

To What Ends?: Educational Reform Around the World

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INTRODUCTION

Many “reforms”—such as those related to welfare programs in the United States—can be actually seen as “deforms.” These so-called “reforms” have led to increasing impoverishment and lives of misery for many instead of improving the lives of individuals and their communities. In examining educational initiatives that are purported to contribute to improvements in educational equity, quality, and efficiency—the three major challenges facing educational systems around the world—it is useful to examine who is instituting the changes, based on what assumptions and values (i.e., what ideologies), with what ends in mind, and with what outcomes. In basic policy analysis, a leading question is who pays and who benefits from efforts to change or reinforce the status quo.

In attempting to provide a conceptual framework that would simplify and provide coherence to an enormous amount of material at issue, I have decided to adopt a model suggested by Rolland Paulston and Gregory LeRoy to examine nonformal educational programs.¹ The framework consists of two principal axes—a vertical one, concerning where reform is initiated (whether at the top in international and national bureaucracies or at the bottom in grassroots movements), and a horizontal axis, concerning the goals of educational changes—varying between principal economic instrumental goals or sociocultural and political change (often associated with identity

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¹ Rolland G. Paulston & Gregory LeRoy, *Nonformal Education and Change from Below*, in *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* 336 (Philip G. Altbach et al. eds., 1982) [hereinafter *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* (1982)].

movements).² Paulston and LeRoy's review of the literature on nonformal education indicated that most programs fell in the upper left quadrant of Figure 1 and were designed to meet the so-called "manpower" or "human resource" requirements³ and the needs of dominant groups. Still, there were also a number of grassroots movements that viewed education as a catalyst for fundamental social changes.

I. TOP-DOWN IMPOSITIONS

Turning to the broader ambit of national systems of schooling around the world and attempts to initiate policies and practices that contribute to major improvements in the management, financing, content, processes, and outcomes of education, it is apparent, at least to me, that the most common pattern has been one dominated by the neoliberal, economic, and educational agendas of the major international financial agencies. These agencies include the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as well as bilateral technical assistance agencies of North America, Europe, and Japan, and national governments, both conservative and liberal, that have bought into this agenda to secure needed external funds to stabilize their economies and pay off their tremendous debt burdens. This agenda derives from

the work of the classical economists, Adam Smith and David Ricardo, who believed that the role of the state consisted of establishing the conditions by which the free play of the marketplace, the laws of supply and demand, and free trade based on competitive advantage, would inevitably redound to the benefit of all.⁴

² *Id.* at 341–42.

³ See generally Irvin Sobel, *The Human Capital Revolution in Economic Development*, in *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* (1982), *supra* note 1, at 54–77.

⁴ Robert F. Arnove et al., *Education in Latin America: Dependency, Underdevelopment, and Inequality*, in *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION: THE DIALECTIC OF THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL* 313, 324 (Robert F. Arnove & Carlos Alberto Torres eds., 2d ed. 2003) [hereinafter *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* (2003)]. See generally ADAM SMITH, *AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE WEALTH OF NATIONS* (C.J. Bullock ed., P.F. Collier & Son 1909) (1776); DAVID RICARDO, *PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND TAXATION* (R.M. Hartwell ed., Penguin Books 1971) (1817).

“Government policies based on these notions have led to a drastic reduction in the state’s role in social spending, deregulation of the economy, and liberalization of [trade] policies.”⁵

INSERT FIGURE 1

The educational counterparts of these policies have included moves to decentralize and privatize public educational systems. The economic and educational “restructuring” that has occurred as an integral part of this agenda has led to a substantial diminution of the role of the state in the public financing of education, but not necessarily its control. It also led to the application of a market logic and business rhetoric to the goals of education, and the evaluation of the processes and outcomes of schooling, rather than the social utility or what has been called a logic of the majority.⁶

Chief among the concerns of national decision-makers is the international competitiveness of their economies and the products (the graduates) of their educational systems (as measured by standardized tests)—the upper left quadrant of Figure 1. The previous dominant themes of education for the formation of participatory citizens and national unity, as well as international solidarity and individual fulfillment, are barely mentioned or given secondary consideration in policy reforms/deforms which have tended to focus on the excellence or quality of an educational system,⁷ rather than its provisions of equitable access, participation, and attainment.

