

# Quality Education and ‘Development Education’

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## 1. International Education Development Cooperation and the Goal 4. of the SDGs

Can education change the level of development of the international community? There is a hopeful desire for ‘change’ in this kind of question. The reason I bring up about changes is because I am not quite happy with the current level. Because the current status is not satisfying nor sufficient, I shall continue the discussion about change. True, talking about change does not instantly change the world. But when we say that education changes the world, does it really affect the level of change? If the answer is ‘no’, the significance of emphasizing the education would fade. However, numerous discussions and research make us wonder if education really has the power to change the world. Thus, even if I do not give a definite ‘yes’ or ‘no’, I would appreciate it if you bear in mind that I am aware and have understanding of the importance of education in your mind. In fact, we plan and organize a lot of things, keeping in mind the power and will of education and what education can do. Hence, there exist the Ministry of Education, schools, and numerous activities that we call education. Whether it is for the future or the present, education is based on the premise that it is meaningful and powerful in itself.

The international community shares the concern for this problem and recognizes the power of education. Thus, the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) indicates how important education is, how much it is necessary to work together in the name of education, and why we need to participate in this. The SDGs’ fourth goal is to ensure comprehensive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong education opportunities. The main objectives of how to achieve fair and inclusive quality education by 2030 are as follows:

- 4.1 - By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. (primary and secondary education)
- 4.2 - By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. (early childhood education)
- 4.3 - By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. (vocational education, college education, higher education, vocational training)
- 4.4 - By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. (vocational skills training, career education, technical education)
- 4.5 - By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. (specific education, vocational technical education)
- 4.6 - By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy. (literacy education, adult basic education, lifelong education)
- 4.7 - By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. (sustainable education, global citizen education, peace education, human rights education)
- 4.a - Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. (educational environment, educational facilities)
- 4.b - By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least development countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrollment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries. (scholarship)
- 4.c - By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States. (teacher education, teacher training)

There are five approaches to be considered in the big framework for addressing the educational objectives that the SDGs pursue. The first is an ecological approach. The rhetorical discussion about great transition, such as “education should change” or “education needs a great transition”, refers to ecological education, which is ecological education system, not an educational ecosystem. The second is a cultural approach. Education should reflect unique cultures we have and allow those cultures to be reflected. The goals and approaches of the SDGs also need to be considered ecologically and culturally. The third is an economic approach. The Korean society was first best known for providing manpower to achieve rapid economic growth, and this is something that came into the spotlight because of its economic understanding.

In addition, education must be taken with ethical and psychological approaches. No matter how great the achievement is, it should not be selected if it goes against any ethical standards, economically or culturally. In addition, psychological content about beauty is also taken with various approaches to education.

In fact, the goal to develop education of the SDGs is linked to what was not achieved by the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) which were ended in 2015. The MDGs set out eight international development goals to eliminate poverty around the world from 2000 to 2015, and the second goal was to provide free and mandatory primary education. Although there were six sub-goals for educational goal, it is true that they did not lead to as comprehensive and diverse in-depth results as the SDGs. The SDGs promote the development of education based on performance, pointing out the things that the MDGs have not achieved. They contain an enterprising willingness to improve quality beyond providing quantitative opportunities. Moreover, they emphasize technological advancement in tandem with the big discourse for economic growth. Three of the 7 SDGs are related to technological advancement, or vocational skills training. This can be seen that the SDGs suggest how education is directly related to economic growth or one's way to make a living. In other words, education should be provided as an important means to achieve the goal of development. While education and development are certainly related to each other, significant consideration is weighted towards the perspective of 'education as a means for development'.

## 2. The Two Sides of Education and the Relationship Between Education and Development

"What is education?" I've had this question in my head for over 30 years since my professor of the introductory pedagogy class in the first semester of undergraduate studies asked me for 16 weeks. Thanks to him, I am in the field of education. But doesn't that sound like a bottomless question? Education is education. But I believe that sorting out what education is the way to get

answers to how to achieve quality education, how to go beyond our individual lives to create a society that coexists with others, and what roles education plays in this job.

