

Chapter 4

Developing an Education Planning Tool to Create the Conditions for Social Justice in a Global Village



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Abstract This chapter argues that inequality seems to impact on virtually every society in the world. Schools seem to reproduce inequality and in some countries in the world poor communities have been reproduced for over more than a century. It calls for a more egalitarian society that is based on developing programmes that reduce inequality. The chapter confronts the issue of inequality facing most countries and calls for changing education systems since education can become an important catalyst for change. Most education systems have been captured by politics and global ideas of accumulating wealth whilst the policy remains irrelevant and useless to the poor. The chapter makes a case for a social justice model in education that influences every decision in terms of planning and operationalizing education. The chapter emphasizes the need for changing theoretical frameworks and practices that are committed to asking questions about what is best for developing the conditions for social justice. How can we plan and develop programmes that will ensure spending and planning is in the best interests of all sectors of society mainly the poor. Finally the chapter argues that the status quo should be ruptured in the interests of creating the conditions a just social order in terms of planning and implementing education policy.

Keywords Changing schools · Cultural reproduction · Education reforms · Globalization · Inequality · Social justice

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Developing an Education Planning Tool to Create the Conditions for Social Justice: Introduction

It has been well documented that education presents a unique opportunity to address the challenge of inequality (Apple, 2001; Klasen & Lamanna, 2009). Most systems of education have not made a serious attempt to address the challenge. Education systems in the world are less likely to address poverty in their own countries without the operational capability since producing policy documents is not the solution. Reports out of the most powerful nations in the world suggest that some communities have been reproduced for over a hundred years. The Black Lives Matter movement in the USA bears testimony to this point, (Maqbool, 2020). This chapter attempts to, (i) describe the problem and (ii) provide a resolution since it suggests that the centre of any Department of Education planning should be vulnerable children. John Rawls (1993) and Amartya Sen (2009) have written constructively about education and social justice. It is important that a social justice theory be applied to education. This chapter suggests that vulnerable children be brought to the centre of education planning particularly at the level of education departments that formulate and implement policy. There is a need to restructure organograms best suited to addressing the plight of growing poor communities and generate a narrative that forces them to ask the question how do we reduce inequality?

Rawls (1993) argued the following principles of justice:

- (a) Each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all.
- (b) Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions. First, they must be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they must be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society (Rawls, 1993, p. 5).

It is against this background that the chapter explains the contemporary problems facing society in terms of inequality and suggests structural change within education departments as well as a comprehensive narrative that forces education authorities to ask the question how can fairness be applied to education policy and practice?

Problem Defined

International data suggests that this is indeed a serious problem and it is growing. The crime and violence that confronts begins in the classrooms of schools. Children who are not well educated pose a serious threat to the stability of society. Inequality is growing for more than 70% of the global population, exacerbating the risks of divisions and hampering economic and social development. But the rise is far from inevitable and can be tackled at a national and international level, says a flagship study released by the UN on Tuesday, March 3 (UN News, 2021).

The World Social Report, 2020, published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), shows that income inequality has increased in most developed countries, and some middle-income countries - including China, which has the world's fastest growing economy. The challenges are underscored by UN chief António Guterres in the foreword, in which he states that the world is confronting "the harsh realities of a deeply unequal global landscape", in which economic woes, inequalities and job insecurity have led to mass protests in both developed and developing countries. "Income disparities and a lack of opportunities", he writes, "are creating a vicious cycle of inequality, frustration and discontent across generations." (Guterres, 2020).

The study shows that the richest one per cent of the population are the big winners in the changing global economy, increasing their share of income between 1990 and 2015, while at the other end of the scale, the bottom 40% earned less than a quarter of income in all countries surveyed. Three strategies for making countries more egalitarian are suggested in the report: the promotion of equal access to opportunities (through, for example, universal access to education); fiscal policies that include measures for social policies, such as unemployment and disability benefits; and legislation that tackles prejudice and discrimination, whilst promoting greater participation of disadvantaged groups.