Emphasis also has been placed on the efficiency of systems, not measured in relation to how effectively limited resources are optimized, but rather in relation to cutting costs by reducing inputs. The crass commercialization of education is evident in the heightened search for business sponsorships, niche markets, and the establishment of competitive reward systems for individuals and schools based on monies garnered. At the postsecondary level, there is a marketplace of competition for students, not only nationally but internationally

⁵ Arnove et al., *supra* note 4, at 313, 324.

⁶ See, e.g., ROBERT F. ARNOVE, *EDUCATION AS CONTESTED TERRAIN: NICARAGUA, 1979–1993* (1994) (studying political changes in Nicaragua that led to education reform). See generally *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* (2003), *supra* note 4 (describing the impacts of globalization and other forces facing education at the beginning of the twenty-first century).

⁷ See generally *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* (2003), *supra* note 4.

(for example, private commercial enterprises, such as the University of Phoenix, recruiting students from around the globe for its virtual institution).⁸

Human capital theory and corporate language—such as “mergers, hostile takeovers, commodification of distinction”⁹—prevail in discourse about the mission and priorities of higher education. John Lombardi, when president of the University of Florida, once quipped sarcastically, but realistically, in an interview with *Business Week*, “Let’s pretend we’re a corporation.” In this exercise, he noted that departments meeting quality and productivity criteria would win shares of \$2 million in discretionary funding.¹⁰

Competition, choice, and voucher schemes in the United States that allow public funds to go to private schools, or in England, opportunities to “opt out” of a Local Education Authority,¹¹ whether intentionally or not, all pose serious threats to the viability of public schooling. They also violate the wall of separation between religion and state, constitutionally prohibited in a number of countries. Policies that introduce user fees and facilitate the creation and funding of private schools are intended to cut public costs for the provision of education. A principal way to cut these costs is to squeeze more labor out of teachers, whose salaries account for more than 75 percent of annual operating expenditures.¹² Replacing certified teachers with machines or teaching aids is one strategy.¹³ Busting national teacher unions, which is a strategy used not only in a number of Latin American countries but also in northern countries such as England, is facilitated by decentralization policies that often require individual negotiation between Ministries of Education and teacher unions at the local, if not, particular school level.¹⁴ Teachers, more than ever, especially in many developing countries, are required to work two shifts at the same school or two or three jobs in order to survive.

These reforms are occurring within national contexts of increasing poverty for the majority of the population and growing disparities between the incomes

⁸ See University of Phoenix homepage, at <http://www.online.phoenix.edu> (last visited Jan. 25, 2005).

⁹ Field Research (on file with author).

¹⁰ Keith H. Hammonds & Susan Jackson, *The New U*, BUSINESS WEEK, Dec. 22, 1997, at 96.

¹¹ Edward H. Berman et al., *The Political Economy of Educational Reform in Australia, England and Wales, and the United States*, in COMPARATIVE EDUCATION (2003), *supra* note 4, at 252, 265.

¹² See Arnove, *supra* note 4, at 313–37.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ See ARNOVE, *supra* note 6.

and wealth of the poorest and the richest.¹⁵ Nearly one half of humanity subsists on \$2.00 or less per day.¹⁶ Internationally, the distance between the richest and poorest nations is growing, with the greatest gap occurring not in income, but in the areas of science, technology, and knowledge production—all parts of the “current restructuring of international capitalism.”¹⁷

The neoliberal agenda and structural adjustment policies occur within a context of intensified globalization that has led to an international “apartheid system” with major winners and losers.¹⁸ Among those excluded from the so-called benefits of international market forces and policies of privatization and decentralization are large sectors of Africa,¹⁹ Latin America,²⁰ Russia, and Eastern Europe, where “[f]reedom and opportunity beckon, but equity has declined.”²¹

In post Soviet-bloc Eastern Europe, “[t]he transition from totalitarianism to democracy goes hand-in-hand with the revival of conservatism”²² manifested through “patriotic-nationalistic commitment, elitism, and traditional-religious values.”²³ These general tendencies are evident through “ideological housecleaning” of textbooks and curricula, with an emphasis on national languages, Christian values, patriotism, and the reestablishment of former elite university preparatory secondary schools with a classical curriculum.²⁴

Not just in Eastern Europe, but worldwide, paradoxically, the state, which has relinquished substantial responsibility for the financing of public education while appealing to market forces to more efficiently allocate resources, has

¹⁵. United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Reports 2004: Inequality in Income of Consumption: Inequality Measures: GINI Index*, available at http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indic/indic_138_1_1.html (last visited Jan. 27, 2005).

