Malaysia may not be as positive. The hundreds of existing smaller communities make up a total of 18.8 per cent of the population. The indigenous languages found on the peninsular side of Malaysia can be divided into three major language groups: the Negrito, Senoi, and Malayic (also known as
Proto-Malay); these can then be further divided into more than 18 subgroups according to their different languages and cultures.

In a 2006 study on the Mah Meri people, who speak a language which is part of the Senoi language group, it was found that among third generation Malaysians, the use of their native tongue was slowly diminishing. All children are sent to school until at least the age of fifteen. A handful have made it to tertiary education. Within the culture, there is an emphasis on education, and some of the Mah Meri people aspire to assimilate into the Malay community through their speech as well as through their attire. In fact, when interviewed for the study, they claimed to have pride in their own language but questioned why they should learn it. Their language does not serve any instrumental purpose for them to pass on to the next generation. One female interviewee even remarked on the “not so nice sounds” that emanate from the speech of her native tongue, compared to the more pleasant sounding Malay language. This group of people live in a suburban area which provides them with easy access to jobs in nearby towns and people from other language communities, for example, the Malays, Javanese, and Chinese. Even as they use their mother tongue, there are many Malay and English terms which have found their way into the Mah Meri language. For instance, they need to teach survival techniques in the jungle, including necessary “do’s and don’ts” that are esoteric to their own culture.

The Kanaq, also from the Malayic group, is one of the most endangered communities in the peninsula, with only 83 people left. This group is somewhat introverted, and education for their children is not a main priority, even though school is within easy access and transportation is specially provided for the children to and from school in the morning and at the end of the day. But often the children come home at midday on their own. According to one mother, they may decide to come home when they are bored, scolded by the teacher, or teased by other students. They prefer to keep to themselves and do not open up very easily to outsiders. Although their language has been maintained, they claim not to have any folk tales or cultural beliefs. I’m not sure if this is really the case. The greater possibility is that, unlike the Jakun and the Mah Meri, the Kanaq do not place importance on passing down their oral traditions. So this may be something that the community has lost irreversibly, even though they more or less managed to maintain their language. From my own observation, this particular community does not seem to have any ambition to move up on the social or economic ladder. It would be enlightening to see if this lack of interest in education and introversion corresponds to their ability to maintain their own language.

In the states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo, the dominant languages that cut across ethnic boundaries are Kadazan-Dusun and Iban. Even though Malay is still taught in schools and is the main medium of instruction, Kadazan-Dusun is used in Sabah, and Iban is used in Sarawak for the purposes of social networking, shopping, and local business transactions. The Iban and Kadazan-Dusun languages are even taught in schools in Sarawak and Sabah. In Sarawak, there are dozens of indigenous groups. The largest is the Iban. One of the smallest is the Lugat people, who numbered only 37 when I visited them in Sarawak in 2006. They live up the Rajang River and the quickest way to visit their longhouse...
is by boat. The longhouse is shared with the Tatau people, also a small community. It was found that among smaller communities like the Lugat and Tatau, culturally exogamous marriages are common. Many are found to intermarry with the more dominant Iban group. Naturally, the Iban language takes precedence as a language of choice within an exogamous marriage, as the lingua franca in Sarawak is more often Iban. Driven by the desire for higher education and a better way of life, even among the smaller indigenous groups in Sarawak and Sabah, people learn and actively use Iban/Kadazan-Dusun, Malay, and English.

Malaysia is extremely lucky to be blessed with such diverse ethnic groups. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Asia Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO, a non-profit organization, Malaysia has a literacy rate of more than 93 per cent. As far as language planning policies go, the government has been successful in ensuring that all its people are at least orally proficient in the national language, thus inculcating national pride and identity. With a common language we have one nation, breaking down all barriers to communication and understanding. Many interested parties, foundations, and researchers, local and abroad, endeavour to describe and document the various minority languages in Malaysia for the purpose of sustainability. We cannot stop the wave of modernization and the advancement in social standing through education in the formal languages. But at the same time it is imperative that we make an equal effort to maintain the diverse native languages and cultures of people. Otherwise, we will be faced with the risk of erasing minority languages from the face of the Earth.

Notes
1 Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980
One of the myths current today, spread by media events such as Al Gore’s film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, is that everyone will be equal in facing the ecological and human catastrophe of climate change. This is simply not true. Clear thinking about climate change and its likely impact on cultural integrity, transmission, and diversity requires that one take note of the glaring differences today among people on the planet.

**URGENT NEED TO IDENTIFY WINNERS AND LOSERS**

Climate change will produce winners and losers. Africa and poor Africans will be more heavily impacted. They and their governments have meagre technical and financial resources to provide capital-intensive buffers against the impact of climate change. For example, only one per cent of African agriculture uses irrigation. Most people in rural sub-Saharan Africa to some extent remain dependent on rain-fed agriculture and livestock. While this is also true of a substantial number of rural people in northern China, parts of South and South-East Asia, Central America and the Andean countries, in most cases the nation-states in those regions have more capacity to assist rural people in adapting their livelihoods.

**URGENT NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT PEOPLE’S SPONTANEOUS ADAPTATION**

Cultural adaptation to climate change is going on right now. Isolated groups of rural people in the Andes, the mangrove-forested coasts of South-East Asia, and the savannas of Africa are not passively waiting for experts to come and tell them how to adapt. It is urgent to understand how rural people understand climate change and what they, themselves, are doing about it. Capacity for doing the participatory action research required to reveal spontaneous adaptation needs to be built up in countries where, to date, the emphasis has been on technical modelling and national policy formulation.

