

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

THE PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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9	Accompanying Reparations in Colombia: Mampuján and Las Brisas	163
	ANNA VOGT	
10	Development and Peacebuilding: Disparities, Similarities, and Overlapping Spaces	189
	CARL STAUFFER	
11	Education for Development: Theoretical Perspectives and the Nigerian Situation.....	215
	ABDALLA UBA ADAMU	
12	Fantasy, Reality, and Illusion in International Aid: Challenges NGO Workers Face in the Field	233
	AUGUST LONGINO	
	Index	247

Chapter 11

Education for Development

Theoretical Perspectives and the Nigerian Situation

Abdalla Uba Adamu

The 'education for development' (EfD) paradigm has long shaped perceptions of education as a primary tool for the social and economic advancement of developing countries. Based on a human capital theory that sees the production of qualified manpower as the main resource for development, state and international efforts have focused on the production of qualified students and other personnel as the mainstay of their EfD work.¹ Increased enrollment, higher retention, and even higher transition from one level of education to another is heralded as the most effective way to achieve development because it produces more and better manpower. Accordingly, from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, governments in developed and less-developed countries encouraged investment in education to enhance the quality of human productivity and thereby spur development.

By the late 1970s, however, the lack of economic growth in most parts of the world slowed investment in education, and researchers started to question the feasibility of human capital theory as a basis for development strategy.² Researchers no longer accepted that expenditures aimed at increasing enrollment rates were enough to enhance economic productivity.³

Criticism of the EfD paradigm typically centered on its core assumptions. First, the theory assumes that there is a perfect market for labor, and that better-educated and more-skilled people will obtain better jobs and become more productive—conditions that do not hold in the real world. Second, human capital theory does not consider factors other than education, such as job satisfaction and working conditions, that could contribute to higher worker productivity. Third, human capital theory fails to recognize education as a screening or filtering device.⁴ That is, employers may use schools to identify workers with superior ability even if education does not directly improve worker skills and productivity. Finally, as Fagerlind and Saha propose, education exists in a dialectical relationship with society. It is at once a product of society and acts continually upon that society.⁵ The contribution of education to the development process, therefore, depends upon the nature of other dimensions of development in a given society at a particular time. By late 1980s, in other words, it was becoming increasingly clear that the education industry should aim at more than making sure children enroll in school and pass with good grades. The search for additional dimensions and inputs led to the emergence of a new paradigm: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Sustainable development is a difficult and evolving concept. One of its original definitions is credited to the Brundtland Commission: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."⁶ It is generally thought to have three components—environment, society, and economy—each of whose well-being is intertwined with the others. For example, a healthy, prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water, and clean air for its citizens. The sustainability paradigm rejects the contention that casualties in the environmental and social realms are inevitable and acceptable consequences of economic development. Thus it is a paradigm for thinking about a future in which environmental, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life.

Since the Earth Summit in 1992, there has been increasing recognition of the critical role of education in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. What eventually became fashionable as 'Education for Sustainable Development' entailed two distinct approaches in developing countries. The first called for the heavy involvement of domestic and international organizations in planning and implementing educational policies and programs. The aim was to create a socially equitable and politically accountable process of education provision as an agent for development on a global standard. In Nigeria, international partners such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO, and national agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Education, all pushed the new perspective—though as we will see they often continued to implement programs based on old EfD approaches. The Sustainable Development framework called for education

planners to consider more indigenous perspectives on education. Sustainable development education carries with it the idea of implementing programs that are locally relevant and culturally appropriate. As Olsen noted, “We define ‘sustainable’ development as development which respects the balances provided by political stability, social equity, economic stability, and development in harmony with nature.”⁷ As a result, programs must be created for each region. Rather than searching for curricular models to adopt throughout a country, ministries of education and school districts should invest their resources in processes by which communities of different sizes and traditions can define their own programs.

As these distinct approaches suggest, there is little agreement about the meaning of sustainable development and whether or not it is attainable, a discord that has stymied efforts to develop new policies. The holistic nature of sustainable development opens it to a broad range of interpretations and misinterpretations depending on the particular lenses of practitioners. Economists and ‘developers,’ for example, view it in terms of economic sustainability, whereas environmentalists see it as environmental sustainability. These discrepancies often result in conflicting scenarios at the operational level.

