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EDUCATION – A ROAD OUT OF POVERTY?

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Education – a Road out of Poverty?

Johan Åkerblom, Head of Information, Sida

At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, 147 heads of state and government and 191 countries in total united in the struggle for development and poverty alleviation. Together they decided that by 2015 the number of people living in extreme poverty would be halved. A number of goals and targets were identified as vital to this process, one of which was universal primary education.

At Sida's annual Poverty Conference in October 2001 we together with the Collegium for Development Studies invited politicians and people from within development cooperation, media and the private sector to examine the issue of education and its significance for development.

The conference offered the opportunity to listen to expert speakers and to participate in discussions on how education can lead to empowerment and freedom. This booklet is an attempt to capture the essence of what was said during those couple of days.

My lasting impression from the conference was the widespread support for education as an essential tool for halving poverty by the year 2015.

A Journey to Mozambique I

Henning Mankell, Author

Dear friends.

Every day in our life is said to be a journey. If it is so, then I would like to invite you to follow me on a very long journey this morning, to Mozambique, deep into East Africa; a country just lying there like a tempting and magical veranda alongside the Indian Ocean. I would like you to travel with me in our imagination. As you all know, the best journeys are always in the imagination. Not only the best, but also the cheapest and less complicated. You do not need a passport or a visa, you do not have to bring luggage, you can leave whenever you want and there is very good place for your feet.

I work in the capital Maputo as a director of theatre when I am not writing. I work at the only professional theatre in the country. Sometimes it is very hot during the rehearsals. The air conditioning in that old theatre building has not worked for a very long time. Even though I am the only white person working in the theatre, I am not the only one exhausted by the hot weather. When there is a short interval in the rehearsal everybody runs into the street where they hope a small refreshing breeze might pass by. In countries with hot climates people not only share the water, they also share the shade. This leads us nicely to the story I would like to tell you.

A couple of months ago we had one of those really hot days. I came out onto the street and saw two old African men sitting on a bench in the shade. I saw that if they just moved a little closer to each other there would also be room for me in the shade. I sat down and there was room for us all. Now, let me make the first of a few confessions I will make in your company today, not of biblical proportions but confessions nonetheless. I am a passionate eavesdropper. Wherever I go I listen eagerly to the real public debates. It might be in a coffee shop, on an aeroplane, wherever! I must add that the mobile phone has given us eavesdroppers a completely new dimension. To me it is like a modern type of magical saga to sit on a train between, let us say, Stockholm and Gothenburg, and there is a man in the seat opposite who suddenly says to some invisible person in his mobile phone: "Hello there, I have just arrived in Helsinki."

I mean, to whom is he lying? What kind of drama am I listening to?

But let us go back to that bench in the shade outside the theatre in

Maputo. I listened to the two old African men while I was resting. I realised that they were talking about a third man who had obviously died a couple of days, maybe some weeks, before. One of the men said: "You know, I went to his house and he started to tell me a wonderful story about something that happened when he was young. But the story was long, it started to get dark and we decided that I should come back the following day and listen to the end of the story, but when I came back he was dead."

There was silence on the bench. I decided that I would not leave before I had listened to the other man's comment. I was quite sure that whatever he said it would be a very important message to me. But the silence remained. The actors were looking at me because I am reknowned for my discipline. If the break is five minutes then five minutes it is. But I waited and finally the other man said something, something that I shall never forget as long as I live. He said: "It is not a good thing to die before you have told your story to the end."

He is right of course. That man had understood one of the most profound secrets of life. Maybe we are Homo sapiens, but as much we are Homo narrans, the Storytelling Man. Some years ago the Turkish author Yasar Kemal said "what will finally save mankind is our ability to talk, to communicate, and to educate." Yes, I believe he is right. Our ability to tell and to listen, to write and to read, that is what makes us: that I can listen to you, your dreams, your sorrows, your pain, your fears and your ambitions. And you can listen to mine. Our ability to talk and listen. Our ability to educate and to be educated. I believe he is right. You can kill a man but you cannot kill a word or an experience. You can steal everything from a man and leave him naked in the desert. But you cannot take the words he has in his head. In the words, in the ability to read and write, the poorest of all people will understand why they live in misery. There is, I would say, no possibility whatsoever to free the world of poverty without a people basically educated. You cannot get rid of AIDS without education. You cannot create a better world without knowledge, without the word. And that word could be written in sand or on paper, it could be whispered into someone's ear. It could be some of the signs carved in the pyramids of Egypt or carved into Swedish rune stones. It could be the words of Shakespeare or the words of a peasant in China. It could be the words told here today. In these words, these marvellous instruments of education that makes us Homo narrans, I believe the solutions are there to be found.

Homo narrans. Yes, I like that. Good teachers are always telling stories. We know that. Even the artificial voice from a computer used in education has to have a story to tell.

There is also another perspective. Education as a struggle to eradicate poverty is not only a question of learning to read and write, or history and biology. Education must also include the stories, the theatre. There is always a risk that we forget that education is a matter of the whole person. No-one is complete without having had the possibility of learning from emotions, from poetry, from sagas, from films and from paintings.