*Continued on page 25 ➤*

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BEN WISNER is Director of International Studies, California State University at Long Beach, USA.
1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
... to provide for their children’s nutrition
Children whose height for age is more than two standard deviations below average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s education</th>
<th>No education</th>
<th>Primary education</th>
<th>Secondary or higher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary or higher</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Achieve universal primary education
... to get their children to school
Children 6-12 years old who have ever attended school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s education</th>
<th>No education</th>
<th>Primary education</th>
<th>Secondary or higher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary or higher</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Improve maternal health
... to have a skilled professional at childbirth
Births attended by a skilled health professional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s education</th>
<th>No education</th>
<th>Primary education</th>
<th>Secondary or higher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary or higher</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
... to protect themselves and their families from disease

Prepared for the UN Chronicle by the Statistics Division, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

“Poorest households” correspond to the 40% of the population living in the poorest households; “wealthiest households” correspond to the 60% of the population living in the wealthiest households. Number of countries in each chart varies between 29 and 39 depending on data availability (Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Etiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Ukraine, Zambia, Zimbabwe). All data collected in Demographic and Health Surveys conducted from 2004-2009.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
   ... to address their own needs
   Women who have a final say in their own health care

4. Reduce child mortality
   ... to guarantee their children's survival
   Children over one year old immunized against measles

7. Ensure environmental sustainability
   ... to ensure adequate sanitation
   Women living in a household with a flush toilet

8. Develop a global partnership for development
   ... to benefit from information and communication technologies
   Women with access to a cell phone
EDUCATION as a MEANS to PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

© ELLIE VAN HOUTTE
URGENT NEED TO PREPARE FOR POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

Climate change will exacerbate current trends in rural depopulation, international wage migration, forced displacement due to mega-projects, and the flight of people from conflict areas. Today international institutions and non-governmental organizations are experienced in dealing with the problems produced by refugees and displacement. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is one, the International Organization for Migration is another, the United Nations Development Programme has specialists who work on post-conflict recovery issues and UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, has developed expertise in providing continuing education for the children of the displaced. Yet none of these agencies has enough resources, and the demands on them are bound to increase. They need more financial support.

We also need better understanding of what happens to rural people and their cultures when they are forced from their home localities or even far from familiar regions and ecosystems. Specialist academic and clinical centres in the world have worked for some time on post-conflict issues. In a similar way, many centres of development studies have done research on employment strategies, retraining people for new livelihoods, and creating jobs. The health specialty known as “cultural psychiatry” has concerned itself with the impact of migration from one culture to another, but the treatment is individualistic; it is not concerned with the impact on the culture per se, or its transmission and survival. Developing regional centres that study this set of problems from an applied point of view is also an urgent priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From this sketch of the key issues, nine specific recommendations follow:

1. Build local capacity to understand the knowledge and beliefs of native people about climate change and their attempts to adapt their livelihoods to changing conditions.

2. Capture stories from the older generation of how they coped with extreme events and crises in the past. Understanding the oral history of people’s past efforts to cope and adapt can hold the key to present and future solutions; yet this history is being lost.

3. Train technical workers, such as agricultural extensionists, veterinarians and livestock specialists, and water engineers and planners to appreciate and respect local knowledge.

4. Train policy makers to appreciate and respect local knowledge without looking through modernizationist and colonial lenses, seeing it as merely an obstacle to progress.

5. Train media representatives to see cultural diversity as akin to biodiversity, as a resource for the whole of society, allowing innovative ways of adapting to climate change based on a dialogue between local knowledge and outside specialist knowledge.

6. Integrate understanding climate change into ongoing efforts to give special attention to women and children in development. This includes work on employment and microcredit, and in areas of energy technology and forestry, health, food security, water supply, and sanitation. Knowledge from women and children about climate and how to cope with extremes should be taken seriously.

7. Redouble efforts to enforce cultural impact assessment and countermeasures where rural people are unavoidably relocated from mega-project sites.

8. Incorporate climate change into school curricula and learning materials, paying attention to the needs of minority language speakers.

9. Identify historical buildings and structures of special cultural significance likely to be harmed by stronger coastal storms, flooding, landslides provoked by intense rainfall, and rising sea levels. Take steps to protect or to move them. Do this in consultation with the groups of people for whom the structure has particular cultural significance.

Notes


The Black Sea region has been defined as a cradle of human civilization. Among its past historical riches, the region is home to the Legend of Jason and the Argonauts and their search for the Golden Fleece, and the biblical account of Noah’s Ark. Athens, Istanbul, Odessa, Sevastopol, Troy, and Yalta are just a few of the names on the Black Sea coast that have a place in world history.

In antiquity, the concept of university as an arena for free debates, and profound analyses on subjects of major concern for individuals and communities, has been conceived and developed in the Black Sea region.

From the crusades and the Golden Hoard to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the region has witnessed multiple religious and political changes. In the face of countless conquests through the ages, the people of the region have endured and today represent a remarkable mixture of cultures and religions.

With a large stockpile of oil, gas, and mineral resources, with excellent conditions for agriculture and located at the crossroads of east-west, north-south transport corridors, the Black Sea region has large economic potential. According to the World Bank, with 336 million inhabitants populating 19 million square kilometres the region had a growth rate of 7.3 per cent in 2006 generating a combined gross domestic product of $1.3 billion.

However, the Black Sea region still suffers from several unresolved conflicts in Trans-Dniester, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ossetia, and Kosovo.