In addition, there is the lack of clarity regarding the practical goals of ESD. In simple terms, educators want to know: “What am I to do differently? What should I do or say now that I didn’t say before?” These apparently simple questions perplex most experts. Each country must decide whether its educators are being asked to teach about sustainable development or to go further by changing the goals and methods of education to achieve sustainable development. Those that elect to teach only about sustainable development may find that it comes across as simply an abstract concept that does not give students the skills, perspectives, values, and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities.

In addition, while it is a good idea to bring together the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability, the concept of sustainable development itself faced the major contradiction of having to exist in global capitalism, which is rooted in the exploitation of natural and human resources and informed by an ideology of economic growth and modernization. Development seen as economic growth often becomes a top-down process in which experts impose their own perception of development on local people considered backward and ignorant. Although this approach has fueled the growth of most developed countries, it has led to major environmental, social, and economic problems that the world is trying to address today.⁸

In sum, EfD explores the relationship between education and development through strategies such as teacher competencies, use of new technologies, gender equality, and infrastructural provisions in education at both formal and non-formal levels—all designed to produce greater human capital. Education for Sustainable Development, on the other hand, is learner and outcome focused. It purports to allow every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values

necessary to shape a sustainable future. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower students to change their behavior and take action for sustainability. Thus, it promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios, and making decisions in a collaborative way.

Education and Development Efforts in Nigeria

Nigeria offers many examples of the quandaries of education for development. The country itself presents a paradox. It is rich in resources, yet its people are poor. Despite Nigeria's strong economic track record, poverty is endemic due to heavy reliance on oil wealth and a corresponding de-emphasis on non-oil growth. As a 2013 report argued:

Despite a plethora of natural and human resources, relatively strong growth, and its ranking as a middle-income country, Nigeria has struggled to make progress on key development indicators. About 68 percent of Nigerians are living in poverty (below \$1.25 daily) . . . while the illiteracy rate for adults (both sexes) is approximately 61 percent. Nigeria is also currently failing to provide education to many of its primary-school-age children.⁹

Some of the hindrances to enhanced growth include the investment climate, infrastructure, incentives, the lack of articulated agricultural policies, and the low quality and irrelevance of tertiary education. From 2009, security challenges caused by an extremely violent insurgency compounded these problems.

The attainment of independence from the British in 1960 led to a condemnation of the objectives of colonial primary education. The clamor for an education system that reflected Nigerian realities reached a crescendo during the oil boom of the 1970s. In 1976, the quest to design something indigenous, coupled with the need to observe the right of the child to education, led to the declaration of the Universal Primary Education (UPE). This policy ushered in a tremendous increase in enrollment as well as extensive community efforts to develop primary education. There was so much enthusiasm that primary education became the major sector for extending government presence to many villages, towns, and communities. However, with it came increased costs and funding needs.

In 1977, the Nigerian government promulgated a National Policy on Education to provide the basis for an improved curriculum to meet the nation's development needs. Many lofty ideals were laid down without adequate planning on the assumption that funds would be available indefinitely to meet the needs of the sub-sector. When policy implementation commenced in the 1980s, however, economic recession had set in. As the economy declined, the school population and number of schools grew. As a result, classrooms became over-crowded; structures

fell into disrepair; and teaching facilities were grossly inadequate. In addition, the dearth of data for effective planning and management became acute as teachers' competences could not meet the needs of increased responsibilities. Finally, constant changes in government created political insecurity.

Additional problems arose due to government outlays for other sectors of the economy. At the dawn of independence, the government devoted as much as 40% of its annual budgets to education. But as pressure for other social and economic services mounted, particularly investment in roads, secretariats, pipe-borne water, agriculture, and industries, the share of annual budgets allocated to education declined, with the lowest figures recorded in the 1990s. The government could no longer bear the financial burden for education alone. Although education continued to attract a huge share of national budgets, the gap between estimated expenditure and actual allocation widened, leaving several needy areas, including teacher's salaries.