That is what that old man in the shade outside the theatre in Maputo said. Everyone must have the right and the instruments to tell his or her story to the end. That is where education starts and poverty is challenged. I wish you all good luck today.

Thank you.

Opening Address

Bo Göransson, Director General of Sida

First of all let me extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you – as individuals and as representatives of your respective organisations and institutions. I am very pleased to see so many of you present. A reflection, I believe, of the importance of the issues we are here to discuss.

As I believe you are all aware, today is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Or, as it more commonly has become known: World Poverty Day. The world over conferences and seminars such as this are being organised. The World Poverty Day was instated by the General Assembly of the UN nine years ago but has its origin further back in history. A number of international organisations had several years before, at the initiative of a small French NGO, begun observing October 17 as a "world day for overcoming extreme poverty". The 1992 decision by the UN is an example of the impact good initiatives from below may have.

THIS CONFERENCE TAKES place against the backdrop of a changing world. Allow me a few moments of reflections on this since I believe it has some bearing on the discussions that will follow today and tomorrow.

The dramatic and tragic chain of events that have been unfolding over the past month continues to dominate media the world over. In the aftermath of the acts of terror and the US-led military response we have witnessed how old alliances have been strengthened, how new spheres of common interests have emerged and how yet others show signs of withering. The immediate economic repercussions have been swift to appear and far-reaching: employment has been hit, private consumption has gone down, and the prevailing sense of uncertainty has lead companies to postpone or abandon investment plans. While speculations about the future abound, no one can foresee the long-term consequences of what is now happening. What we *can* say with a considerable degree of certainty is that ongoing events will strongly influence world developments for years to come. One way or another.

An important piece of news that, at least here in Sweden, partly was eclipsed by other headlines was the decision by the United States to

pay their large outstanding debts to the UN system. Partly to be interpreted as a sign of the emphasis the US is placing on mobilising a broad international coalition. Partly also to be interpreted as a sign of recognition that the fight against terrorism, to be successful, *must* go hand in hand with the fight against world poverty – and that this fight needs a well-functioning and adequately funded UN system. On a more general level, hopefully also an indication that politicians world-wide are beginning to fully internalise that a world characterised by increasing disparities between rich and poor (our world of today) will never be a safe world.

Poverty and hatred neither presuppose nor exclude one another. Truly poor people neither have the means nor the capacity to plan and carry out the kind of sophisticated acts of terror we saw in the US. Their concerns and activities are focused on a far more pressing issue: the daily fight for survival. There is plenty of evidence that poverty can exist – *do* exist – without it leading to feelings of hatred or acts of terror. But it is also easy to understand that fundamentalism, poverty and repression provides a much more fertile soil for the twisted ideas and concepts of terrorists than freedom and prosperity.

It is against this backdrop that calls for a new Marshall Plan have been made. The concept of concerted international action is not new. We have already committed ourselves to a number of international development goals and, should the rich countries finally decide to honour their age-old promise to allocate 0.7% of their GDP to development assistance, adequate funding would in one go become available. The novelty rather lies in the very explicit linkage that is now being made between the fight against poverty and security concerns.

THERE IS AN increasing criticism of the West emerging from poor countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This will in all likelihood not translate itself into terrorism. This should not make us believe that the criticism is irrelevant, nor does it lessen the weight of the arguments that are being put forth.

What is the nature of the complaints that are being raised? Let us take a closer look.

We are being criticised for protectionism, for erecting tariff or non-tariff trade barriers that effectively bar many of the products that are being produced in the developing countries. This at the same time as

we preach the benefits of free trade, something that we tend to translate as a removal of the trade barriers facing our own exports.

We are being criticised for unfair competition in the sense that we flood the world markets with subsidised exports. Thus in effect squeezing out competing products and produce coming from poorer countries.

We are being criticised for not honouring our promises. A recent example: a joint decision to set up a global fund for the fight against HIV/AIDS under the auspices of the UN, then providing one sixth of the needed funding. For repeating, but never fulfilling, the promise that was made 30 years ago to set aside 0.7% of our GDP to development assistance. A promise that, if fulfilled, translates into approximately 100 billion dollars. At the same time having an intra-EU regional support to Spain that amounts to more than half of the combined development assistance to all the poor countries of the world.

We are being criticised for applying double standards. For attempting to prevent and solve conflicts when our economic interests (oil) are at stake (Kuwait) or when the geographic proximity gives us cause for concern (the Balkans). This while we, irrespective of the number of casualties, neglect conflicts in countries where we have no economic interest at stake (Ethiopia/Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Angola, Congo).

THE CONCEPT OF a new Marshall Plan against poverty may sound attractive, but the question must be asked: Whom is it for? The security of the rich or the well-being of the poor? If the aim is truly to reduce world poverty, we should focus on countries with extreme poverty, not with extreme people. We could start by reducing our trade barriers and subsidies. We could intensify our diplomatic efforts to prevent and solve conflicts, irrespective of where they are looming or occurring. Last but not least – a point I repeatedly return to, but with good reason – we must make sure that *all* developed countries increase their development assistance to the 0.7% level. That would be something close to a new Marshall Plan. There should be no contradiction – we can and must afford both to fight poverty and terrorism.