While action at a national level is crucial, the report declares that "concerted, coordinated and multilateral action" is needed to tackle major challenges affecting inequality within and among countries.

Universal access to education is indeed a very important point of departure but education departments and teaching training should make vulnerable children the centre of their programmes. In most countries education policy is driven by politics, personalities and power with programmes largely reproducing the status quo. It is important that all countries both developed and developing recognize inequality as the single biggest threat to the stability of society. The world has never been as chaotic as it is now. This is reflected by various events in the world which include, for example, the instability in the United States, Middle East and in Africa. All these people have emerged from classrooms of the world and often inequality results in violent and aggressive behavior. The source is often economic although there are a number of other variables.

How Do Education Departments in Various Countries Respond to This Crisis?

Can education policy create the conditions for change and transformation as most policy documents promise to do or is it a type of symbolism that attempts to appease the public? This chapter attempts to answer this question given the lack of progress at an international level in areas such as removing inequalities and ensuring inclusive education. There is often much talk about neatly crafted policy documents that are

written and made reference to when questions are raised about challenges in practice as it relates to inequality. This chapter makes the point that much more work should be done concerning transformation than just preparing a policy document. At an international level 17 Sustainable goals have been developed and most countries are signatories to this policy initiative. After signing and agreeing to implementation limited structural changes take place regarding the organogram of the departments that implement, no budgetary change and little or no human resource development takes place. Since mass education began a hundred years ago little has changed for poor children and children who experience barrier to learning. Well written policy documents remain on the shelf whilst the status is reproduced over centuries. It is against this background the chapter makes reference to the policy process in the contemporary world and makes recommendations on what should be done in order to ensure new policy is given a good chance for implementation.

This chapter suggests that two interventions need to take place. On the one hand there has to be a reorganization of organograms of education departments. At the centre of the planning process, there should be an attempt to place the vulnerable learner at the centre. This should be emphasized in all developing countries. However, the United States and United Kingdom also experience serious challenges in terms of inequalities. Organograms should be designed in such a way that their formation should be based on the inequality narrative and ask the questions, how do we reduce inequality in all its forms in education. Thus there has to be structural change. Budgets and human resource development should be aligned accordingly. This will ensure that at the centre of the planning process is the structures that will address underdevelopment and poverty in education. In terms of human resource development all key personnel who drive transformation and change should be exposed to a broader narrative on barriers to learning. This narrative should be the gaze of every public servant within an education department. The barriers to learning narrative is discussed in detail below and draws heavily from South Africa's education white paper 6 on special needs education building an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education (2000)).

The Key Barriers to Learning and Development

Barriers can be located within the learner, within the centre of learning, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context. These barriers manifest themselves in different ways and only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs, when learners 'drop out' of the system or when the excluded become visible. Sometimes it is possible to identify permanent barriers in the learner or the system which can be addressed through enabling mechanisms and processes. However, barriers may also arise during the learning process and are seen as transitory in nature. These may require different interventions or strategies to prevent them from causing learning breakdown or excluding learners from the system. The key to preventing barriers from occurring is the effective monitoring

and meeting of the different needs among the learner population and within the system as a whole.

Socio-economic Barriers

The relationship between education provision and the socio-economic conditions in any society must be recognized. Effective learning is fundamentally influenced by the availability of educational resources to meet the needs of any society. In many countries, especially our own country, there are inadequate numbers of centers of learning and other facilities to meet the educational needs of the population. In most cases, inadequacies in provision are linked to other inequalities in the society such as urban/rural disparities, as well as inequalities arising from discrimination on grounds such as gender, race and disability. Barriers result not only from the inadequacy of provision, but also from policies and practices which are designed to perpetuate these inequalities.