To address these problems, the federal government set up the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC). The same decree also established the State Primary Schools Management Boards (PSMB) to perform a similar function in each state, and the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA) to manage schools within their respective districts. While this framework held, a great deal of improvement was recorded in primary education funding and management. Salaries were paid regularly, and workshops were held for inspectors and head teachers.¹⁰

It was in the midst of this transition that the World Bank first intervened in Nigerian education. In 1989, a World Bank study asserted that Nigeria, along with many developing countries, had not met the objectives set by them for the primary education sub-sector. Schools had been ineffective in developing in pupils the core skills stipulated by the national curriculum. Above all, it had not been able to provide all school-age children, particularly girls, access to primary schooling. Consequently, national efforts to develop a human capital base for development had been seriously jeopardized.

World Bank concerns, focused as it was on educational capacity and infrastructure, fell directly within the purview of EfD, despite a growing worldwide interest in ESD, an interest that the World Bank also held. To assist Nigeria in improving overall performance in primary education, the Nigeria Primary Education Project was approved by the World Bank in 1990 and ran from 1992 until June 1997. It became the first in a series of interventions in Nigerian education targeted at achieving the 'education for development' objective. Yet by the mid-2000s, a series of think-tanks, workshops, and conferences revealed that major challenges persisted:

- Low enrollment, completion, and progression rates at all levels of education
- Inequities in terms of gender, geographical zones, states, local governments, and schools

- Poor quality of learning outcomes
- Inappropriate curriculum for the needs of a growing economy
- Inadequate attention to the learning needs of adults and youth in non-formal settings
- Poor teacher training and development at both pre-service and in-service levels
- Weak system of staff deployment leading to large numbers of unqualified or under-qualified teachers.
- Poor infrastructural facilities for teaching and learning
- Weak institutions and poor management systems leading to weak planning and monitoring and evaluation
- Limited capacity for data collection and data analysis
- Examination malpractice and cultism
- Weak external and internal systems of communication
- Dissatisfaction with the public education system, leading to the expansion of private schools and the consequent exodus of influential stakeholders out of the state sector.¹¹

These findings prompted further interventions. USAID's Northern Nigerian Education Initiative (NEI), for example, tried to expand the provision of universal basic education and delivery of education services in northern Nigeria.¹² Through the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (2008–2015), Britain's Department for International Development (DfID) sought to improve the planning, financing, and delivery of basic education services and increase access, equity, and quality at the federal level and in six Nigerian states.

Yet the education machinery is not working—even according to EfD indicators of examination scores and enrollment rates. After many workshops and reports, government officers still lack a strategy to improve examination results, the main benchmark of any education project. In Nigeria, the two main examinations students take at the end of senior secondary school are the West African Examination Council's Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National Examination Council Senior School Certificate Examination (NECO SSCE).¹³

The outcomes of both WAEC and NECO have consistently painted a bleak picture. For instance, data available from the Public Affairs Department of the West African Examinations Council, WAEC, in Lagos show a consistently poor examination performance by Nigerian students, as indicated in Table 11.1.

The failure rate of almost 79% in the most-credible examination in Nigeria calls into question the efficacy of educational provisions by both the government and international agency partners.

Data on school survival, completion, and transition rates are similarly bleak. The 'survival rate'—the percentage of pupils enrolled in Primary 1 in a given

Table 11.1 Trend of Mass Failure of Students in the May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) between 2003 and 2010

<i>Year</i>	<i>% Failed</i>	<i>% Passed</i>
2003	80.74	19.26
2004	81.74	18.26
2005	72.47	27.53
2006	84.44	15.56
2007	74.46	25.54
2008	86.24	13.76
2009	74.01	25.99
2010	75.06	24.94
<i>Total</i>	<i>78.65</i>	<i>21.35</i>

Source: Public Affairs Department of WAEC, Lagos

Table 11.2 Basic Education Population, 2006–2010

<i>Year</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Junior High School</i>
2006	21,717,789	2,643,358
2007	20,469,395	2,998,372
2008	18,980,395	3,451,078
2009	18,818,544	3,758,093
2010	19,042,167	4,125,211

Source: Compiled from National Bureau of Statistics

school year who reach Primary 5—has fluctuated over time. Data provided by the educational authorities show that the proportion of students who survived in 2000 was 97%, but by 2009 it was only 72.3%. While an increasingly high proportion of school-age children are actually enrolling in school, more of them are dropping out over the course of their education. The Primary 6 completion rate is similarly dire. The average trend over the last five years shows almost an 11% drop.