¹⁶. WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE, *STATE OF THE WORLD 2004: A WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY 6* (2004) (stating 2 out of 5 persons live on less than \$2.00 per day).

¹⁷. Thomas Klak, *Thirteen Theses on Globalization and Neoliberalism*, in *GLOBALIZATION AND NEOLIBERALISM: THE CARIBBEAN CONTEXT* 3, 3 (Thomas Klak ed., 1998).

¹⁸. See Richard A. Falk, *Democratizing, Internationalizing, and Globalizing*, in *GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION: CHALLENGES TO THE STATE SYSTEM* 478 (Sakamoto, ed., 1994).

¹⁹. See Joel Samoff, *No Teacher Guide, No Textbooks, No Chairs: Contending with Crisis in African Education*, in *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION*, *supra* note 4, at 393.

²⁰. See generally *UNEQUAL SCHOOLS, UNEQUAL CHANCES: THE CHALLENGES TO EQUALITY OPPORTUNITY IN THE AMERICAS* (Fernando Reimers ed., 2000).

²¹. Maria Bucur & Ben Eklof, *Russia and Eastern Europe*, in *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* (2003), *supra* note 4, at 384, 404.

²². Tamas Kozma, *The Neo-Conservative Paradigm: Recent Changes in Eastern Europe*, in *EMERGENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES* 93, 93 (Robert F. Arnove et al. eds., 1992).

²³. *Id.*

²⁴. *Id.* at 103.

simultaneously tightened its controls over curriculum and evaluation.²⁵ The neoliberal economic agenda is complemented by a neoconservative value agenda that emphasizes the role of the state as a moral guardian of children and uses the school system to propagate a predetermined canon of correct values, tastes, and behaviors.²⁶

Moves to introduce feminist perspectives into the curriculum and textbooks in a number of countries have been set back by this neoconservative agenda. In Nicaragua during the Sandinista period of 1979–90, women were prominently depicted in school textbooks and adult education programs as playing major roles in the defense of the Revolution and the creation of a new society;²⁷ they are now portrayed as housewives whose fulfillment as women is found primarily through their roles as mothers.²⁸ Recently, a former student of mine from Nicaragua informed me that plans to introduce sex education in the high school curriculum were quashed by the Catholic Church. The Church played a similar censorship role in Argentina several years ago as well.²⁹

The current model is for the State to set educational goals and priorities and evaluate outcomes, leaving it to individual education districts and schools to comply. Once these goals and examination standards are set, however, the leeway for teachers is greatly restricted. Standards have become confused with standardization. That is, standardized and largely paper-and-pencil tests cover a narrow range of knowledge and talent. The autonomy of schools and teachers is greatly circumscribed and the quality of the curriculum suffers when teachers are forced to teach to standardized tests.³⁰ This “one size fits all”³¹ approach is a recipe for failure. Teachers and university “teacher education” faculties are made scapegoats of and blamed for the problems of not only education, but the economy. There are major efforts underway in Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere to have most teacher

²⁵ See, e.g., Jim Carl, *Parental Choice as National Policy in England and the United States*, 38 COMP. EDUC. REV. 294, 296 (1994).

²⁶ See *id.* at 297–302.

²⁷ Cf. ARNOVE, *supra* note 6, at 82.

²⁸ *Id.* at 89.

²⁹ Author's correspondence with persons from Argentina (on file with author).

³⁰ See GERALD BRACEY, WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE WAR AGAINST AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS 48–70 (2003); GERALD W. BRACEY, SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT: RESPONSES TO MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES (1997); Linda Darling-Hammond & Peter Youngs, *Defining “Highly Qualified” Teachers: What Does “Scientifically-Based Research” Actually Tell Us?*, 31 EDUC. RESEARCHER, Dec. 2002, at 13.