My hope is that the events of today will sharpen, rather than make us divert from, the focus on the far-reaching and morally obliging objectives we already have committed ourselves to. I am referring to the international development objectives that no less than 147 countries

are signatories to. To reduce world poverty by 50% by the year 2015 governments in the South as well in the North need to act up, pay up, and get their priorities right.

This brings me naturally to the here and now. An objective of this conference is to keep the focus firmly and squarely on the overarching objective – the reduction of poverty – and to discuss the meaning and implications, in donor as well as in recipient countries, of the expression: getting the priorities right.

A reprehensibly large part of humanity, the poor people of this world, are in effect excluded from fair economic participation. In order for this to be changed a variety of enabling social conditions need to be fulfilled. One of the most basic of these, perhaps the most basic, relates to education and the acquisition of knowledge. There is no shortage of other issues to address: economic insecurity, prevalence of preventable illness, needless hunger and malnourishment, premature mortality, discrimination and social exclusion, denial of political liberty. This to name but a few. But education is special insofar as its end result, knowledge, represents a master key towards solving many other development issues. According to the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen education contributes to poverty eradication (i) directly in the way it affects peoples sense of freedom and general well-being (ii) indirectly in the way it contributes to social and political changes, and (iii) indirectly by the way it affects economic production and productivity. To this can be added that education serve to empower people, something that in turn contributes to positive developments in a number of fields. As the OECD correctly has pointed out: *the attainment of basic literacy repeatedly has been identified as* the *most significant factor in reducing poverty and increasing participation by individuals in the economic, political and cultural lives of their societies.*

UNIVERSAL EDUCATION FOR all may seem like a utopian target in a world where nearly a billion adults are illiterate and over 100 million children have no chance of going to school. But the target cannot be set any lower. Education is a human right for every single person on earth. Moreover, the goal *is* attainable. Considerable progress has already been made. One example: in 1970 only 52 percent of the children in the world's poorest countries went to school; the corresponding figure in 1998 was 72 percent.

Given that education is the key tool by which nations become economically productive and individuals healthy and active citizens, why

is the area still subject to so much neglect? I would image that this question, and attempts at answering it, will be recurrent and central themes in the deliberations that now will follow. I look forward to the various answers to this and related questions that will emerge from your deliberations. As a person and as a professional.

Thank you for your attention, and again, welcome to you all!

How Can Education Affect the Well-being and Freedom of Poor Children?

Penina Mlama, Professor, Executive Director FAWE,
Forum for African Women Educationalists, Kenya

Governments and development partners continue their efforts to provide Education for All in Africa and thereby assist in reducing poverty. But development will be difficult to achieve if constraints on the education of women continue to be ignored. The school performance of many girls is still poor due to lack of gender responsiveness by teachers and lack of confidence and safety. Concrete action is required at school level, community level and the level of the girls themselves to eliminate the problems, said Penina Mlama whose presentation opened the Poverty Conference.

Studies have delineated the correlation between education and poverty reduction, Mlama pointed out. It has been shown in Africa that the education of women results in reduced infant mortality, better family health, and increased oppurtunity for income generation. Educated women are also more inclined to send their own children to school.

But whether or not empowerment is achieved through education depends on the quality, according to Mlama. She mentioned traditional African societies where the education systems were relevant to the existing mode of production. The systems were based on learning by doing. Fathers took their sons through a life-long learning process, showing them how to farm, fish or hunt. Similarly, mothers taught their daugthers all the production skills expected of them in society. This explains the successful survival of traditional communities within today's socio-economic contexts.

"But if you ask if the education systems today empower people, for the majority of Africans the answer is no," Mlama said. "Only a small percentage of the people gain access to education in the first place. Also, there are not enough efforts to improve the quality of education. And a person's economic survival is now premised on the ability to understand and operate within complex global economic forces."

The challenge, therefore, lies in offering education that will empower people with the relevant skills to survive in a global economy. According to Mlama, most education systems in Africa reveal a disturbing

inadequacy to address both traditional and modern socio-economic set-ups. The majority of children do not have access to higher education. They often remain in their villages without fitting in, because they have missed out on the traditional education and they have required no relevant skills from their primary schooling. Some of them migrate to urban areas in search of employment but find that they do not have the skills for the urban socio-economic set-up either.

External support to our education system is appreciated, Mlama continued, but often the western education system is forced on people. It is therefore necessary to involve the local community in deciding what kind of system would be relevant in their society.

"When we were planning a new school, we asked the community about their visions of a good school for girls. A man in his late 60s was surprised and said, 'I've lived all my life in this village, no one has ever asked what kind of school I want for my children. But what I want is a school that makes our children our children.'"