Data on transition rates are difficult to obtain. Not only are there constant drop-outs, but cohort studies are unable to gather precise data on pupils as they progress from one level of schooling to another. However, a measure can be obtained in the absolute population of students at junior secondary school as compared with similar data on primary school pupils in the same years. This is shown in Table 11.2.

While no correlation per year is suggested, the juxtaposition of the primary and JSS populations clearly indicates a wide disparity, suggesting that far fewer children are in JSS schools than graduate from primary schools. There is a need to capture these children and determine why they remain out of school, what they do, and how to get them back.

The Paradigm Remains the Same

These failures illustrate what I call the “paradigm paradox” in development—the rhetorical commitment to a new paradigm but the continued pursuit of an old one. Under normal circumstances, the shift from one paradigm (inherited or hybridized) to a newer one (development-partner oriented, ‘global’) should address current problems in more effective ways, leading to growth and development. Yet despite multiple engagements in Nigerian education by development partners advocating for change from without, the results and the underlying administrative structures remain virtually the same. These interventions led to a demand for change, but paradoxically they merely reinforced the existing EfD structures rather than promoted ESD. In light of this trend, I argue that the various models and theories of development simply do not work when faced with the reality of contemporary governance in Nigeria; despite their neat categorizations of development behavior, the ground-level reality simply does not operate along their theoretical lines.

I will illustrate with a recent USAID activity in the north Nigerian state of Zamfara, one that focused on determining the total educational expenditure for a given year. Funded by an international development agency, the exercise aimed to assist state officials in determining the best ways to plan their education finances. The first problem faced was that the officials—privately—stated that they did not ask for the activity and therefore could not provide counterpart funding to sustain it, as requested by the partners. As good as the project seemed, it was not theirs and was not factored in their approved budget; they therefore could not fund it.

This refusal highlights the wider problem of shared ministerial responsibility that often goes unacknowledged in donor plans. Popular thinking promotes the myth that an educated society is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education alone. In reality, however, the Ministries of Environment, Commerce, State, Health, and others all have a stake in education. In principle, combining expertise, resources, and funding from many ministries increases the possibility of building a successful education program. In many countries, however, responsibilities are modularized and compartmentalized according to the supervising ministry. Under the education financing project referred to above, it became difficult to get non-education ministries who provided education services to come on board. They did not see why they should provide financial data to a ministry that was

not theirs. The Ministry of Education, in turn, suddenly realized that it should be the sole custodian of education—no matter where it was offered—and its officials therefore wanted to re-evaluate all educational activities in other portfolios, a task that deviated from the core project. In the attempt to streamline data, in other words, the project heightened ministerial competition.

Ultimately, an agreement was worked out to launch the project. However, while officials co-operated with consultants, agreed to proposed structures, and provided the information needed, private off-record comments reflect bemusement at the year-long exercise. The comments mainly focused on the motives of the funders—and theories ranged from what Nigerians call ‘spooky stuff’ (that every development partner activity dealing with figures is a cover for spying) to linking the process to violent uprisings in the Middle East. In one instance, consultants were seen as spies for the Nigerian government’s anti-graft agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, due to their insistence on collecting detailed expenditure data, down to the amount spent on gasoline for generators.

The use of local consultants, or ‘credible outsiders,’ with a national or regional reputation made it possible to overcome suspicions—even though white team leaders often prompted further ‘spooky stuff theory,’ such as the belief that they were tied to U.S. secret services. (Oddly, the British did not elicit such fear.) As a result, some partners reduced the presence of non-Africans in the field, relying on ‘local’ consultants to face Ministry officials, gather data, and report to the higher metropolitan level.

Worrying, however, were further off-record comments about the lack of synchronization between what international partner organizations saw through an EfD lens and what local officials described as ‘realities on ground’ that were indifferent to theoretical perspectives. The mismatch between rhetoric and practice, which extends to other initiatives as well, is revealed in at least four ways.