Industrialization, extensive and intensive farming, and regional population explosion have caused irreversible soil degradation, overfishing, eutrophication, and the flow of chemical and radioactive poisons into the Black Sea. As a consequence, the sea is in danger of becoming a toxic and nearly lifeless ecosystem—an ecological disaster with few equals.

In order to address these challenges, following a recommendation of PABSEC or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Black Sea Universities Network was established in 1998 at the second Conference of Rectors from the Black Sea Region.

The region’s academic community welcomed the Network with enthusiasm and it has grown to 117 universities representing 12 member countries of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, viz.,

By EDEN MAMUT
Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Since its establishment twelve years ago, the Network has promoted the mobility of students and academic staff, organized scientific meetings, summer schools, and workshops in different fields. Today it is an extremely valuable platform for cooperation, professional exchanges, and long-lasting human connections.

The fundamental pillars of the Black Sea Universities Network are:

- Active involvement in the sustainable development of the region.
- Promoting the role of universities from passive organizations into active engines of social, economic, and cultural development.
- Involving universities in scientific research, knowledge transfer, and innovation in order to facilitate the emergence of high-value economic sectors.
- Direct contribution to energy security and integration of renewable energy sources.
- Conceiving innovative solutions for social cohesion and prevention of conflicts in the region.

I shall present a few achievements facilitated under the framework of this Network.

The Black Sea region witnessed environmental disasters like Chernobyl, spills in the Azov Sea, and industrial complexes that look like landscapes from other planets.

Since its establishment, the Black Sea Universities Network has concentrated on the sustainable development of the region. The Kiev Declaration of the University Rectors for the Sustainable
Development of the Black Sea Region, signed on the occasion of the Network’s 2008 Congress, states: “We believe that urgent actions are needed to address these fundamental problems and reverse the trends. Equilibrated demographic policies, eco-innovation by adoption of environmentally sound industrial and agricultural technologies, reforestation, and ecological restoration are crucial elements in creating an equitable and sustainable future for all citizens of our region in harmony with nature. Universities have a major role in the education, research, policy formation, and information exchange necessary to make these goals possible.”

The outcome of this Declaration is visible in the many universities in the region which have introduced new programmes on sustainable development at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate levels and more environmental curricula both leading to a more active involvement by students. New cooperation has been recently initiated with the Baltic University Programme, a regional university network, to generate synergies between the Baltic and Black Sea regions on education for sustainable development.

The second example of the Network’s activities is in the preservation of minority languages.

During the centuries of clashes between military and political powers in the Black Sea region, the local communities suffered complex processes of relocation, division, or reconsideration of their political, economic or religious rights.

A typical case is that of the Crimean Tatars whose relocation from Crimea started at the end of eighteenth century. But the most dramatic phase had been under Joseph Stalin whose directive on 18 May 1944 led women, children, and the infirm to be loaded onto trucks, taken to the nearest train station, loaded onto cattle wagons, and shipped off to Central Asia, the Urals, and other remote areas of the Soviet Union. After fifty-five years, the survivors have succeeded in obtaining the right to return to their homeland. But, overlapping with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and without any political, legal or economic support, the reintegration of the Crimean Tatars opened a new drama in the region which may turn explosive in the future.

The Black Sea Universities Network has addressed this issue very carefully. The Taurida National University and the Technical and Pedagogical University of Crimea (TPUC), in cooperation with the National Technical University of Ukraine (NTUU), developed advanced quantitative models and are offering decision makers and civil society tools for analyses and simulation of economic, political, legal, or environmental outcomes in the Crimean subregion.

A working group at TPUC dedicated to the reform of the Crimean Tatar language is currently working with Ovidius University of Constanta in Romania and Sakarya University in Turkey. In addition, the Network, in cooperation with the European Council and European Commission, organized an International Conference on the Protection of Minority and Regional Languages in Bucharest in December 2008, which evaluated the status of implementation of the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages. As a case study, the status of the Crimean Tatar language used in Bulgaria, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine, and several other countries was assessed and a report presented at the First World Congress of Crimean Tatars held in Simferopol in 2009. This was followed by a special committee from TPUC and other organizations to reform the Crimean Tatar alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin, and the first draft of the proposed reform has been distributed to the Network’s member universities in Azerbaijan, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, and Ukraine. In parallel, a programme to teach the Crimean Tatar language in Romania and Ukraine has been developed by TPUC and Ovidius University of Constanta with the support of the ministries of education of Romania and Ukraine. Under the agreement, workshops, seminars, training courses, and debates about the curricula, lesson planning, teaching technologies, and support activities were organized using information and communication technology tools and a dedicated website.

Recently, a group of four teachers and thirty Tatar pupils between the ages of eight and sixteen from Romania participated in a summer camp in Staryi Krym, together with their colleagues from Crimea, Ukraine. Coordinated by TPUC, the camp aimed to test the final curriculum, teaching plans, and methodologies that would be used as standard reference for teaching the Crimean Tatar language in Romania and Ukraine.

The third example of activities developed by the Black Sea Universities Network’s activities is in the preservation of minority languages.

“Since its establishment twelve years ago, the Black Sea Universities Network has promoted the mobility of students and academic staff and organized scientific meetings, summer schools, and workshops in different fields. Today it is an extremely valuable platform for cooperation, professional exchanges, and long-lasting human connections.”

“...”

EDEN MAMUT • THE BLACK SEA REGION: ACADEMIC IMPACT AND EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
The Black Sea region has large energy resources and is an important transit platform for oil and gas flowing to the European Union countries. The environmental problems in the region however have a direct impact on the exploitation of renewable energy sources, which is possible only with cross-border cooperation. Unfortunately, with conflicts and clashes between different communities over investment projects, including the exploitation of renewable energy sources, the region has inherited a non-cooperative mentality.