MLAMA ALSO DISCUSSED the educational disadvantages for girls in sub-Saharan Africa. In many areas, girls are still considered inferior to boys. As a result, fewer girls are enrolled in school, they are often withdrawn for early marriages and they are not encouraged to perform well. When parents cannot afford to send all their children to school, girls are more likely not to be enrolled. Distance from school also brings about safety problems, as girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse. While the effect of HIV/AIDS is devastating for boys as well, girls are more vulnerable in terms of being both infected and affected.

Constraints continue even when the girls have been enrolled in school. Drop-out rates due to teenage pregnancy are high. Problems in the school environment include teachers who are not gender responsive and do no use gender-neutral teaching methodologies.

FAWE, the Forum for African Women Educationalists, has been grappling with these constraints in the 33 countries where it has chapters. FAWE's work focuses on three areas. The organisation works closely with education policy makers and with ministries of education to ensure that the education policies are gender inclusive. FAWE is also working with teachers, training them in gender-responsive teaching methodologies. Sensitisation of parents and community leaders to support girls' education is also important.

"But of course we also work with the girls themselves to empower

them. Often, girls have been brought up in a social system that trains them to be passive and quiet. That means that the girl child cannot show the best of ability," said Mlama.

Representatives of FAWE meet with the girls and make them identify and analyse their problems in school, as well as suggest possible solutions. By using dance, drama, song, storytelling, etc., they put the problems into a theatrical performance and engage the audience in a discussion on what action to take. A plan of action is designed and the school's girls' club tries to solve the identified problem.

"This process has helped to raise the confidence of many of the girls, we really see a significant difference," Mlama said.

Her conclusion was that there is a need for everybody to go one step further on gender equality and get to the point of concrete action on the ground. This is required at the school level, community level and the level of individual girls themselves. Otherwise, if the constraints on education for women continue to be ignored, development and empowerment will be difficult to achieve.

IN THE DISCUSSION that followed, many of the participants agreed upon the importance of focusing on girls. They often use their knowledge better, and an educated woman will more likely send both her boys and girls to school. Someone stated that quality of education is not related to money, it depends on the teachers. To improve teacher quality you need to involve them from the beginning in the curricula planning.

The need for school meals was stressed; hungry children do not learn very much. Lots of studies show that school feeding decreases drop-out rates and increases academic performance.

One of the participants also raised the issue of the public sector and the difficulties in paying the teachers their salaries. Mlama agreed that public expenditure is a problem. Not only does money go to the military, it also disappears because of corruption. Another important issue, she said, is that schools have the possibility to supply food.

Mlama stressed that FAWE's first premise is education for all, but special attention must be paid for girls because of the imbalance in the education system. This does not meen not sending boys to school, but whatever is done for the girls will also benefit the boys.

Reduction of Poverty in Bolivia: Importance of the Educational Reform

Dr *Gustavo Gottret,*
PROEIB-Andes at Universidad Mayor
de San Simon, Cochabamba, Bolivia

The Educational Reform in Bolivia came into force in 1994. The reform has a multicultural approach and deals with bilingual and intercultural education. The same year, the Law of Popular Participation was passed, which recognises the indigenous authorities at a local level. The law gives indigenous people power to influence the administration of their community. With these two reforms, we accepted the multicultural and multilingual character of our society, Gustavo Gottret argued.

Bolivia is a multicultural society with thirteen indigenous cultures, very different from each other. One of ten inhabitants speaks only one indigenous language and no Spanish. After Guatemala, Bolivia is the most indigenous country in Latin America. Talking about education in Bolivia, it's important to bear those facts in mind, Gustavo Gottret explained. In 1955, Bolivia adopted an "Educational Code", which meant all children had the right to go to school.

"For Bolivian people, this was revolutionary," Gottret said. "Not only for the possibility to learn to read and write, but also for the importance to learn to live in a democracy."

In 1989, two programs financed by UNICEF – Multigrade Schools Program, PEM, and Intercultural and Bilingual Educational Program, PEIB – were introduced in Bolivia. For the first time, the children were the stars of the classroom and the teachers functioned more as facilitators and guides, Gottret explained. The teachers worked in the official language, Spanish.

"This was a mistake, though," Gotrett said. "We should have worked both in mother tongue, like *Aymara* or *Quechua*, and the official language. The bilingual approach is a far more constructive approach."

The Law of Popular Participation and the Educational Reform, both from 1994, had a multiculture-sensitive approach and considered indigenous peoples' status and rights. The Educational Reform introduced new legislation on bilingual and intercultural education. In the begin-

ning, indigenous parents were against the bilingual program, according to Gottret. Textbooks in the indigenous languages were elaborated for rural areas, but the pupils did not get textbooks in Spanish as a second language at the same time. As a result, indigenous people felt discriminated. They did not want their children to learn to read and write in the mother tongue, but preferred that they learn Spanish, the official, prestigious language, to manage in society.

"We demonstrated to the indigenous parents that their children were able to learn both mother tongue and Spanish from the first year, at an oral level, as a second language," Gottret explained. "Four, five years later most of them changed their opinion about the bilingual program."