First, there was lack of synergy among the development partners in the education sector. In north Nigeria, for instance, more than ten development organizations descended onto schools, offices, and communities to provide ‘development assistance’ without coming up with a unified approach that looked at the local systems holistically. For the most part, they kept their individual programs close to their chests, giving little clue to others about what they were doing and therefore often duplicating efforts—to the bemusement of recipients.

Second, none of the development partners seemed aware of what worked or did not work in the past. There was thus a lack of historical awareness as to how the situation got to the point where international NGOs intervened in the first place. It would appear that someone came up with a concept, sold it to a funding agency, got approval, and took the first flight to Nigeria to start a project. Due to lack of clarity and continuity in government policies, Nigeria’s educational system relies substantially on interventions by international aid agencies. And yet these interventions are based not on identified needs of the Nigerian education

system—which do not seem to be of much concern—but on the wider global concern with EFD. This often causes a rift between what government policies set out to achieve and what international agencies do.

Third, some of the international agencies exhibited naiveté when it came to offering development assistance because their conception of what constituted a problem differed from what was seen by their target beneficiaries. This was illustrated in 2013 by an NGO that selected target states in Muslim north Nigeria for carrying out a program of ‘out-of-school girl-child’ education for girls ‘aged 16–18,’ deemed vulnerable and therefore in need of survival skills. They found it difficult to accept that in northern Nigeria, girls in that age-group are not ‘girls’ but married women, often in purdah matrimonial situations—and therefore are not available for ‘survival skills’ training. Yet they ignored the real targets of concern—pre-teen girls who were out of school and hawking food items on the streets, where they were vulnerable to all sorts of predators. This was because the original metropolitan mandate specified the higher age bracket, who it assumed would be more aware of their world.

This naiveté could also make partners miss the ways their projects were being manipulated by recipients for individual ends. Another agency in northern Nigeria insisted on implementing Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) to families as a means of encouraging them to keep their girls in schools. Development partners failed to notice two problems. First, unrecorded observations of the CCT program indicated that the girls and their parents were motivated by the money to attend school but not to continue with their education; they almost always got married immediately after high school. They came to the cash dispensary centers for money, stayed for a required period to learn, and then left. The cash inducement alone attracted them, not the desire to learn. Ironically, those that continue their education beyond high school are those that do not need the CCTs due to higher economic status. Second, a change in state government put a stop to the program—not because it was inherently bad, but because any credit for program success would go to the previous regime, a situation the new administration could not tolerate. The project was restructured to include the children of party faithful; children whose parents were in opposition were edged out.

Fourth, the education interventions lacked sustainability. Since development partners had metropolitan funding, it was easy to travel widely, set up project offices, buy computers, pay for training, produce manuals, and print attractive reports. The partners rarely pondered what would happen when funding ended and they left the field. They seemed to expect that local managers would maintain the tempo of activities. When another agency entered the picture, it therefore did not bother to bridge the gap that existed between the previous project and the new one. In this sense, ‘paradigm paradox’—a structural change that leads to stasis—resulted from both local governance and international project management.

In the end, the anticipated model of change advocated by development partners rarely led to any measurable difference in Nigerian education.

Ultimately, efforts by international agencies concentrate on educational provisions geared to improving enrollment or accountability, typical Efd preoccupations. Yet the fundamental problem of education in Nigeria is not whether students attend schools or not, but that they attend schools with poor learning outcomes, as noted in the examination results cited above.

Implications for Development Practice

Perhaps the biggest problem of implementing Efd in Nigeria is a lack of clarity about whose agenda is being served. The Nigerian government seeks to ensure that education serves development purposes by instituting programs and plans designed to improve citizen welfare (e.g., Education for All; Vision 2000, 2010, 2015, and 2020). Development partners, by contrast, seem more concerned with international benchmarks than local circumstances. For the most part, they appear to be only vaguely aware of government plans and are certainly unaware of their own ignorance of local needs. This author once had a consultant from a major development NGO request an explanation of the structure of the Nigerian educational system whose problems he was employed to synthesize! In another case, a consultant explained to trainees how an Excel spreadsheet could be used to create charts without knowing that they were seasoned computer users who had written the briefing report—complete with charts—on which his own presentation was based. Many expatriate staff fall into what Nigerians refer to as the ‘squeaky clean lot’—fresh graduates from U.S. or U.K. universities who studied development and came to Africa filled with messianic zeal but ignorant of the internecine struggles for power and the raw inefficiency of the system they were trying to ‘redeem.’ At the very least, these examples suggest a striking disregard for local reality.