In order to address this, in 1998, the Black Sea Universities Network, with the support of the NATO Science Program, Duke University, USA, and a large group of scientists from different universities in the Black Sea region and worldwide, established the Centre for Advanced Engineering Sciences (CAES) to exchange ideas and initiate joint research projects. In 2006, at the Network’s Congress held in Varna, Bulgaria, a sustainable energy strategy for the region emphasized the role of universities in promoting solutions. Soon the Network established various partnerships: with the International Centre for Hydrogen Energy Technologies, a project of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in Istanbul, for cleaning up the river waters and wetlands; with the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre in Petten, Netherlands for development of a regional Summer School on Fundamentals of Fuel Cell Technologies; and with the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development in Rome for the preparation of multimedia training on energy management and renewable energy sources.

As an exploratory project, five member universities, namely, Istanbul Technical University, Taurida University, Technical University of Moldova, Technical University of Varna, and Ovidius University of Constanta decided to harmonize their master’s degree programmes on energy management and prepare a future regional joint degree programme.

Even if the main focus of the Black Sea Universities Network is cooperation in education, the participation of its member universities in research and innovation activities is of equal importance. In 2008, CAES represented the Network in a pilot project on knowledge and innovation communities called SUCCESS or Searching Unprecedented Cooperation on Climate and Energy to ensure Sustainability that defined requirements for future knowledge and innovation communities. Following this, CAES was selected as a partner in the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) sustainable energy project—InnoEnergy. The EIT-InnoEnergy Consortium is coordinated by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Germany, grouping leading universities, research institutions, and innovative companies, and “envisioned paving the way for an independent and sustainable energy system enabling a climate-neutral Europe by 2050 … by successful commercialization of innovations.”

In 2010, the Black Sea Universities Network, the Eurasian Universities Association, and the Association of Universities from the Caspian Sea Region organized a forum on higher education at Moscow State University. With more than one thousand participants, the event captured the attention of the larger region’s academic community. Speakers said that the Black Sea region universities should take into account the social demands of their communities when considering the creation, development, and transfer of and inquiry into scientific, technological, and cultural issues. Likewise, universities should think about the scientific and technical support they can provide their communities in their cultural, social, and economic development. But more than ever, the speakers argued, universities should assume a leading role in society and participate actively in crucial decisions by providing innovative solutions for the sustainable development and welfare of their communities.
Reducing Poverty through Education — and How

By IDRissa B. MSHoro

There is no strict consensus on a standard definition of poverty that applies to all countries. Some define poverty through the inequality of income distribution, and some through the miserable human conditions associated with it. Irrespective of such differences, poverty is widespread and acute by all standards in sub-Saharan Africa, where gross domestic product (GDP) is below $1,500 per capita purchasing power parity, where more than 40 per cent of their people live on less than $1 a day, and poor health and schooling hold back productivity. According to the 2009 Human Development Report, sub-Saharan Africa’s Human Development Index, which measures development by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment, and income lies in the range of 0.45–0.55, compared to 0.7 and above in other regions of the world. Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa will continue to rise unless the benefits of economic development reach the people. Some sub-Saharan countries have therefore formulated development visions and strategies, identifying respective sources of growth.

Tanzania Case Study

The Tanzania Development Vision 2025, for example, aims at transforming a low productivity agricultural economy into a semi-industrialized one through medium-term frameworks, the latest being the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). A review of NSGRP implementation, documented in Tanzania’s Poverty and Human Development Report 2009, attributed the falling GDP—from 7.8 per cent in 2004 to 6.7 per cent in 2006—to the prolonged drought during 2005/06. A further fall to 5 per cent was projected by 2009 due to the global financial crisis. While the proportion of households living below the poverty line reduced slightly from 35.7 per cent in 2000 to 33.6 per cent in 2007, the actual number of poor Tanzanians is increasing because the population is growing at a faster rate. The 2009 HDR showed a similar trend whereby the Human Development Index in Tanzania shot up from 0.436 to 0.53 between 1990 and 2007, and in the same year the GDP reached $1,208 per capita purchasing power parity. Again, the improvements, though commendable, are still modest when compared...
1 GUINEA — A boy at Tombo school in Conakry shows a picture he drew of a cafeteria, the most important addition he would like to see at the school. The school lacks a cafeteria, fresh running water, functioning toilets, and electricity. © DARREN ORNITZ

2 INDIA — Photo taken inside Pudupet Slum, one of the largest slum colonies in Chennai. At an age when every child likes and prefers to play with toys, this one was seen playing with a notebook and pen. This child is probably anxious to receive an education and start learning at this early age. © M.G. VIGNESH MANIKANDAN

3 MEXICO — Outdoor classroom. Tzotzil women learning despite the lack of comfort. © UNESCO/VICTOR MANUEL CAMACHO
with the goal of NSGRP and Millennium Development Goal 1 to reduce by 50 per cent the number of people whose income is less than $1 a day by 2010 and 2015. 

More deliberate efforts are therefore required to redress the situation, with more emphasis placed particularly on education, as most poverty-reduction interventions depend on the availability of human capital for spearheading them. The envisaged economic growth depends on the quantity and quality of inputs, including land, natural resources, labour, and technology. Quality of inputs to a great extent relies on embodied knowledge and skills, which are the basis for innovation, technology development and transfer, and increased productivity and competitiveness. 