THE LAW OF Popular Participation recognises the indigenous authorities at a local level. The law gives the indigenous people power to influence the administration of the community, a participation which is fundamental, Gottret argued. The parents in the community are, for instance, able to follow the work of the teachers thoroughly. With funds from the state they can also arrange and prepare breakfast for the schoolchildren. Several other local community projects have been set up. The community members work together with the municipality in different development projects concerning health, infrastructure, school construction, and so on.

In the rural areas people often say that they lack money and resources, according to Gottret. But, he said, there is a lot of knowledge among the indigenous parents about natural resources and how to use for example trees and plants. In our society we have now discovered the importance of working in an ecological way, which indigenous people have always done, Gottret argued.

He summarised by saying that we all have to open our minds for other cultures: "We have lost respect towards nature, but we can learn a lot from our indigenous cultures," he said.

AFTER HIS PRESENTATION, the advantages of bilingual programs were discussed, among other issues. Half the population of Bolivia is bilingual, speaking Spanish as well as an indigenous language, according to Gottret. Two million out of eight million inhabitants are Aymaras. They are in the minority but bear a lot of cultural values, he argued. The indigenous people have been humiliated during 500 years, as

white people have made it understood that their culture is not worthy. In the latest Educational Reform the "cultural possibility" is integrated, Gottret said, and now the indigenous languages have to be taught.

What Is the Role of Education in Raising Incomes and in the Reduction of Poverty?

Jandhyala Tilak, Professor, Senior Fellow
at the National Institute of Education,
Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India

There is a two-way relationship between education and poverty, according to Jandhyala Tilak. Poverty of education results in income poverty and income poverty leads to education poverty, he explained. It has been argued that the cyclic relationship can be broken effectively by concentrating on education development of the poor. But educational development requires sound approaches based on sound assumptions. Many questions arise on the approaches and assumptions in education development adopted in several developing countries. Basically, most approaches view education as a means of poverty reduction and rarely as an end in itself.

Jandhyala Tilak presented an overview of the two major approaches to education development, the human capital approach and the human development approach. The latter is close to the human capability approach of Amartya Sen.

According to Tilak, the human capital approach emphasises education as a means of development, while the human development approach recognises education as an end in itself. The human capability approach offers an integrated view on education, both as a direct measure of well-being and freedom, and as an indirect influence on social change and economic production.

Tilak pointed out that while the human capital and human development approaches are distinct, they have also been found to be closely related. In terms of poverty and education it has been discussed how education may reduce poverty through its influence on productivity and earnings, and also how poverty leads to education deprivation. It has been argued that the mutually reinforcing cyclic relationship between education and income poverty can be broken effectively by concentrating on education development of the poor.

ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR Tilak, features of education poverty include children's non-participation or low rates of participation in schooling, high drop-out rates and low achievement rates. All these aspects of edu-

cation poverty are closely related to income poverty. Several studies have shown that income poverty causes education poverty. Poverty and economic constraints keep many children from going to school. Even when free education is provided by the state, income poverty may force children to stay out of schools for various reasons.

Many of the children from poor families participate in wage-yielding activities or are engaged in activities that may relieve their parents to participate in wage-related activities. A large number of those who are able to go to school drop out, and very few among those who continue achieve even a minimum level of learning, according to Tilak.

RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES THAT education poverty is influenced by two sets of factors, economic factors, on the one hand, and school related factors, on the other. Opportunity costs of putting children through school, difficulties to meet costs related to school, and low levels of earnings of the poor households are widely found to constitute an important set of factors. The second, also important set of factors relates to the poor quality of school infrastructure – physical and human. Tilak brought up some examples: shortages of teachers or schools, absence or inadequate number of schools, long distances from home to school, and absence of an attractive learning environment in the schools. The second set of factors may also be related to the lack of resources, i.e., poverty levels of the societies. This is true in the case of households, as well as nations as a whole, Tilak pointed out. Poor states will not be in a position to provide schooling for all children, ensure good quality of education with adequate numbers of teachers and other infrastructure facilities, or make any special arrangements – such as incentives for children to participate in schooling – for the poorer sections of society.

TILAK ALSO REVIEWED some of the prevalent approaches towards development of education in developing countries and their underlying assumptions. It has been found that not all the assumptions are sound, and not all approaches can be expected to yield positive outcomes in terms of improving the education status of the poor. Tilak mentioned initiatives such as emphasis on non-formal and adult education. Such education is often offered as an alternative by governments in developing countries, primarily because it is cheaper than traditional education. But it has been realised that non-formal and adult education cannot be a substitute and that it would not provide a sustainable solution

to the problem of poverty, according to Tilak. He also brought up the assumption that basic education is all that is needed to eradicate poverty. Secondary and higher education is to a great extent ignored in many developing countries. Tilak argued that higher education may form a more sustainable means of poverty reduction than mere basic education. Another assumption is that the private sector can take care of education. But Tilak wondered how the private sector, which is characterised by profit motives, would help in the development of education as a means of reducing poverty. After all, education is widely recognised as a public good.