³¹ Joseph P. Farrell, *Equality Education: A Half-Century of Comparative Evidence Seen from a New Millennium*, in COMPARATIVE EDUCATION (2003), *supra* note 4, at 146, 166.

preparation take place *in situ* with an emphasis on disciplinary knowledge rather than on pedagogy.

A summary of these seemingly contradictory tendencies suggests that “[t]he effort to ‘downsize’ the public sector while simultaneously lessening government oversight of market activity represents an effort to reinvent a nineteenth-century laissez-faire political economy characterized by a class of robust capitalist entrepreneurs assured of a supportive investment climate and a plentiful and pliable labor force.”³²

Reforms aimed at privatizing and decentralizing education at all levels are promoted by influential business roundtables and industrial councils advisory to education, such as the Council for Business/Higher Education Cooperation in Australia,³³ as well as conservative think tanks, such as the Centre for Policy Studies, the Institute of Public Affairs, and the Centre for Independent Studies in Australia; the Hillgate Group and the Institute of Economic Affairs in England; and the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, and most recently the Brookings Institution, in the United States.³⁴ University economics departments, such as that of the University of Chicago, and related research and development departments or intellectual property offices also play active roles in promoting such reforms. These initiatives view education in terms of forming “human capital” and serving primarily the goals of economic productivity and global competitiveness.³⁵

If, according to the British social historian E.P. Thompson,³⁶ the secular historical trend has been for the long-term ascendance of personal citizenship rights over property rights, then what we are witnessing is the reverse. For “concerns over property rights have come to challenge, if not to supplant, concerns over citizenship rights.”³⁷ Furthermore, “[t]he economic rationalist argument concerning the primacy of material interests leaves little room for such issues as self-development or collective development, participation, equity, social justice, or even democracy.”³⁸

³² Berman et al., *supra* note 11, at 252, 245–55.

³³ *Id.* at 260.

³⁴ *Id.* at 284.

³⁵ *See id.* at 255.

³⁶ *See generally* E.P. THOMPSON, THE MAKING OF THE ENGLISH WORKING CLASS (1963) (discussing the process by which the working class was formed in England).

³⁷ Berman et al., *supra* note 11, at 255.

³⁸ *Id.*

II. REFORM FROM BELOW: GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS

Against these top-down tendencies in educational policy, there are grassroots movements all over the world that aim to raise a critical consciousness and equip individuals and their collectivities with the perspectives, skills, and knowledge to effect social change that meets their basic needs and most profound desires for a better life.³⁹ These social movements are often based on the need to confront global and national economic forces that are destroying natural environments and essential livelihoods.⁴⁰ They open opportunities for women, indigenous people, and other historically discriminated-against populations to affirm their identities, make a decent living, and participate in the shaping of national policies that contribute to the democratization and development of their societies.⁴¹ Movements, such as the popular education and science program Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad in India, affirm the value of traditional knowledge and how it can work with modern science and technology to improve the lives of destitute communities.⁴² Maternal language programs in Papua New Guinea, a country of approximately four million people with over 800 languages, engage communities in developing their own primary school and adult literacy materials based on local myths and oral traditions.⁴³ Using relatively inexpensive desktop publishing equipment, John Hutchison and other scholars were able to produce in Mali, in only one year, seventy manuscripts, forty of which were published as books in various indigenous languages;⁴⁴ one of these books was a translation of Ngūgi's *Decolonising the Mind* into Bamanankan.⁴⁵

Around the world, adult education programs inspired by the emancipation pedagogy of Paulo Freire's writings on literacy⁴⁶ have provided previously

^{39.} See Raymond A. Morrow & Carlos Alberto Torres, *The State, Social Movements, and Educational Reform*, in *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION* (2003), *supra* note 4, at 102.

^{40.} See *id.* at 102–03.

^{41.} Cf. *id.* at 103.

^{42.} See MATHEW ZACHARIAH & R. SOORYAMOORTHY, *SCIENCE IN PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND DILEMMAS OF A DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT: THE CASE OF KERALA* (1994).

^{43.} See SUSAN E. MALONE & ROBERT F. ARNOVE, *PLANNING LEARNER-CENTRED LITERACY PROGRAMMES* 53 (1998).