A quick assessment in June 2010 of education statistics in Tanzania indicated that primary school enrolment increased by 5.8 per cent, from 7,959,884 pupils in 2006 to 8,419,305 in 2010. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) was 106.4 per cent. The transition rate from primary to secondary schools, however, decreased by 6.6 per cent from 49.3 per cent in 2005 to 43.9 per cent in 2009. On an annual average, out of 789,739 pupils who completed primary education, only 418,864 continued on to secondary education, notwithstanding the expansion of secondary school enrolment, from 675,672 students in 2006 to 1,638,699 in 2010, a GER increase from 14.8 to 34.0 percent. Moreover, the observed expansion in secondary school education mainly took place from grades one through four, where the number increased from 630,245 in 2006 to 1,566,685 students in 2010. As such, out of 141,527 students who on an annual average completed ordinary secondary education, only 36,014 proceeded to advanced secondary education. Some improvements have also been recorded at the tertiary level. While enrolment in universities was 37,667 students in 2004/05, there were 118,951 in 2009/10.

Adding to this number the students in non-university tertiary institutions totalled 50,173 in 2009/10 and the overall tertiary enrolment reached 169,124 students, providing a GER of 5.3 percent, which is very low.

The observed transition rates imply that, on average, 370,875 primary school children terminate their education journey every year at 13 to 14 years of age in Tanzania. The 17- to 19-year-old secondary school graduates, unable to obtain opportunities for further education, worsen the situation and the overall negative impact on economic growth is very apparent, unless there are other opportunities to develop and empower the secondary school graduates. Vocational education and training could be one such opportunity, but the total current enrolment in vocational education in Tanzania is about 117,000 trainees, which is still far from actual needs. A long-term strategy is therefore critical to expand the capacity for vocational education and training so as to increase the employability of the rising numbers of out-of-school youths. This fact was also apparent in the 2006 Tanzania Integrated Labour Force Survey, which indicated that youth between 15 and 24 years were more likely to be unemployed compared to other age groups because they were entering the labour market for the first time without any skills or work experience. The NSGRP target was to reduce unemployment from 12.9 per cent in 2000/01 to 6.9 per cent by 2010; hence the unemployment rate of 11 per cent in 2006 was disheartening.

One can easily notice that while enrolment in basic education is promising, the situation at other levels remains bleak in meeting poverty reduction targets. Moreover, apart from the noticeably low university enrolment in Tanzania, only 29 per cent of students are taking science and technology courses, probably due to the small catchment pool at lower levels. While this is so, sustainable and broad-based growth requires strengthening of the link between agriculture and industry. Agriculture needs to be modernized for increased productivity and profitability; small and medium enterprises, promoted, with particular emphasis on agro-processing, technology innovation, and upgrading the use of technologies for value addition; and all, with no or minimum negative impact on the environment. Increased investments in human and physical capital are also highly advocated, focusing on efficient and cost-effective provision of infrastructure for energy, information and communication technologies, and transport with special attention to opening up rural and other areas with economic potential. All these point to the promotion of education in science and technology. Special incentives for attracting investments towards accelerating growth are also emphasized. Experience from elsewhere indicates that foreign direct investment contributes effectively to economic growth when the country has a highly-educated workforce. Domestic firms also need to be supported and encouraged to pay attention to product development and innovation for ensuring quality and appropriate marketing strategies that make them competitive and capable of responding to global market conditions.

It is therefore very apparent from the Tanzania example that most of the required interventions for growth and the reduction of poverty require a critical mass of high-quality educated people at different levels to effectively respond to the sustainable development challenges of nations.
By LOTTE N. GOEDE AND DONNA PULESE-MURPHY

Mom Phoeun, who lives in rural Cambodia, lost his father at a young age, and his mother is suffering from chronic illnesses. With cow herding being their only source of income, they could not make enough money to pay for her rising medical costs. Mom Phoeun sought relief by attending the SimplyHelp Tailoring School which had just established itself in his village. By learning a trade and distinguishing himself, Mom Phoeun is now not only able to support himself, but can also provide for the care that his mother desperately needs.

Cambodia is a country burdened with a legacy of conflict. The Khmer Rouge,
led by Pol Pot, seized power in 1975. An estimated 1.7 million Cambodians died; most intellectuals and educated people were executed, and their cultural heritage destroyed. The devastation of the Pol Pot regime remains with the people of Cambodia, now one of the poorest countries in the world.

In 2001, the SimplyHelp Foundation decided to establish a branch in Cambodia. The Foundation’s two vocational training schools—a Tailoring School and a Computer School—have over 4,000 graduates, of which 85 per cent find jobs working for large companies, in banking, for non-governmental organizations or open up their own storefronts. Some go on to higher education.

Mobile Tailoring School—Sewing up Poverty Wounds

The SimplyHelp Tailoring School opened its doors officially in 2002. Many had the means to learn not only a trade but how to be self-sufficient. The school is mobile and goes to poor villages in the middle of rice fields where it is needed most. When a farming village is chosen as the school’s next destination, the village chief opens up his home and turns it into a temporary school. A highly-qualified master sewing teacher is sent from Phnom Penh to this village two or three days a week to train two assistant teachers who teach on the days she is not in the village. There are two classes per day, which allows the students to go to school either in the morning or afternoon, and to work their land the other part of the day. Students are trained for six months and classes are free. Since its inception, the school has moved eight times and, to date, has graduated 1,686 students.