Lack of Access to Basic Services

One of the most significant barriers to learning remains the inability of learners to access the educational provision that does exist and their inability to access other services which contribute to the learning process. In most instances the inability to access education provision results from inadequate or non-existent services and facilities which are key to participation in the learning process. For example, in many poor communities, particularly in our own country in rural areas, learners are unable to reach centres of learning because there are no transport facilities available to learners or the roads are so poorly developed and maintained that centers cannot be reached. While such barriers affect all learners in poorly serviced communities, it is important to recognize that particular groups of learners are more severely affected by these barriers. In general transport systems which do exist are inaccessible to learners with disabilities, particularly learners who use wheelchairs. So, for example, learners with disabilities who should be attending school or who wish to go to adult education classes are unable to even reach the school or class because the public transport system which is available is either physically inaccessible or unwilling to transport them. At the same time they are unable to walk to school or classes and in this way they are totally excluded from the education system.

While inadequate transport remains a key element preventing access to education, other basic services such as access to clinics also impinge on the learning process. If a child has a chronic illness, for example, regular medical treatment which may be needed may result at best in learners experiencing periods of long absence from the classroom to reach treatment or at worst in learners 'dropping out' of school in order to be hospitalized in a facility where no provision exists for learning support to

continue during the period of treatment. Lack of early intervention facilities and services also means that many children, especially those with severe disabilities, are unable to receive the necessary intervention and stimulation which will equip them to participate effectively in the learning process. This barrier not only leads in many cases to increased impairment, but also to decreased capacity to learn, particularly in integrated settings.

Lack of access to other services, such as welfare and communication services, also affects the learning process and leads to learning breakdown or exclusion. The lack of Sign Language interpreters in public services mean that these facilities remain largely inaccessible to Deaf learners.

Poverty and Underdevelopment

Closely linked to the lack of access to basic services is the effect which sustained poverty has on learners, the learning process and the education system. For learners, the most obvious result of poverty, often caused by unemployment and other economic inequalities, is the inability of families to meet basic needs such as nutrition and shelter. Learners living under such conditions are subject to increased emotional stress which adversely affects learning and development. Additionally, under-nourishment leads to a lack of concentration and a range of other symptoms which affect the ability of the learner to engage effectively in the learning process.

Poverty-stricken communities are also poorly resourced communities which are frequently characterised by limited educational facilities, large classes with high pupil/teacher ratios, inadequately trained staff and inadequate teaching and learning materials. Such factors raise the likelihood of learning breakdown and the inability of the system to sustain effective teaching and learning. Learners from families where one or more of the breadwinners are unemployed or poorly paid are also more likely to leave school as soon as possible to go out to work to supplement the family income. This perpetuates the cycle of limited skills with fewer work opportunities, increased likelihood of unemployment or poorly paid work and, thus, ongoing poverty and exclusion.

In considering the effects of poverty on the learning process and access to education, it is also important to recognize the link between poverty and disability. People with disabilities are often those most easily excluded from the education system and from the labour market and are therefore the most poverty stricken in any population. Related to these realities is the perception in many families who have a child with disabilities such a child is unlikely to be employed or to be in a position to contribute to the family income. At best, the child is kept back from school until his/her more able-bodied siblings have been accommodated or at worst, is never given the opportunity to go to school or to learn. This has, for example, resulted in an affirmative funding approach in Uganda where families with four children receive free education with the proviso that preference is given to the sibling with disabilities.

Factors Which Place Learners at Risk

Effective learning is directly related to and dependent on the social and emotional well-being of the learner. It is important to recognize that particular conditions may arise within the social, economic and political environment in which the learner lives which impact negatively on the learner's social and emotional well-being, thus placing the learner at risk of learning breakdown. Such factors either impact directly on the learner or on his/her family or community. In all cases the learner's emotional and social well-being and development are threatened.

A child who is physically, emotionally or sexually abused is not only emotionally and physically damaged but such abuse may also lead to the learner being forced to miss school and eventually to 'drop out' of the system. Factors such as substance abuse may affect the learner or may affect the learner's family, causing family breakdown and increased stress. Problems in families and abuse may also cause children to leave home and live on the streets. For young girls who fall pregnant while still at school, effective learning breaks down when the economic implications of having a child force the learner to leave to go out and work to earn money. The associated stigmatization and the lack of a supportive infrastructure for learning and teaching mitigates against being able to continue attending school and thus engage in the learning process.