Education is divided into two extreme forms based on functions. One is a concept centered on “education as a well-functioning means”, and the other is the idea of “education as a mechanism to change”, not to function or to maintain. The former conceptualizes education as a ‘planned change in human behavior’, and the latter as a ‘planned change in desirable human behavior’. Both concepts use the same words, so it is hard to spot the difference, but the difference lies in the term “desirable”. The former concept of ‘planned change in human behavior’ is based on behaviorist psychology. Education is the mechanism by which an individual can be made into something through external forces. Education is to turn a human being born without any knowledge into a useful being in a society. Here, it does not presuppose a change in society. Education is to inherit and reproduce the existing system, the existing knowledge system, and the existing community values. There is change, but the degree of individual change is the only point of change that can be perceived and assessed. This may not be the case for the latter concept. Change makes you change things and make people learn things, but it is not a functional means that stays at the individual level. Change is explained by a network of connections between individuals, and a dialectical process that leads to a change in society as a whole. Value plays a pretty important role here. ‘Desirable’ is an adjective. The problem is that not everyone has the same standard of what is desirable, so people collide over the standards of desirability. I believe that in a society, this conflict, the tension that creates this conflict is really important. It is an essential part of a society. Education is the mechanism that makes a change in the direction of the winner in this conflict and drives it. In a more comprehensive way, this whole process is called education. If the former concept of education is for humans to grow along the path given to them, the latter implies that education includes the process of overcoming and solving conflict, tension, confrontation, and contradiction. The two are very different and so is the relationship between development and education.

I look at other activities based on education. Now, when we say that education is related to development, I perceive education as a concept, a theoretical practice that works in an

equitable way. Let's be honest. Education in many areas is just an important means of achieving those areas. However, the relationship between education and development as theory and practice varies considerably and is not clearly conceptualized as one. In most cases, education is instrumental or subordinate in its relationship to development. This is called "Education for Development". When education is dependent on development, there is no inherent value in education. This is because the goals and orientation of education are aligned with the goals and ideology of development. Here is an example. In an era when theology and faith were dominant, education was the ultimate goal, and perhaps the only goal, to portray a god-centered society and idealism and to embody history in it. It is said that education is important as a process of finding to discover and achieve something, but instead of discussing the own process of education, we tend to focus on how well one is educated based on the results. But development and education have other relationships. If education and development exist as independent areas and there are parts that are related to each other, there are parts that correspond to the intersection of education and development. Moreover, it is important to recognize the area of difference sets, which are the unique values of development and education.

Education does not always produce results the way it is intended. It is education's fault that unintended consequences emerge in the relationship between education and development. However, in this model, rather taking the fault of education itself, it is more appropriate to say that the approach or understanding of education is wrong. Understanding the difference has significant implications for how we understand the concept of development that we aim for and the education that is associated with it. So when we recognize a certain unique area of education, we do not pay much attention to the own values and meaning of education. Since development is central, the unique values and areas of education are considered insignificant and education is only partially related to development. Education is considered important only when it is related to development. In another light, individual development is emphasized over collective and community development, and economic development is emphasized over socio-cultural development. Education can be excluded if it is not related to economic development in the paradigm of development. The educational objectives of the SDGs are a key topic that enables us to see development and education.

### 3. Quality Education, What and How?

What does it mean to achieve quality education? Above all, what does “quality education” mean? The dimension that determines the quality of education can be presented in six categories.

The first is a safe learning environment and a learning-friendly environment. When UNICEF builds schools or provides specific educational programs in developing countries, a key topic is providing a learning-friendly environment. The recent reorganization of space and creation of ecological environment reflect the strong will to help students study in a safer and ecologically friendly environment.

The second is the curriculum and evaluation. The curriculum deals with how to decide what content and why, how to teach each content and evaluate what is taught, and how to feedback the evaluated content back to the content and methods of education. In our society, we pay much more attention to evaluation than to discussions related to this curriculum. “Will Seoul National University take more early admissions or regular admissions?” “Should the College Scholastic Ability Test be made easy or hard this year?” While it may seem like these topics determine the curriculum or the evaluation, the curriculum covers a much larger area.

The third is a good teacher. I use the word “good”, and in fact, “good” is an expression. In other words, the answer depends on the criteria you use to judge someone a “good” teacher. In the neoliberal education policy of the United States, teachers in classes with many students with improved academic performance are good teachers. Do you agree? Maybe, or maybe not. I do not necessarily see it that way. This good teacher does not just happen. The college of education which I belong is a teacher education institution, and it includes areas related to teachers’ college, training college, and teacher education institute.

The fourth is efficient administrative support. The reason why the Ministry of Education has become bloated and there are so many administrative staff in the Office of Education is because they serve as one factor that determines the quality of education. The same goes for universities. Without effective and efficient support from administrative staff, professors and students would

not be able to teach and study in such a comfortable and safe environment.

The fifth is support from parents and communities. The way in which education is conducted is not possible only with public-level budgets and public-system activities, whether it is formal or informal education. Support from parents and communities is absolutely necessary, and this includes not only interest, but also some financial support and various voluntary activities

The last is a much larger ideological model. It is fair opportunity, value for excellence, and a social atmosphere and culture that respects these values. This includes the value of respecting education for education, different from the often-used term “education fever”.

