

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

How do we know the right direction of ‘development’ for a society or its people? And how does this perceived ‘right’ direction of development become a consensus among those working in international development? These questions have been with me from the early stages of my career as a consultant for educational development in the 1990s. Fashionable approaches, such as human resources planning, cost sharing of social services including education, decentralization, vocationalization of education and so on, have come and gone, regardless of whether societies were ‘developing’ as intended. When one prescription failed to create positive results, policymakers promoted the next trend as the solution. Such was the case when the poverty reduction paradigm emerged after the era of neoliberal structural adjustment of the 1980s had slashed public expenditures on social services and was said to have increased disparities.

‘Development’ is a value-laden term, which inherently suggests that something must be changed for improved status. It also involves interventions from the outside to facilitate the processes of change. We rarely question who decided the direction of global trends in educational development and for what ends. Instead, taking the fundamental direction as given, a large part of discussion among professionals in this field is concentrated on strategies and methodologies of implementing, monitoring and reinventing programmes.

These haunting questions of who and why drove me to analyse two different historical discourses on policymaking for international education development: the discourse surrounding British colonial education in the early 20th century (Yamada 2003) and that of the early 21st century in the midst of the universal primary education movement (Yamada, 2010). The pendulum looks to be shifting perennially between vocationalization and generalization of the curriculum, between central planning and decentralization and between basic education for the disadvantaged and technical or higher education for the human resource needs of industry and state-led development agendas. By and large, similar arguments for and against approaches in vogue have been repeated throughout history. Still, the international community has made a constant effort to set a global policy framework that

would overarch different national contexts. This continuous process of reform may itself have been a mechanism to boost the momentum and maintain the field of international development.

Under the Education for All (EFA) global agenda for educational development, a review of achievements was scheduled for the years leading up to 2015, to culminate in the adoption of renewed goals. Though this process seemed to be an ordinary self-boosting exercise of the educational development community, after witnessing it as a participant, I came to sense that it was a little different from earlier processes, happening in tandem with more fundamental structural changes involving new types of actors and means of interaction. It seemed quite significant, not only academically but also for the informed practices in this field, that we closely examine the global discourse in this crucial timing. That is how we started this project to analyse the nature of the paradigm shift toward a post-2015 agenda. Given the fast-shifting focuses of discussion and widely scattered voices from all corners of the world, it was challenging to capture the nature of the discourse. At the same time, we were driven by the belief that it would be more difficult to track the processes later, given that much of the discussion took place outside of the formal, recorded channels of consensus building.

In 2012 I started to conceptualize this research and to exchange ideas with the authors of the country cases in Part II of this volume. A symposium on Asian donors in the education sector sparked a 2014 special issue of the journal *Asian Education and Development Studies* that discussed the history, philosophies and mechanisms of educational aid given by donors in the Asia-Pacific region (Yamada 2014). While the authors of Part II of this volume provide in-depth analysis of their respective countries, the chapter ‘Post-EFA Global Discourse: The Process of Shaping the Shared View of the “Education Community”’ presents interviews and text analysis on the global post-2015 discourse, picking up from around the end of 2013. Dr. Leon Tikly, the author of the chapter ‘Education for All as a Global Regime of Educational Governance: Issues and Tensions’, took on the difficult task of providing an historical overview of the vast discourse on EFA up to the middle of the last decade.

I am not sure how successful we were in pinning down the dynamics and theorizing about them, given that our interviewing and document collecting took place right in the midst of the changing process. We have to wait for the judgement of readers, but hope that the effort to capture systematically why, how, and what has been discussed, not merely to participate in the discourse on the global agenda reform, will make some contribution to academia and the international educational development community.

Finally, on behalf of the authors, I would like to express sincere gratitude to anonymous peer reviewers of chapters for improving the quality of our work. Appreciation also goes to people who made important comments on the presentations we gave in the conference session and meetings in advance of this publication. I also owe a great deal of thanks to those anonymous interviewees who candidly shared their opinions and observations of the post-2015 consultation process. Although I cannot write their names here, some of them even gave additional comments on my research after the interview.

As an Asian scholar with serious commitments to education for all,
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Editor

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