^{44.} John Hutchinson, *On Claiming the Right to Material Language Publishing in 'Francophone' Africa*, Symposium, *Africa's Educational Challenges for the Twenty-First Century* (Indiana University 1993).

^{45.} See NGŪGĪ WA THIONG'O, *DECOLONISING THE MIND: THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IN AFRICAN LITERATURE* (1986).

^{46.} See, e.g., PAULO FREIRE, *PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED* (Myra Bergman Ramos trans., 1970).

mented individuals with the critical insights and means to name the word and change the world. Frequently, grassroots initiatives are supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as “Save the Children” with its maternal language village literacy and school program in Mali.⁴⁷ In the absence of eventual state support, however, such programs often become isolated pilot experiments that fail to prosper and expand.⁴⁸

Case studies from around the world, from programs for female street children in Kenya to indigenous populations in the highlands of Peru, document the trajectory of a number of grassroots-initiated educational reforms. Without complementary efforts on the part of a range of international, national, and local NGOs, community organizations, and the State, these initiatives will eventually die out or become ineffective.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the State cannot be replaced; there are certain indispensable things that it must do.⁵⁰ The issues facing marginalized and systematically discriminated-against populations in most societies (i.e., women, young children, ethnic minorities, the working class, and peasantry) require a strategic response at the macro or societal level—changes in laws and in the workings of major institutions. These changes require the mobilization of resources, both financial and human, on a national level.

III. THE MIDDLE SPACE: STATE-NGO/LOCAL-INTERNATIONAL INTERACTIONS

If we examine the middle space where international actors, the state, and local communities meet, there are a number of initiatives aimed at substantially improving the content and methods of education that promise greater equity and quality, as well as efficiency (as measured by retention and graduation rates, and individuals equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to society and to lead meaningful lives). There are worldwide movements that emphasize goals of education related to the formation of critical, participatory citizens in multicultural societies. Civic education

⁴⁷ CIVIL SOCIETY OR SHADOW STATE?: STATE/NGO RELATIONS IN EDUCATION (Margaret Sutton & Robert F. Arnove eds., 2004).

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ See Robert F. Arnove & Rachel Christina, *NGO-State Relations: An Argument in Favor of the State and Complementarity of Efforts*, 1 CURRENT ISSUES IN COMP. EDUC. (1998), available at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/journalarchives.htm> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

programs are being introduced in a number of countries previously under totalitarian rule—or authoritarian regimes at best. The programs are based on constructivist epistemologies and methods that engage students in questioning the value of existing rules of the game.⁵¹ They further encourage students to envision more desirable futures and to take an active role in shaping the course of their societies.⁵²

Frequently, however, these curricula come up against the strong tendency of national systems of education to use such courses for purposes of political indoctrination. For example, Hong Kong illustrates the tension between “Chinese History” courses whose curriculum is based on the experiences of the Chinese mainland, with an emphasis on traditional values and unproblematic pedagogy designed to integrate the former colony into the mainland society. And yet, there are also more general history courses that are designed locally and draw on international tendencies in this field to have more open-ended pedagogies involving critical examination of major social issues.⁵³

Tensions related to such reform efforts were highlighted at an international conference in Bellagio, Italy, in June 2002, where representatives from eighteen nations examined attempts to introduce notions of multicultural education and citizenship education into the curriculum.⁵⁴ With regards to Japan, for example, Professor Murphy-Shigematsu underscored the difficulties of diversity education in a society where the motto has been “the nail that sticks out gets hammered in,” and where ethnic education (*minzoku kyoiku*) and education about the minority burakumin (*Dowa kyoku*, putative “untouchables”) have existed, but in isolation from the main curriculum.⁵⁵ In Japan, as in several European countries, a low birth rate and the influx of immigrant workers are driving forces behind efforts to have a more inclusive education.

International norms concerning not only the rights of immigrant and indigenous groups, but also those of children and special education

⁵¹ See DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES (James A. Banks ed., 2004) [hereinafter DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION].

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ See Flora Kan & Edward Vickers, *One Hong Kong, Two Histories: ‘History’ and ‘Chinese History’ in the Hong Kong School Curriculum*, 38 COMP. EDUC. 73 (2002).