The need for this type of education in rural Cambodia is staggering. In the village of Krang, for example, within three months after graduation, ten out of eighty graduates established small businesses in their living rooms with just a sewing machine and some fabric, and all of them have been able to earn good money. In other villages as well, graduates have opened tailoring shops which provide them with steady, reliable incomes—in sharp contrast to the difficulties that go along with being farmers. Some of these shops have developed into authentic-looking businesses with glass displays, beautiful clothes, and proud owners.

Tailoring School's Social and Economic Impact

Former tailoring school graduates who have started their own businesses have taken on apprentices, thus passing on their knowledge. These apprentices pay the master tailor $150 and can stay with the tailor until they have mastered the essential skills. When asked why they choose to pay $150 to learn the trade when they can get paid to learn it at a government school, their answer is “quality!”

According to Vuthi Seng, Coordinator of SimplyHelp Cambodia, the social status of women changes after graduation. “Young Cambodian rural women traditionally have to stay home,” he says. “However, once a young lady graduates from the SimplyHelp Tailoring School in her village, which takes much less time than the two to three years required in a private school in the capital, she has a skill and can earn an income. She now has a more equal relationship with her husband; otherwise she is treated as a subject...
to her husband and has little decision-making power in the home.”

Additionally, not only does this heightened income affect a woman’s social status, but it affects a community at large. For instance, all students at the tailoring school are farmers and cow herders and have an average income of $1 to $2 per day. But graduates with their own businesses increase their average income from $3 to $7 per day. This extra income is not only used for basic needs, but is also re-invested in their own businesses and in their communities.

**COMPUTER SCHOOL—PROCESSING THE POSSIBILITIES**

The SimplyHelp Cambodia Computer School also opened in 2002 and is located in the capital Phnom Penh. Due to the high-quality training and low cost, 200 to 250 students apply for the 100 available training spots every three months. Typically, the students selected are from low-income households, orphans, or have a disability. During these classes they learn Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. From 2002 to 2009, the Computer School had 2,784 graduates.

The school’s teacher, Sophat Phoung, is a disabled young man from a rural area of Cambodia. Due to an accident in his early childhood, his right leg does not function anymore, which significantly reduced his job opportunities. So in 2002 he attended the computer school and worked as a volunteer after graduation. Due to his hard work and dedication, he was hired as a teacher in the school in 2003 and not only can he support himself now, but he can also provide income for his family.

**COMPUTER SCHOOL’S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT**

There are signs that Cambodia is catching up with the rest of the information technology world as the Computer School has seen an increase in demand for more specialized computer training in QuickBooks, Photoshop, Access, and Peachtree.

A notable trend is that, although there are more male than female students, the number of female students has steadily increased over the years. Common jobs for graduates include data entry for companies or working at the cash register in supermarkets. It might not occur to people in the West that one needs to have basic computer skills to operate a cash register. Many others become business managers, administrators, or teachers, such as Ky Bun Heang, who became executive director for a Japanese NGO operating in Cambodia and specializing in the education field; Miss Chea Lida, who became a manager at one of the most successful Cambodian Banks; or Mr. Nuty, who became a provincial manager at the Department of National Treasury in Rattanankiri province.

SimplyHelp Cambodia is an educational model for economic and societal success, but certainly more work needs to be done. No matter how small or large, it is critical to support these kinds of vocational education endeavours which not only help individuals build a new life for themselves, but also help perpetuate a self-sustaining community.

Lotte N. GoeDE is Director of Development for The SimplyHelp Foundation which has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. DONNA PULESE-MUPRHY is an independent writer and educator.
In recent years, we have constantly been reminded that we are living in a knowledge economy. Societies that invest most heavily in training their citizens will therefore be in the best position on the global chessboard. Thus, education is being given a new role in the concept of competition. Not only is this concept of competition encouraged within society, whether in the North or South, the implication is that the primary benefit of an education is economic. For this reason, skills which are not specifically related to knowledge are frequently overvalued, often at the expense of fields of knowledge that are considered abstract and useless.

It is, however, no secret that the modern world was built on tacit or explicit knowledge through the courageous actions of city dwellers who, like Galileo and Michelangelo, challenged established beliefs and world views that were considered immutable. They, of course,
did so not only in spite of dominant establishments, but also with the support of newly-emerging institutions and new types of power. We should also bear in mind that the dissemination of new forms of knowledge during the Age of Enlightenment was facilitated by a significant technological development—printing. New forms of media communication such as the Internet are, without a doubt, an equally important step forward in the dissemination of knowledge and information.

Yet how much influence would printing have had without changes in society brought about by rising levels of school enrolment that gave most citizens of Western societies access to the written word? Thus, universal education and literacy both provided access to information and made it possible for citizens to express their will, at least in principle. Of course it took several centuries for education, which was for a long time a prerogative of the elite, to spread to all sectors of Western society. Universal education through compulsory primary school enrolment, which must first and foremost be viewed as a right, constituted a genuine revolution thanks to the establishment of state-run public schools. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the world’s population does not yet enjoy the right to this fundamental source of instruction in reading and writing, which would give these people access to information and self-expression on a civil level through either print or electronic media. Furthermore, what is the use of producing increasingly efficient and affordable communication technologies if many people are unable to use them due to their lack of knowledge in deciphering messages and information?

Thus, the development of democracy and grass roots participation cannot be ensured unless responsible government and state institutions provide universal access to basic education for every citizen regardless of his or her economic status. Only institutions geared towards public interest are capable of ensuring basic access to knowledge and to universal secondary and higher education. Strangely, over the past few decades, there has been a tendency in ultra-modern societies to view education as a personal issue, and access to education as a personal investment. The idea of competition in education is brought about by promoting the ranking of institutions, including public schools, and especially by making comparisons between public and private schools. New forms of elitism are entering the field of education and some organizations and establishments are advertising what are considered Grandes Ecoles (prestigious institutions of higher education), thereby justifying a higher cost for education for those who are clearly able to pay. These depictions of education are an attempt to instill the idea of an education market, claiming that the approach guarantees those students aiming to acquire profitable knowledge a higher-quality product.