Sometimes learners are placed at risk by conditions arising in the wider society. In many countries, our own being a case in point, young learners have been subjected to civil war and other forms of political violence which not only disrupt the learning environment but also lead to trauma and emotional distress. High levels of mobility of families resulting from processes such as urbanisation, the establishment of informal settlements, eviction of farm workers and families being forced to seek refugee status in safer environments also lead to disruption of the learning process and, ultimately, to learning breakdown.

The nature of the centre of learning and its ability to provide a conducive teaching and learning environment is undermined when the surrounding environment is made unsafe by high levels of violence and crime. When the safety of educators and learners cannot be guaranteed learners may be prevented from participating in effective teaching and learning or these may be disrupted. In this way lack of safety in the learning environment becomes a barrier to learning and development. A lack of provision of basic amenities at centers of learning such as electricity and toilets creates an unhealthy environment which undermines learning and teaching and places learners at risk.

In recognizing and identifying those factors within the broader environment which place learners at risk, it is important to recognize that problems such as natural disasters or epidemics which arise in any society have a significant impact on learners. For example, over the last decade more and more children and adults have been affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Many learners have not only had to deal with chronic illnesses resulting from the disease, but have also had to deal with the loss of family members, particularly breadwinners.

It is obvious from the above that the impact of socio-economic barriers is more severe for those learners who are already excluded or marginalized in the society. Learners with disabilities, learners living in poor communities, learners discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, culture or other characteristics which are used to marginalize people are often subjected to a range of these barriers, such as the compounded nature of various forms of discrimination, thus rendering them even more vulnerable and likely to be excluded or experience learning breakdown. It is also important to recognize that learning breakdown can perpetuate further breakdown, often manifesting itself in disruptive and self-destructive behaviour by the learner which also negatively affects other learners. In recognizing the impact of a variety of barriers on learners and the system it follows that overcoming and preventing these barriers must involve a range of mechanisms which recognize the needs of the learner and the needs in the society which must be met.

Attitudes

Negative and harmful attitudes towards difference in our society remain a critical barrier to learning and development. Discriminatory attitudes resulting from prejudice against people on the basis of race, class, gender, culture, disability, religion, ability, sexual preference and other characteristics manifest themselves as barriers to learning when such attitudes are directed towards learners in the education system.

For the most part, negative attitudes toward different learners manifest themselves in the labelling of learners. Sometimes these labels are just negative associations between the learner and the system such as 'drop outs', 'repeaters' or 'slow learners'. While it is important to recognize the impact which this kind of labelling has on the learner's self-esteem the most serious consequence of such labelling results when it is linked to placement or exclusion. Sometimes learners are placed in a particular learning environment merely because they are labelled as belonging to a category of learners for which a particular kind of educational placement exists. Because the placement has occurred through the attachment of a label rather than through an appropriate assessment of the educational needs of the learner or what is required by the system to meet those needs, the placement may not only be inappropriate to the learner's needs but it may also result in the learner being marginalized. This also perpetuates the failure of the system to change or adapt to meet such needs. Learners with disabilities have often been placed in specialized learning contexts merely because they were labelled as disabled. The particular nature of their disability, the particular educational needs arising from such a disability, such as a necessary assistive device, or other needs within the system, such as physical accessibility, are not properly considered. Labelling goes so far as to sometimes categorize learners, particularly those with severe mental disabilities, as being 'ineducable'. Such a label fails to consider what is needed from the system in order to meet that learner's needs, whatever their capabilities and capacity.