⁵⁴ DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, *supra* note 51, at xxi–xxii (publishing the proceedings of the conference).

⁵⁵ Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, *Exploring the Borders of the Nation: Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship Education in Japan*, in DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, *supra* note 51.

populations, are circulating with greater force around the world.⁵⁶ These norms are being introduced into extremely difficult contexts, such as the West Bank of the Palestinian Authority, through its innovative programs that attempt to balance respect for local culture with the developmental needs of children.⁵⁷

Farrell provides a useful, but cautionary, summary of the conditions under which educational reforms may succeed.

A central lesson from the comparative data assembled over the past several decades is this: Don't take seriously anyone who speaks with certainty about the probable effects of the current wave of educational reform proposals. Significant gains in educational equality have been made over the past fifty years, but they have been for the most part not the result of broad-scale, centrally driven, international agency-supported reform programs. Rather, they have been the result of economic growth or social structural change outside the realm of the school, or of an option that is now generally unavailable or that political leaders are unwilling to choose: massive increases in educational expenditure.⁵⁸

Farrell, however, ends his review of current policy trends and the implications for equality of educational opportunities on a "hopeful note":

Throughout the world, particularly the developing world, small and large attempts are being made to fundamentally alter the traditional teacher-directed model of schooling. They typically spread not by a centrally planned and commanded reform plan but through an innovation diffusion process. Such change programs do not simply alter one feature of the standard school. Rather, they represent a thorough reorganization and a fundamental re-visioning of the standard schooling model such that the learning program, although

⁵⁶ See Rachel K. Christina, *NGOs and the Negotiation of Local Control in Development Initiatives: A Case Study of Palestinian Early Childhood Programming* (2001) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University) (on file with Indiana University Education Library); RACHEL K. CHRISTINA, *TEND THE OLIVE, WATER THE VINE: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION* (2004) [hereinafter *TEND THE OLIVE, WATER THE VINE*].

⁵⁷ Christina, *supra* note 56; *TEND THE OLIVE, WATER THE VINE*, *supra* note 56.

⁵⁸ Farrell, *supra* note 31, at 166–67 (citation omitted).

often occurring in or based in a building called a school, is far different from what we have come to expect to be happening in a school.⁵⁹

Such reforms often cost less than average per capita expenditures and frequently show superior academic results for the most marginalized populations.⁶⁰

Some major examples of these model-breaking educational changes include the Escuela Nueva program in Colombia, which currently includes close to 30,000 rural schools and has been adapted on a large- or small-scale basis in at least ten other Latin American nations; the multi-grade program in Guinea, now operating in over 1,300 schools; the MECE Rural Program (Programa de Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Educación para las Escuelas Multigrados Rurales) in Chile, which is now present in over 3,000 schools; the Non-formal Primary Education program of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), which operates in thousands of villages in that nation and is spreading into urban areas and parts of India; a wide network of community schools supported by the Aga Khan Foundation in Pakistan and other developing nations; and the Community Schools Program in rural Egypt, which is expected to be operating in thousands of schools within a few years.⁶¹

Although promising, are these reforms transferable and sustainable? While instructional technologies represent a major modality for disseminating innovations, these technologies also may be used to export inappropriate programs to the rest of the world from the metropolitan centers of the North. At the same time, modern telecommunication technologies can facilitate individuals, classrooms, and whole schools linking up to share common concerns and seek solutions to them. For example, through efforts of the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis School of Education, predominantly African-American students from Indianapolis inner city schools are communicating with township schools in Soweto, South Africa. Local classrooms are now able to communicate with expert resources otherwise unavailable—or even unimaginable—until recently. For example, students in classrooms can converse with astronauts in space, follow various archeological

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 167.

⁶⁰ *See id.* at 168.

⁶¹ *Id.* at 167–68 (citations omitted).

expeditions around the world, and, in a classroom in Bloomington, Indiana, follow the Iditarod.⁶²

IV. GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW

Advances in telecommunication technologies certainly have facilitated the linking up of places far and near and the compression of time required to exchange information and services. These advances are a central component of what we call globalization. Globalization and the accompanying neoliberal agenda are dominant themes of contemporary comparative and international education research and discussion;⁶³ they are forces and policies that can be resisted, accommodated, or employed to the advantage of those most negatively affected by them. So far, in terms of who pays and who benefits in terms of opportunity, I would say unequivocally that the most vulnerable and poorest have paid, and the most powerful and richest have benefited both across, and within, nations. However, this is not to say that the tensions, contradictions, and conflicts generated by these forces cannot be turned to the advantage of subaltern groups.