This trend is a movement away from both the right to education—which should be viewed as a universal right—and a concept of education, not only which includes profitability but which first and foremost prepares every individual to participate in civic life and shape his or her society. Introducing variables into the education framework may, of course, promote innovation and necessary change. But should this necessarily incite education marketing and competitiveness and the establishment of schools for the elite? People often refer to the necessary balance of having a private and a public school network. In addition, too little importance is attached to the experience acquired by years of life education through social movements and civil society organizations.

The labour movement emerged two hundred years ago during the industrial revolution. Mutual aid organizations were among the first to appear, followed by workers’ cooperatives and trade unions. Not only were they extremely resourceful and innovative, but they have been, and still are, the genuine schools of decision making and participation in addition to providing training in economics and social rights advocacy. This has also given rise to a tradition of social economics which has continued for over a century. Businesses that operate in this environment have an essential sense of community, ensuring involvement and open discussion by allowing its members and spokespersons to negotiate with political and economic institutions, thereby helping to democratize the economy. The same is true of more recent social movements, such as the women’s movement, whose organizations are a genuine training ground for social rights advocacy, active civic integration, and the development of alternative service providers. We find the same forms of learning and training in debates on environmental issues and globalization models.

What these various kinds of organizations and their networks have in common is their sense of community. They give individuals the freedom to join a bigger group, and they are dedicated to community—and often universal—interests, rather than to personal ones. In this respect, they provide a more legitimate and credible counterbalance to the public education system.

“It is no secret that the modern world was built on tacit or explicit knowledge through the courageous actions of city dwellers who, like Galileo and Michelangelo, drove back established beliefs and world views that were considered immutable.”
The UN Chronicle has evolved over the past years into an increasingly attentive and inclusive journal. The focus of each number on a specific issue, like climate change or disarmament, makes it possible to examine these questions from a variety of viewpoints. Its contributors testify to its broad geographic outlook. Recent issues have featured articles by academics, UN officials, government representatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and recently, the fanciful innovation of testimony by novelists. What are largely missing, however, are the voices from people’s organizations directly representing those sectors of the population most affected by the issues under discussion.

Not surprisingly, these same voices are generally missing from the current debate around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were crafted a decade ago in a process from which civil society was excluded despite its intensive participation in the Summits of the 1990s from which the goals were distilled. There was only token civil society participation in the Millennium Summit and the subsequent Millennium +5 Summit, although the 2005 scenario did see the introduction of an interactive dialogue between civil society and the General Assembly three months before the main event. The situation is a little better in 2010—selected civil society representatives have participated in the MDG Summit Roundtables on 20-22 September 2010, and the outcome of the interactive dialogue held from 14-15 June 2010 was considered as a formal input to the preparation of the Summit outcome. However, if we look inside the “civil society basket,” we find that the overwhelming majority of spokespersons come from NGOs. They are often articulate advocates of important values and positions but do not have a mandate to speak for those most directly concerned by the MDG targets. Out of the fifty-two speakers at this year’s interactive dialogue, forty-five were from NGOs, and only seven from people’s organizations: five representing rural and indigenous women, one from an international trade union, and one from a disabled people’s organization.

What does it matter who speaks, one might ask, so long as the “right” views are voiced? For one thing, people who take it upon themselves to speak on behalf of others often get it wrong, however well-intentioned they may be. The advocacy platforms of international NGOs may contain planks that contrast with the agendas of the sectors of the world’s population “on behalf of whom” they are lobbying, but with whom they have not necessarily consulted. For
If we look inside the ‘civil society basket,’ we find that the overwhelming majority of spokespersons come from NGOs. They are often articulate advocates of important values and positions but do not have a mandate to speak for those most directly concerned by the Millennium Development Goals’ targets.
another, those most affected by poverty, hunger, and violence against women are not just victims of problems, they are also the prime actors in finding solutions. The practices they have developed in coping with difficulties are often take-off points for alternative solutions, like the pro-poor housing promoted by community members of the Shack/Slum Dwellers International network. Finally, people's organizations are key to mobilizing political will for change and resistance to the arrogant super-power of economic interests. Small family farmers are the majority of the electorate in West African countries, yet their voices have been ignored for decades. However, now that they have self-organized into the Network of Farmers’ and Agricultural Producers’ Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA), Peasant Organizations and Producers in West Africa representing some fifty million farmers, their governments have learned that it is better to have the peasants with you than against you, and are starting to stand up to conditionalities imposed from outside. People's organizations have a fundamental role to play in ringing out the era of impunity, as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has put it, and ushering in a new age of accountability.

If it is indeed important to empower people's organizations to speak for themselves, what would it take to make it happen in the UN context? One fundamental step is to respect the requirements for meaningful dialogue with organizations that are geographically scattered throughout the peripheries of the world, are not necessarily English-speaking or eternally hooked up to the internet, and are committed to consulting with their base before taking decisions. These conditions include ensuring their timely access to strategic information in a form that is accessible

Can voices of people belonging to grassroot organizations be heard in global policy making? How can thousands of people's organizations from around the world set up networks, deliberate on shared values and common actions, generate a democratic process without formal mechanisms of representation, and interact effectively with the United Nations? The answer—in the case of food security—is in this excellent book by Nora McKeon, a scholar, activist, and insider who has been involved with the Food and Agriculture Organization’s relations with civil society. Following a detailed reconstruction of experiences in UN-civil society relations, the book shows how a variety of activist voices—non-governmental organizations at first, later peasant’s organizations—have obtained a role in decision-making on global food issues. Over the past decade, people's organizations have developed a capacity to act as legitimate players in global institutions without being co-opted. They integrate protest with an ability to affect policy outcomes. As a result, the concepts of the right to food, food sovereignty, and agroecology are establishing themselves as credible and practical alternatives to the dominant view of food as a commodity like all others.