To save huge public resources on teacher salaries, governments have also begun recruiting "barefoot" teachers whom they pay very little. The adverse effect of such a strategy on the quality of education could be very severe, according to Tilak. The concluding assumption was that central governments find it convenient to use decentralisation as a way of abdicating from its own responsibilities. Decentralisation is also viewed in many places as a mechanism of raising resources from the local communities to substitute the budgetary resources from the central governments.

ONE OF THE questions discussed after the speech was how it is possible to finance both elementary and higher education, and teachers' salaries simultaneously. Tilak quoted Amartya Sen: "It's absolute nonsense to say that India doesn't have money for education and health." Tilak mentioned his own experiences as a member of an Indian committee trying to make elementary education a fundamental right in the constitution. He said 0.7% of the GNP is what it would take to make reasonably good education available all over India.

"We have the resources," Tilak said. "You can get it from taxes, it's only a question of priorities."

Tilak also viewed the role of the donor society. According to him, 5% of the total education expenditures in India come from international donors.

"It's limited, but it could play a significant role," he said. "Donors may start with a small project that the government will take up in a larger scale and that will spread all over India."

"But you can't expect the World Bank or other donors to come and finance the whole education system. The government still has to take the primary responsibility."

A Journey to Mozambique II

Henning Mankell, Author

While I was listening here this morning, I had a growing feeling that at each and every table there was an invisible person present. A boy, a girl, ten, eleven years old. Somebody from the so-called third world. They are symbolically here and they are listening carefully to what we say and what we do not say. We shall remember that, we shall not forget that while we are here.

This morning I took you with me on a long journey to Africa. Since I do not believe that people should travel so far for such a short time, I want us to stay there, down in Maputo a while longer. At least for one more story.

Maputo is a city full of street-children. You find them everywhere. I have them outside my home; I find them surrounding the theatre. Obviously their lives are miserable, often short and violent. Their lives are full of infections, brutality, accidents. I know a boy in Maputo who sleeps in a small building that houses an electrical transmission station. One day, when the rainwater enters that little building he will be electrocuted as if he had been sleeping in an electric chair. I have asked him, insisted, that he leaves. But he refuses. "It is my house," he says. "My Kaya Kwanga, death does not worry me."

The lives of the street-children are miserable but it does not mean that these children enter the street for the same reasons. Every street-child has his or her specific reason for living in the street. Make no mistake about that. Many of them have chosen this life because the streets are better than whatever they have run away from.

Every child has a story. So I shall choose one of them and introduce you to Ricardo. When I first met him he was about six years old. He had come from nowhere and had fought himself into a group of children who sorted out the parking outside a restaurant close to my home at that time. There was something special about Ricardo. Maybe his eyes, his calmness, a sense of him being an old man, even though he was still a child. Whatever it was we got some kind of contact from the first time he took care of my car. I started to ask him questions and I soon realised that whatever he gave me as an answer was a lie. After a couple of months he had in his stories buried his mother twice, let her live again and she abandoned him while she ran off with another man.

He knew nothing about his father. But then one night a serious traffic accident occured close to the ruins of a house where he was sleeping and the next day he told me a story about how his father had been killed a long time ago in a car accident. There were indeed no limitations to Ricardo's imaginative forces. He told me wonderful stories that eventually did not say anything about him: he told me stories hoping that I would be moved and give him some money. I suppose it took two years before he felt any confidence in me. And I can understand him. He really did not have any reasons to have confidence in anyone, at least not grown up people. He was indeed a street-child because of the civil war that for so long had haunted Mozambique. His parents were gone, dead or alive, he did not know. He had lost contact with his brothers and sisters and in his memory the reminiscence of his childhood was so weak that he could not even remember the name of his native village. The only thing that was sure was that he came from somwhere in the middle of the country. That could be understood because of the language he spoke.

It took time. But one day I finally understood that we had reached something that eventually could be called friendship. It was when I could ask him about his dreams. What did he long for? If he tried to foresee a future, what did he want to see? I must admit that what he said surprised me. I shall as my second confession today say that I could never in my life have imagined what the answer would be to the question of what he wanted most from life. I might have been able to if I had thought a little deeper, but I did not. What change in his misery was most welcome? I thought that he would say that he most of all wanted a mother, the resurrection of a family, a home, clothes, shoes, a school, decent food, health. But the answer was something completely different. Like the old man on the bench this boy, Ricardo, said something that I shall never forget as long as I live.

So, what was his answer? He said: "What I want most of all is an identity card. With my photo and my name. Something that shows that I am I and not just anybody, a nobody. That shows that I am I and not exchangeable." Even though I, at the time, realised why he had answered that way, I asked him: "Why? Why is it so important?" He looked at me with that special look of being a bit bored having to answer stupid questions instead of doing important things like washing cars and earning a bit of money. He said: "You cannot understand anything about anything if you do not know who you are."

I think we should all reflect upon the wisdom of Ricardo. I believe he is right. Poverty and education – yes. But before that comes the question of identity, which is probably very profound and basic for someone ever to believe in education, that knowledge can help you. A nobody will never ever bother to learn. And he will never ever bother to learn to read so that he can understand why his life is so miserable.