Sometimes negative attitudes and labelling result from fear and a lack of awareness about the particular needs of learners or the potential barriers which they may face. Children who are HIV+ have been excluded from attending school with other children because of the negative assumptions and misconceptions associated with the disease. Because of poor knowledge of the disease and its transmission, these children, by merely attending school with other children, are seen to be placing other children at risk of infection.

Barriers resulting from fear and lack of awareness may arise from the feelings of parents or educators themselves. For example, learners with high ability are often regarded as a threat and therefore face denial of their significant abilities.

For learners with disabilities, fear and lack of awareness about disability among some parents and educators remain a significant barrier to their learning and development. Such barriers may arise when the child is born. Many parents have difficulty in accepting a child with a disability. In a patriarchal society the mother is often blamed for the disability and fathers deny responsibility for the child. The isolation and marginalisation of the child is exacerbated when and if they are able to enter into the education system. Very often teachers fear the inclusion of a child with a disability in their class and respond negatively to their attendance. Negative attitudes towards disability are picked up by the other children who further alienate the disabled learner. Many of the negative attitudes towards disability result from some traditional and religious beliefs which denigrate disability.

Inflexible Curriculum

One of the most serious barriers to learning and development can be found within the curriculum itself and relates primarily to the inflexible nature of the curriculum which prevents it from meeting diverse needs among learners. When learners are unable to access the curriculum, learning breakdown occurs. The nature of the curriculum at all phases of education involves a number of components which are all critical in facilitating or undermining effective learning. Key components of the curriculum include the style and tempo of teaching and learning, what is taught, the way the classroom is managed and organized, as well as materials and equipment which are used in the learning and teaching process.

Sometimes educators, often through inadequate training, use teaching styles which may not meet the needs of some of the learners. An educator may teach at a pace which only accommodates learners who learn very quickly. Alternatively, the pace and style of teaching may limit the initiative and involvement of learners with high levels of ability. What is taught or the subjects which learners are able to choose may limit the learner's knowledge base or fail to develop the intellectual and emotional capacities of the learner. Such barriers arise when sufficient attention is not given to balancing skills which prepare learners for work (vocational skills) and skills which prepare the learner for coping with life (life skills). Some learners are excluded from certain aspects of the curriculum as a result of ignorance or prejudice.

For example, learners with physical disabilities are often prevented from playing sport or are not given the opportunity to do so. Similarly, male and female learners are encouraged or pressured to take certain subjects at school or at tertiary level according to their gender because those subjects will equip them for jobs which stereotypically are undertaken by men or women. What is taught through the curriculum may often be inappropriate to the learner's life situation making learning extremely difficult and ultimately contributing to learning breakdown. For example, adults involved in literacy training may be taught with the use of examples which are unrelated to their particular life experience. Materials used for teaching and learning which constantly reflect only one culture or life experience, may lead to learners from other cultures and life experiences feeling excluded and marginalized.

One of the most serious ways in which learners are prevented from accessing the curriculum is through inadequate provision of materials or equipment they may need for learning to take place. Such barriers often affect learners with disabilities who do not receive the necessary assistive devices which would equip them to participate in the learning process. For example, blind learners are unable to access the curriculum effectively if appropriate Braille facilities and equipment are not available and if teachers are not skilled to teach Braille or use audio equipment. Lack of provision of assistive devices for learners who require them may impair not only the learning process but also their functional independence, preventing them from interacting with other learners and participating independently in the learning environment.

The ability of the curriculum to lead to learning breakdown also occurs through the mechanisms which are used to assess learning outcomes. Assessment processes are often inflexible and designed to only assess particular kinds of knowledge and aspects of learning, such as the amount of information that can be memorized rather than the learner's understanding of the concepts involved. The seriousness of such barriers is most obvious where there are large number of learners who are forced to repeat aspects of the curriculum, even if this means remaining in levels where the age gap between the learner and the other learners is significant.

Language and Communication

A further area of barriers arising from the curriculum, are those which result from the medium of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning for many learners takes place through a language which is not their first language. This not only places these learners at a disadvantage, but it also leads to linguistic difficulties which contribute to learning breakdown. Second language learners are often subjected to low expectations, discrimination and lack of cultural peers. Educators furthermore often experience difficulties in developing appropriate support mechanisms for second language learners.