Beyond food, the book presents the results of a survey on UN-civil society relationships in a variety of UN system offices and has important lessons for mobilization on global issues and for activists engaging in the difficult art of dealing with UN meetings, summits, committees, and agencies. Difficulties and unresolved questions abound, but the direction outlined in the book is important for both global institutions aiming to become more democratic and civil society groups aiming to be more effective. The conclusion of the book stresses the need to extend the political process—confined traditionally in national arenas—to global issues, putting politics and people back into the often isolated mechanisms of global governance.

Reviewed By Mario Pianta

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to them and their members; recognizing their right to self-organize and to select their own spokesper- sons; respecting their languages, agendas, time-frames, and consul- tation practices; and mobilizing the necessary resources to meet these requirements.  Another step is that

principles are already being put into practice around some of the key issues that the UN system is address- ing. The global governance of food is one of these. The crisis in food price of late 2007 opened up a political opportunity for engagement with small food producers’ organizations, which have been building up their networks and capacity for inter- vention in policy forums since the World Food Summits of 1996 and 2002. The reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), housed in the Food and Agriculture Organization, was negotiated during 2009 through an innovative and inclusive process that accom- modated unprecedented quality

input by these networks. The result has been the birth of a “new” CFS in which civil society—with the accent on organizations representing those most affected by food insecurity—will be full participants in a year-round process that enables non-state actors to help frame the terms of the debate. The process aims at building two-way links between multi-actor policy spaces at national, regional, and global levels. The new CFS was inaugurated in October 2010 and the voices of people’s organizations came through strong and clear, along with those of governments and UN officials. Change in the direction of more legitimate global governance practices is not only necessary, it is possible and is happening.

Notes

1 One example is the short-sighted NGO campaigns to cut or eliminate agricul- tural subsidies in the United States and in the European Union. In contrast, small farmer organizations of the South, in soli- darity with their sisters and brothers in the North, take the more sophisticated position that agriculture should be sub- sidized in its multifunctional role and the common goods it produces, which means subsidizing sustainable fam- ily farming rather than— as at present—industrial agricultural production and the agribusiness “food chain.”

2 Like the Economic Partnership Agree- ment, negotiations between the Euro- pean Union and the Economic Commu- nity of West African States (ECOWAS) in which, thanks in good part to ROPPA’s advocacy, the latter is insisting on an adequately protected regional market to ensure that local food producers are not undercut by “dumped” products from Europe.

3 Basic principles for engagement between the UN system and people’s movements are documented in a recent publication, Strengthening Dia- logue: UN Experience with Small Farmer Organizations and Indigenous Peoples (Nora McKeon and Carol Kalafatic, UN NGO Liaison Service 2009) avail- able at http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=peoplemovements.
You too can be a part of this process of change!

400 institutions in more than 80 countries

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Contact:
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Email: AcademicImpact@un.org
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As a faculty member, it’s a great topic for discussion [Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment]. I highly recommend all other faculty consider posting a link to the UN Academic Impact Facebook on your course sites.
—LYDIA

Women leaders create innovative profitable business and marketplace ingenuity.
—GRAEME

I hope that eventually will see to fruition a more globally equal and appreciative status for women.
—GEORDANA

Congratulations UN Academic Impact team. You have indeed started a great canvas for people all around the world to paint, write and share!! This is a great idea and hope to get my students participate.
—PADMINI

A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education.
—MUHAMMAD

Here in Argentina there are some genuinely aimed at improving retention rates in primary and secondary schools.
—NAHUEL

Gender equality and women empowerment needs to be more on the focus of discussions on the global level and it’s a privilege to see that UN Women Watch will be taking on this challenging and rewarding task.
—PATIENCE

As a new graduate this is a great site and a wonderful resource! I am glad that we can use social media such as Facebook to spread these important messages!
—HEATHER

In honour of the UN Academic Impact, we have created a student group [at my Uni] called the Impact Initiative. The students learn about the MDGs and are trained to teach others about them.
—KELLY

My institution has not as yet joined the UNAI but I plan to bring this up with our student group. There are so many activities that we as students could undertake that could highlight issues related to the United Nations and its work.
—JAMES

It would be an honour to join you in observing the international year of youth through my work as an English teacher in Tunisia.
—BEN AKKIZ

As 400 institutions in more than 80 countries, you too can be a part of this process of change! Contact: Academic Impact Secretariat Outreach Division, DC-2-0870 Department of Public Information United Nations, NY 10017, USA Email: AcademicImpact@un.org Web: www.academicimpact.org
The United Nations Academic Impact encourages higher education institutions to actively support the UN’s TEN UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED PRINCIPLES:

1. Commitment to the United Nations Charter
2. Human rights
3. Educational opportunity for all
4. Higher education opportunity for every interested individual
5. Capacity-building in higher education systems
6. Global citizenship
7. Peace and conflict resolution
8. Addressing poverty
9. Sustainability
10. Inter-cultural dialogue