The ID card, the civil right of anyone to know who he or she is, the feeling of not being a nobody in a society of other nobodies, yes, I believe Ricardo is right. Without feeling your identity, why should you ever bother to confront your life with the arms of education.

I do not know what Ricardo is doing today. One day he just disappeared. Someone said he had gone to see his mother, I wonder which of them, the mother he had created in a dream or his real mother if she was still alive. I hope he found her. As I hope he today has an ID card in his pocket.

Thank you!

How Does the HIV/AIDS Pandemic Affect Education?

Carol Coombe, Research Leader,
HIV and Education Programme,
University of Pretoria, South Africa

Education is no longer the key to escape poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, argued Carol Coombe who spoke about the relationship between HIV/AIDS, poverty and education. She said the education system is too weakened by the AIDS pandemic. Governments could make plans to fight the pandemic, but often seem unwilling or unable to take appropriate action. "After 20 years of watching HIV/AIDS spread, we haven't learned much," said Coombe.

Coombe asked the audience to stand up while she offered an image of the struggles of South African children, whose parents are dying of AIDS. Instead of going to school, they have to take care of their parents; they wash them, change their clothes and help them to the toilet. They spend hours every day trying to get food for the family, they cook, carry water and look after the younger children. And when their parents finally die, there is no time for mourning. Then they have to seek assistance for the arrangements for the funeral.

"Let us remember those children," Coombe said, asking the audience to sit down again.

ACCORDING TO COOMBE, HIV is no longer only a virus, it is a complex socio-economic phenomenon. She continued with terrifying statistics: by 2005 life expectancy in the Southern African Development Community region will have fallen from 68 years to 49 and there will be more than 1 million orphans. Some 60 to 70 percent of the children who are now 15 are expected to die of AIDS within the next two or three decades.

"HIV/AIDS is coming down like a nuclear bomb on our governments. And yet President (Thabo) Mbeki is saying that it's not a very big problem."

Coombe described what she called the circle of hope and despair. Poverty and the AIDS pandemic thrive on each other, while education provides some hope for a way out of the despair, for children affected by the pandemic. But education cannot be the key to escape poverty, since the education system is severely weakened because of AIDS. In

some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as many as 20 percent of the teachers are thought to be infected. This means high educator attrition, declining quality and fewer specialists. At the same time, AIDS-affected children may be ill and they have to cope with trauma and stigmatisation. The overall impact is declining school enrolment, poor performance and higher drop-out levels. Also, teachers often do not know how to deal with the orphans, their grief and their isolation. Orphans may lose access to social support and are often forced to drop out of school.

COOMBE ALSO CITED a survey done at the Ministries of Education in the Southern African Development Community region, about their response to HIV and AIDS. Out of 13 countries, only two had life skills curricula in place, one had materials, two had trained school teachers to deliver life skills curricula and none had trained teachers as educators. As for protecting education provision, one country had a policy in place, two had strategic plans and four had completed impact assessments.

"To me this was devastating, what have we learned after 20 years of watching HIV spread?" Coombe wondered. "We have to try to make it possible to implement, to make change happen, otherwise people will die."

Coombe compared our reaction to 22 million AIDS related deaths, to the quick international response to the terrorist attack in New York. The attack created a big network of cooperating governments and put USD 50 billion on the table. How can we comprehend the difference?

ACCORDING TO COOMBE it is necessary to concentrate efforts in three areas: prevent the spread of AIDS, mitigate consequences for learners and educators, and protect the system of education. Many governments seem unwilling, unable or too corrupt to take appropriate action. People who make the difference are often fieldworkers, like teachers or health workers. A good example of this is the concept of a "circle of care" in Botswana. This includes school meals, orphan subsidies and voluntary, home-based care that makes it possible for children with infected parents to attend school.

Coombe emphasised that governments must work more with NGOs, community people and youth. She concluded her remarks with two questions: What are the representatives of the government in Sweden

doing in order to intervene and save lives? And how can aid money be diverted effectively to community programmes?

IN THE DISCUSSION afterwards one suggestion was to change perspectives from a government level to a grassroots level and to rely on people with knowledge of local needs and possibilities. Someone in the audience brought up the role of churches and NGOs. While working in Botswana 1993, he had experienced that the church was very frank about HIV/AIDS. The conclusion was that if the governments fails, you can always use NGOs and churches as partners.

One of the participants underlined the importance of trying to break the taboo surrounding HIV/AIDS. According to her, the only solution is to treat it, and talk about it, as a sexual matter, however provoking it may seem to some people. Another suggestion was to organise a follow-up to the Holocaust conference, held in Sweden, but change the focus to HIV/AIDS.

A female participant, who had worked in Zimbabwe 10 years ago, asked why it took Sida so long to react to the impact of HIV/AIDS in the country. She said the newly set up regional office in Harare is not enough. Sida Director General Bo Göransson referred to the Sida policy on HIV/AIDS and pointed out that a conference on HIV/AIDS in Asia is due to be held in Stockholm in November.