Such barriers can be particularly destructive for Deaf learners whose first language is Sign Language. Misperceptions with regards to the morphological, syntactic, discourse, pragmatic, 'phonological' and semantic structures of Sign Language,

which are entirely equal in complexity and richness to that which is found in any spoken language, often lead to Deaf learners being forced into learning through the so-called 'oral' method, or having to learn through signed spoken languages (for example, signed English or Tswana, or signed exact English or Tswana. Being able to access Sign Language as the medium of teaching and learning enables these learners to develop bi- and multi-lingualism through Sign Language as the medium of teaching and learning.

Communication is essential for learning and development in both formal and informal contexts. Learners who are non-speaking due to the severity of their physical, intellectual and/or mental disability experience enormous barriers to learning and development. These barriers arise from the general unavailability of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies to enable them to engage in the learning process, and more often than not find themselves totally excluded from learning and development experiences. AAC systems could consist of alternative communications systems, supplements to vocal communication and communication through facilitators.

Inaccessible and Unsafe Built Environment

In many contexts the vast majority of centers of learning are physically inaccessible to a large number of learners, educators and communities. Inaccessibility is particularly evident where centers are physically inaccessible to learners, educators and members of the community with disabilities who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Such inaccessibility often also renders centers unsafe for blind and Deaf learners.

Inappropriate and Inadequate Provision of Support Services

Particular enabling mechanisms and processes are needed to support diversity and enable the education system, including educators and learners, to minimize, remove and prevent barriers which may exist or arise. Where no provision exists for such services, barriers cannot be overcome and needs cannot be met.

In some contexts, however, inappropriate or inadequate support services may contribute to learning breakdown or exclusion. For example, where the nature of the service is focused on problems in the learner rather than in the system where the barrier may exist - such as poor teaching methods - the intervention may exacerbate the learning breakdown. Similarly, the nature of the intervention may lead to a learner being removed from a learning environment rather than addressing the problems which may exist in that environment. Learners who may require individualized intervention to address barriers to learning may also not have access to these.

As was discussed earlier, basic services which may support learners and the system to minimize and remove barriers or prevent them from arising are often lacking or limited in poorer communities. This is especially true in rural areas where access to professional assistance is limited or non-existent. Thus the inadequacy or unequal distribution of services which do exist may further disadvantage learners rather than being services which contribute to effective learning.

One of the key contributing factors to inappropriate and inadequate support provision relates to the nature of human resource development of both educators and personnel who provide services to learners and their families. Lack of awareness, service provision which is fragmented and inappropriate to the context in which it takes place, demoralization and a fear of dealing with a diverse range of needs all result from inadequate and fragmented development of human resources. Not only does poor provision in this area lead to a dearth of necessary skills and knowledge but it also contributes to a system which is unable to meet a diversity of learner needs and prevent barriers to learning and development.

Lack of Enabling and Protective Legislation and Policy

Many of the barriers to learning and development discussed above do not merely arise from problems occurring in the education system or in the wider society. It is often policy and legislation governing the education system and regulating the society which directly or indirectly facilitate the existence of such barriers. Where such legislation or policy fails to protect learners from discrimination or perpetuates particular inequalities, it directly contributes to the existence or maintenance of such barriers. For example, policy which is inflexible regarding issues such as age limits may prevent learners from being able to enter or continue in the education system, thus leading to exclusion. Similarly, legislation which fails to protect learners from discrimination and fails to provide for minimum standards which accommodate diversity allows for individual practices which may inhibit learner development or lead to provision which is inadequate and inappropriate for the needs which exist.

Lack of Parental Recognition and Involvement

The active involvement of parents and the broader community in the teaching and learning process is central to effective learning and development. Such involvement includes recognition for parents as the primary care givers of their children and, as such, that they are a central resource to the education system. More specifically, they are critical components for effective governance of centers of learning and for facilitating community ownership of these facilities.