In fact, quality education forms within a very complicated relationship that consists of several components. Safe and learning-friendly environment, excellent teacher, community support, efficient administrative system, value systems that advocate education, curriculum and high academic performance. If any of these is missing, it can only be said that the quality of education is not secured. In short, it is not quality education. Here is the problem. It is difficult to secure, maintain and improve these elements at a high level. Moreover, the criteria for determining the level and degree of improvement is not the same for all. It differs by individuals, societies, and even political landscapes within a society based on different standards. This shall be the fundamental reason that we have so many complaints and inadequacies about education.

The international community’s development agenda aimed at sustainable development by 2030 suggests that countries should strive to create and maintain a high-quality educational environment that fully supports the growth and development of each student beyond mere access to an educational system. What we have done so far to ensure the quality of education has been, first and foremost, to provide the environment. Providing this physical infrastructure was the main activity that has been done so far. But just clinging to providing a physical environment does not guarantee a certain level of quality of course.

We have focused on the material supply so far while emphasizing the quality. This is based on the premise that delivering something leads directly to the quality of education, or that we deliver the results right on to educational achievements. However, (in my opinion) that is not the case.

Time is a very important variable in education. Whether it is free aid, paid aid, education-related or not, I believe it is quite unreasonable to expect great results from one, two or three years of cooperative support. When South Korea decides to support other countries and demands results in some way, ‘temporal’ characteristics must be considered.

#### **4. For a New Paradigm, Development as Education**

Earlier, I mentioned that the relationship between education and development contains a process in which education is colonized and subordinated within development. In fact, I believe education is the same concept as development. Development does not exist as a single concept. Nor it is just a single paradigm. This is what I call ‘development as education’. The kind of power that allows us to connect and communicate, gives us a framework to discuss, and drives us to change within a relationship where different developments, certain values and certain ideologies collide and confront - that is education. Therefore, although education is included in development, education is also the mechanism by which various discussions work to resolve conflict and dialogue among development, development paradigms, and paradigms.

Those who study development in itself may think that what I described as education is development. That is why I conceptualized development as education. This is how I relate development with education and I believe it is a point for scholars in various fields to think about. Educating is a verb, not a noun. The word development is read and interpreted as a noun itself. The meaning of ‘development’ and ‘develop’ are different. Nouns are rhetorical in themselves. In other words, they need to be embodied to come into reality. The meaning of rhetorical nouns needs to be brought down to the earth and changed in a way that touches our hearts through our own hands, feet and skin. This process of creating is the verb. Verbs are not nouns that refer to tangible or intangible shapes, adjective that deal with value, or adverbs that deal with degree. We have to make a long-winded explanation of why we use nouns as a concept. It has to be explained scientifically and academically, so nouns must turn into verbs. Development is a



concept referred to as a noun, but education is the foundation and driving force for materializing the values and degree of development, and refers to a series of processes that comprehensively include strength, conflict, tension and friction. The words used as verbs include process, so education places importance on process. Perhaps education is a process itself. Traditionally, educational development has focused on expanding opportunities to improve accessibility to the school system. As can be seen in the SDGs, education in development has been transformed into a concept that refers to organizational learning of the major subject communities for transforming individual as lifelong learner and social development. In this regard, education is a concept and principle of practice that allows us to concretely materialize sustainability - the main verb concept of development for a sustainable society.

They say that everyone promotes change everywhere. But if you look carefully, not everyone wants change. Some talk about change, and some don't. Through the words 'reform' and 'innovation', we naturally say that change would lead to good things, but some may say no to such change. This is well demonstrated in 『Diffusion of Innovations』 (Rogers, 1995). In the words of reform and diffusion as a rhetoric longing for change, reform, innovation and development, education can serve as a force to materialize these. The way in which development is related to education in this book highlights the understanding of development on the same line as education. Unless we understand development as a mechanism by which education works, we may continue to reproduce social systems and/or situations that do not change. Once again, within development, education is a noun and a verb, a concept that refers to a series of processes for us to do something.

Education is about sustainability. A whole series of courses can be called education, and all activities are represented by verbs. The action of forming a verb, that is education. Therefore, education is a theoretical practical activity that involves sustainability and allows us to explore the meaning of sustainability. That is why development is education. Above all, there is a need for all of us to ponder a sustainable society based on education.

### Author Introduction

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Sungsang Yoo is a professor of education at Seoul National University. He received BA and MA in education at Seoul National University and a Ph.D. in education (comparative/international studies in education) at UCLA. Before he joined the SNU faculty, he worked as an assistant fellow at the Korean Educational Development Institute(KEDI) and served as an associate professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. He currently serves as an advisor to education department in KOICA and head of Korean Education Network.