This is a very difficult time for those who work on behalf of transnational understanding and peace. It is easy for us to succumb to pessimism and fatalism about what internationally-minded citizens can do to stem institutional violence, the daily misery of millions of individuals around the globe, environmental destruction, the arms race with weapons of mass destruction, and the resolution of conflict by means of war. The forces of globalization that have intensified over the past decade challenge us to cope with transnational forces that appear to overwhelm and fragment our communities and set whole populations against one another. But the same mechanisms that enable multinational economic and cultural corporations to go wherever they want and do whatever is in their self-interests, which is invariably the bottom line, also can be used to unite people across previously insurmountable divides. Just as there is globalization from above, there is countervailing globalization from below—grassroots movements and the use of interactive technologies and media can unite people in common endeavors. Very much as the giant

⁶² *Show & Tell: Class Notes: Indiana Musher Comes to Edgewood*, THE HERALD TIMES (Bloomington, IN), May 18, 2004.

⁶³ See Thomas Clayton, *Compelling Conceptions of Globalizations Revisited*, 48 COMP. EDUC. REV. 274, 274–75 (2004). See also Robert F. Arnove, *Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Facing the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and Contributions*, 45 COMP. EDUC. REV. 477, 478 (2001).

Gulliver⁶⁴ was subdued by hundreds of diminutive Lilliputians in the fable of Jonathan Swift, cross-national social movements can achieve remarkable results.⁶⁵

One example of the Lilliputians' strategy is the "No Sweat [Shop]" movement that unites university students and faculty and labor unions in the United States and abroad to press demands that multinational corporations pay their workers a living wage in a safe and secure environment and recognize the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively under a threat of losing their rights to sell goods displaying university logos.⁶⁶ International social movements also have achieved victories related to the distribution of free or low-cost antiretroviral medicines for AIDS patients in countries devastated by the disease, such as South Africa,⁶⁷ they have stopped the wholesale firing of union workers who refused to accept cutbacks in wages, working conditions, and benefits,⁶⁸ and they have forced major agenda setters in education to talk about putting a human face on globalization.⁶⁹ In just one week in March of 2003, the anti-war virtual organization Move On⁷⁰ was able to mobilize over one million individuals around the world to send letters to the United Nations Security Council urging a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Iraq. Many of the participants in this conference, as well as readers of the *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, likely subscribe to websites that link and encourage hundreds of thousands of socially conscious individuals to take action—whether through contacting national and international policy makers—or other means to advance a progressive, nonviolent, environmentally friendly social agenda.

Recent events in Bolivia are indicative of how grassroots social protest movements can topple a government. Miners and coca growing peasants united against the selling of natural gas rights to multinational companies on exploitative terms were able to bring down the government of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, and set conditions for national control of natural

⁶⁴. See generally JONATHAN SWIFT, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS (Paul Turner ed., Oxford Univ. Press 1998) (1726).

⁶⁵. JEREMY BRECHER ET AL., GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW: THE POWER OF SOLIDARITY 26–29 (2000).

⁶⁶. *Id.*

⁶⁷. *Id.* at 28–29.

⁶⁸. *Id.* at 28.

⁶⁹. *Id.*

⁷⁰. See MoveOn, at <http://www.moveon.org> (last visited Feb. 1, 2005).

resources that benefit the nation as a whole.⁷¹ “Across South America, labor unions, student and civic groups and a new wave of leaders are expressing similar doubts about who actually benefits from a free flow of international trade and investment.”⁷²

Another example of a Lilliputian nation confronting a giant is the case of Cuba’s challenge to the “Colossus of the North” by following a socialist path to development.⁷³ Despite being a low income country with massive economic problems during the early nineties and the continuing US trade embargo, Cuba has the most impressive and equitable education system of Latin America. Language and mathematics scores of Cuban primary school children as a whole are far superior to those of any other Latin American country on achievement tests administered by the Regional Office (OREALC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).⁷⁴ Net secondary education enrollments in Cuba are also among the highest in the region.⁷⁵