Where parents are not given this recognition or where their participation is not facilitated and encouraged effective learning is threatened and hindered. Negative

attitudes towards parental involvement, lack of resources to facilitate such involvement, lack of parent empowerment and support for parent organizations, particularly in poorer communities, all contribute to a lack of parental involvement in centers of learning.

Disability

For most learners with disabilities, learning breakdown and exclusion occur when their particular learning needs are not met as a result of barriers in the learning environment or broader society which handicap the learner and prevent effective learning from taking place. Having said this, however, particular impairments may prevent the learner from engaging continuously in structured learning and development. Such impairments may render the learner unable to participate in an ideal process of learning. For example, disabilities such as schizophrenia, severe autism, severe intellectual disabilities or multi-disabilities may prevent the learner from being able to continuously engage in programmes aimed at facilitating learning and development. Some learners also experience learning breakdown due to intrinsic cognitive or learning difficulties in areas such as in acquiring skills in literacy or numeracy or in the organization or management of their own learning.

Lack of Human Resource Development Strategies

The development of educators, service providers and other human resources is often fragmented and unsustainable. The absence of on-going in-service training of educators, in particular, often leads to insecurity, uncertainty, low self-esteem and lack of innovative practices in the classroom. This may result in resistance and harmful attitudes towards those learners who experience learning breakdown or towards particular enabling mechanisms.

Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development

If the education system is to promote effective learning and prevent learning breakdown, it is imperative that mechanisms are structured into the system to break down existing barriers. Such mechanisms must develop the capacity of the system to overcome barriers which may arise, prevent barriers from occurring, and promote the development of an effective learning and teaching environment.

Central to the development of such capacity is the ability to identify and understand the nature of the barriers which cause learning breakdown and lead to exclusion. Over and above this, however, such capacity requires a commitment to

using and learning from practices and processes which exist within the system itself and which have been used or can be used to break down barriers and meet the range of needs which are present.

Such mechanisms will include: initiatives aimed at providing for learners who have been excluded from the system by both the state and non-governmental organizations; innovative practices for recognizing and accommodating diversity; activities that advocate against discrimination and challenge attitudes; processes towards the involvement of learners, parents, educators and community members in the governance of centers of learning; training programmers which equip educators to deal with diverse needs; curriculum restructuring; organization and development of teaching and learning environments; as well as economic and political transformation supported by enabling and protective legislation and policy.

Conclusion

The above narrative is offered as a possible narrative for reducing inequalities in planning education. This chapter provides guidance to education departments concerning structural change and programme change since most education departments have a tendency to respond to the environment pressures without examining sufficiently the operational capability of white papers and policy that is developed to reduce inequality. At an international level, 17 Sustainable goals have been developed by the UN General Assembly. Hak, Janoušová and Moldan, (2016) explain the challenges to this process. At the UN in New York the Open Working Group created by the UN General Assembly proposed a set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which comprises 17 goals and 169 targets. Further to that, a preliminary set of 330 indicators was introduced in March 2015. Some SDGs build on the preceding Millennium Development Goals while others incorporate new ideas. A critical review has revealed that indicators of varied quality (in terms of the fulfilment certain criteria) have been proposed to assess sustainable development. Despite the fact that there is plenty of theoretical work on quality standards for indicators, in practice users cannot often be sure how adequately the indicators measure the monitored phenomena. Therefore we stress the need to operationalise the Sustainable Development Goals' targets and evaluate the indicators' relevance, the characteristic of utmost importance among the indicators' quality traits. The current format of the proposed SDGs and their targets has laid a policy framework; however, without thorough expert and scientific follow up on their operationalisation the indicators may be ambiguous. (Hák et al., 2016) The challenge is spelt out clearly by Hak et al. (2016) that most of the policy papers do not offer an operational capability. This chapter has attempted to do that.

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