Overcoming this attitude requires a fundamentally new understanding by those engaged in development work. First, one must reject the old anthropological model of coming to a ‘barren’ land. For the most part, beneficiaries are aware of their problems, and most requests for partnership ultimately come down to providing funding for solutions that are locally identified. Second, interventions should be based on specific requests—a hard thing to do for a partner with good will and funding. The reality, however, is that beneficiaries need to specify a needed intervention and show their commitment to its sustainability. The partners themselves have to make subsequent engagement contingent on clear proof of the sustainability of previous interventions. Third, development partners working in the same area need to be aware of each other and how their various efforts can be harmonized and synchronized—instead of the current situation in which

various partners work in the same domain without coordinating. Fourth, development partners must understand the nature of local educational provisions. A lack of awareness leads to educational plans that are universally the same, reproducing in one place what was done in another. There is also a need to base interventions on direct system analysis rather than 'anticipated development needs,' which take little consideration for local sustainability. For the most part, current 'capacity training' workshops, sensitization meetings, development teams, and other activities are sustained not by the recipients but by the funding of the development partners alone. Rarely do recipient countries build such activities into their long-term strategy budgets. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that they rarely last.

Conclusions

It would be pessimistic in the extreme to suggest that the widespread faith in educational investment as a component of economic development was an aberration. There is evidence in many studies of productivity benefits derived from educational investment.¹⁴ How then do we resolve the paradox of a clear link between education and development and the failure of many education projects to achieve significant results?

First, we must recognize that there is no single answer to the question of how education promotes development: There are many answers depending on circumstance, developmental status, and the specification of variables. Second, the direct policy implications of macro-level research are very limited. They are constrained by dependence on historical relationships that may or may not persist, and the level of aggregation is often so high that effective and ineffective years of schooling are treated as similar. The application of findings from individual countries or groups to other countries is analytically hazardous. General and empirically verified truths about the relation between education and economic development may not hold in every circumstance.

Third, educational effects are associated with various externalities—school fees, instability due to insurgencies and political upheavals, raw poverty, creeping malaise among youth, political indifference to the plight of the poor—that lay beyond the control of particular projects. Without awareness of these externalities, project goals may be undermined.

Fourth, there are many methodological questions in the analysis of relationships between education and economic development that have only partial resolutions. For instance, there has been no convincing data showing the link between earned income and educational status in Nigeria. With a fluid economy, such absolute correlations are difficult to make.

And finally, as Hopkins and McKeown argue, sustainable development will require major changes in policy and mindset, as well as fundamental changes in

our lifestyle, economy, and worldview.¹⁵ To date, few financial resources have been dedicated to implementing education programs for sustainable development. Yet even with resources, the reform process is fraught with challenges. The initial step is to develop an awareness within the educational community and the wider public that reorienting education to achieve sustainability is essential. Unfortunately, the need to achieve sustainable development is not seen as sufficiently important to spark a major response in Nigeria. Attempts at awareness-raising are often met with cynicism from officials who fail to share the 'larger' vision held by development partners; instead, officials are typically concerned with solving immediate problems. If leaders at all levels of government are to make progress, the recognition and active involvement of the education sector is imperative.

The effort to win over the education sector to ESD is made more difficult by the fact that sustainable development is a complex, evolving concept that encompasses intricate interactions of natural and human systems. Sustainable development education, by its nature, depends on concepts and analytical tools from a variety of disciplines. For that reason, it is difficult to teach in traditional school settings where studies are divided into disciplinary frameworks. The inherent complexity is exacerbated in Africa by the introduction of a variety of educational strategies that look like experimental models because they have not been tried elsewhere. Successful national education campaigns often have simple messages, such as vaccinate your children, boil drinking water, do not drive drunk, and do not take drugs. Success in the complex arena of sustainable development education will take much longer and be more costly. The challenge to educators is to develop messages that illustrate complexity without overwhelming or confusing students.