Visionary university leaders of the South are also communicating how they can overcome their marginalized position in the world of knowledge creation and dissemination, and pursue research and development policies that benefit the majority of their populations. Universities can contribute to income and job generation to overcome the devastating effects of the debt crisis and economic restructuring to control inflation and fiscal deficits. Higher education leaders like the late Xabier Gorostiaga, the former rector of the Central American University, UCA, of Nicaragua, have proposed a “[n]ew [r]ole for Universities of the South.”⁷⁶ His vision calls for utilizing existing university departmental extension programs and research and development institutes

⁷¹. See Larry Rohter, *Bolivia’s Poor Proclaim Abiding Distrust of Globalization*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 17, 2003, at A3; Lucien O. Chauvin, *People Power Rules in S. America*, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, Oct. 21, 2003, at 6.

⁷². Rohter, *supra* note 71, at A3.

⁷³. See LABORATORIO LATINOAMERICANO DE EVALUACIÓN DE LA CALIDAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN, PRIMER ESTUDIO INTERNACIONAL COMPARATIVO SOBRE LENGUAJE, MATEMÁTICA Y FACTORES ASOCIADOS EN TERCERO Y CUARTO GRADO [FIRST INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE STUDY ON LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS IN THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE] (1998), available at <http://www.mineduacion.gov.co/publicaciones/llece/inFlab1.pdf>.

⁷⁴. *Id.*

⁷⁵. UNESCO, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report*, available at http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.phpURL_ID=11283&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (last visited Jan. 26, 2005).

⁷⁶. See Xabier Gorostiaga, *New Times, New Role for Universities of the South*, 12 ENVÍO 24 (1993) available at <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo.php?id=1698> (last visited Jan. 27, 2005).

affiliated with the UCA as nuclei for experimentation, training, and popular education.⁷⁷

Building a university education around the knowledge generated by rural-based centers would contribute to the formation of professionals, who, because they had a more realistic understanding of their society, would be better prepared to address its most pressing problems.⁷⁸ Moreover, the work of such centers would contribute to empowering the producing majority to become major historical actors involved in the transformation of an unsatisfactory status quo that has marginalized and exploited them. According to Gorostiaga, “All of these experimental nuclei offer an ideal place for our professors and students to bring their theoretical knowledge down to earth, to participate in research projects that directly benefit civil society and to extend teaching to the Nicaraguans excluded from access to secondary and university education.”⁷⁹ Such efforts are critical to the development, dissemination, and sustainability of appropriate technologies, and they offer prospects of collaboration between universities of the North and the South.⁸⁰

V. THE TASKS AHEAD

International education and legal scholars have important roles to play in public consciousness-raising and social change. Far from being marginal to the struggle to achieve social justice, universities, and especially teacher preparation institutions and law faculties, must play an instrumental role in preparing present and future generations of students with the knowledge, skills, values, and ideals to comprehend and transform the world. Neglected in the current emphasis of policymakers’ roles in educational systems, serving primarily the economic goal of national competitiveness in the global marketplace, is the fundamental and historic mission of public schooling in contributing to the formation of an enlightened and participatory citizenry that would actively forge a more democratic and equitable society. Progressive educators and statesmen over the past two centuries have also envisioned public education contributing to the struggles of populations and countries all around the world for self-determination and justice. The audiences reached by

⁷⁷. *Id.*

⁷⁸. *See id.*

⁷⁹. *Id.* at 37.

⁸⁰. *See generally* Robert F. Arno, *Partnerships and Emancipatory Educational Movements: Issues and Prospects*, 42 ALTA. J. EDUC. RES. 170 (1996).

this conference and the *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* are ideally suited to carry out the research, service activities, and teaching that enhance public understanding of the global forces affecting economies and education systems transnationally. Do these forces strengthen or weaken the long-term trend towards comprehensive human rights? In addition to critical analysis of current worldwide trends in economic and educational policies, it is necessary to stimulate the imaginations of teachers, students, and policymakers, with reference to alternative and preferable futures consistent with ideals of democratic citizenship both locally and globally.