The establishment of ESD programs, therefore, requires accountable leadership and realistic strategies. Because sustainable development education is a life-long process, the formal, non-formal, and informal educational sectors must work together to accomplish local goals.¹⁶ In an ideal world, the three sectors would divide the enormous task of sustainable development education by identifying target audiences as well as areas of responsibility. They would then work innovatively within their realms. This division of effort would reach a broader spectrum of people and prevent redundant effort. Many resources currently exist in the educational and administrative labor pools. Talented educators—especially in the fields of the environment, population, and development—already teach strands of sustainable development education and could easily expand their focus to include other concepts. In developing curricula, however, someone must have a sufficiently wide-ranging vision to pull together the pieces and form a complete picture of the role that individuals, communities, and nations play in a sustainable world.

Finally, our societies will need to examine how goods are manufactured and consumed; the way we use, preserve, conserve, and restore natural resources; and the way we perceive and rank social, political, and economic needs. Sustainable

development will require that we learn new ways to think about problems, make decisions, and implement solutions. Education is the key to this effort. Development practitioners can play a strong role in the process only if they allow recipient partners to analyze their own educational systems, rather than coming in with neat theoretical models that do not match local conditions.

Notes

1. The EfD paradigm rests on a decades-old literature. While many early studies focused on industrialized countries, there were important contributions that compared developed and developing economies. In a study of the rates of return to educational investment in 44 countries, Psacharopoulos (1981) (cited in Fagerlind and Saha [1989]) found that primary education yields the highest social and private returns; that private returns are higher than social returns, particularly at the university level; and that all rates of return to investment in education exceed the rates of return on alternative investments in capital. He also found that developing countries' rates of return on education investments are higher than those of advanced industrialized countries at comparable levels.
2. Webster (1984); Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985); Fagerlind and Saha (1989).
3. Fagerlind and Saha (1989).
4. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985).
5. Fagerlind and Saha (1989).
6. World Commission on Environment and Development (1987): 43.
7. Olsen (1996): 187.
8. Babikwa (2004).
9. The Good Planet Foundation (2013): 1.
10. In 1991, Decree 2 and 3 abolished the NPEC and handed the management of primary schools over to the local governments. Primary schools once more witnessed a serious downturn. Teachers' salaries went unpaid for months, and teachers embarked on strike after strike. Parents who could afford it withdrew their children and wards from public schools and enrollment dwindled drastically. The drop-out rate increased, and the incidence of street children grew. Fortunately, the government gave ear to public outcries and, through Decree 96 of 1993, reestablished the NPEC, later to become the Universal Basic Education Commission; its state counterpart, the State Primary Education Boards (SPEB), later the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB); and the local government, LGEAs.
11. FME (2007): 10–11.
12. NEI was designed to strengthen state and local government systems that delivered education services for out-of-school youth, orphans, and vulnerable children. The project started as State Education Accounts (SEA) in Kano in about 2005 and ended as the Northern Education Initiative (NEI) in Sokoto in 2013.
13. Students sitting for both examinations are allowed to select up to nine subjects. Candidates are expected to pass five at credit level to gain admission to a university in Nigeria. Most courses will require that the five credit subjects include English Language and Mathematics.

14. Studies have found that:

- farmers (in 18 low-income countries) with four years of primary education produced 8% more (Lockheed et al. [1980]);
- a one-year increase in schooling can increase wages by more than 10%—and has raised farm output and income by over 2% (Korea) and 5% (Malaysia) (World Bank [1991]: 52–53);
- a 1% improvement in national literacy is directly associated with a two-year gain in life expectancy (Preston [1976]);
- education is directly related to health: the higher the parents' education, the less likely their child will die (Cochrane et al. [1980]);
- children of educated mothers are more likely to be enrolled in school and to attain higher education (World Bank [1986]);
- women's education leads to better family health, especially for the children and themselves, partly because of higher family income but also due to the mother's increased knowledge and use of better health and nutritional practices (World Bank [1993]).

15. Hopkins and McKeown (1999).

16. In north Nigeria, 'non-formal education' refers to schools outside the main government system, such as Quranic schools, whereas 'informal education' refers to skills and competency training that falls outside the main education system. 'Formal education,' of course, designates the main government education system.

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