SUMMARISING, COOMBE STRESSED the need for short-term action to save lives. She said condoms should be available at every school and that health workers should be present to check for sexually transmitted diseases. Other basic needs are school meals, clean water and latrines. And finally, to protect the education system as a whole, it is necessary with more analysis, research and support for senior executive management.

Reflections

Moderator: *Alice Petrén*, journalist
Carin Norberg, Sida, DESO
Ingrid Wetterqvist, Swedish Foreign Department,
Department for International Development Cooperation, Policy Group
Susanne Eriksson, Forum Syd, Asia Coordinator
Malin Ljunggren Elisson, Rädda Barnen, Program Department

The concluding panel discussion on the first day of the conference focused on Sida's role in education and poverty alleviation. Four speakers from Sida, the Swedish Foreign Department, Rädda Barnen and Forum Syd participated in the debate. They all agreed that the education sector is neglected and must be given much more attention.

The four speakers started with a short statement each, introducing themselves and reflecting on the importance of education in development cooperation. The moderator Alice Petrén wondered why education, said to be a key to better health and economy, is still largely neglected. Ingrid Wetterqvist said that education is very important, at least on a policy level. But although the need to work with education programmes is obvious to Sida, it seems to have been forgotten. Within development cooperation right now, the focus is mainly on issues like human rights.

"I think it's time to bring education back into focus," Wetterqvist said.

Carin Norberg added that, according to statistics from Sida, the subsidies for the education sector have decreased. She agreed that more emphasis needs to be given to education.

Susanne Eriksson wanted to know why Sida only acts on request, and is not proactive. According to Norberg, however, Sida has a proactive style, participating at an international level. As an example she mentioned the World Education Forum in Dakar, a follow-up to Education for All. Norberg pointed out that Sweden participated in the work to hammer out the details of the final Dakar document.

Malin Ljunggren Elisson asked the next question, on Sida's view on a rights-based approach. According to Norberg, this term is a tool to look at the needs of individuals. Among other things, it is a way of analysing if public money is spent on the poor or the middle class, on men or women, or in rural or urban areas. A rights-based approach is a legal

instrument and an indicator to measure the performance of activities, Norberg concluded.

One of the participants wondered how Sida deals with the rights-based approach on a national level in countries that do not respect human rights. Wetterqvist argued that when working with countries that do not respect human rights, it is necessary to use political dialogue. Most of the time we talk about political and economic rights but we can work with a rights-based approach in any country, whether it is "bad or good", according to Wetterqvist.

She thought that economic analysis has totally dominated development cooperation for a long time. She found it refreshing to now be allowed to bring in another dimension that, she said, is very useful and creative. But that does not mean we should leave the other analysis altogether, she added. To Wetterqvist, the rights-based approach is a complement.

NORBERG BROUGHT UP the issue of HIV/AIDS and Sida's response to the pandemic. She pointed out that for the first time, an issue of the health sector has been brought up by the UN Security Council. In June 2001, there was also a UN conference on HIV/AIDS in New York. But in spite of this emphasis and focus on the issue there is a lack of impact on the ground level, according to Norberg.

"And we really have to ask ourselves: 'What can we do? How can we have an impact on the political leaders in the affected countries?' If the leaders themselves don't recognise the seriousness and the importance of the issue, it's extremely difficult for us as outsiders to do much about it."

Norberg mentioned Sida's contributions in the field of HIV/AIDS. One is the HIV/AIDS secretariat in Harare and Norberg added that it might be necessary to change its approach and let contributors work directly with the government. Norberg also brought up the different approaches Sida has tried in its work with HIV prevention: everything from theatre to cartoons and sponsoring magazines with sex education.

"We don't give up, to work with HIV/AIDS is a challenge and we have to face it," she concluded.

She also said that Sida is participating in a commission set up by Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO, looking into the linkages between

health, growth and poverty reduction. The commission is also focusing on HIV/AIDS activities, such as prevention, care and treatment.

The moderator pointed out that there seem to be a number of good policies, and wondered which is the main obstacle to implement them. Norberg thought that one of the obstacles that is possible to overcome is the poor coordination of donors. She said that Sida is trying to form a different role, and mentioned among other things cooperation with Norad.

Wetterqvist said the main obstacle is the complexity of development cooperation. But she wanted to look at the problem from another angle and wondered what possibilities there are. According to her, the international development target to halve world poverty can be reached by 2015. She said it is a target that needs full commitment from different countries in the world, not only donors. Wetterqvist closed the discussion with optimistic words:

"You will need partnership, political will, priorities, money, capacity and people. But we can do this and we have to remember that, otherwise we just despair."

A Journey to Mozambique III

Henning Mankell, Author

And so, we have come to the end. For the last time I ask of you to follow me to far away Mozambique. This time we shall leave Maputo behind us and travel to a small village located some 50 kilometres from the capital, where you can see the mountains of Swaziland on the blazing horizon. This village is dusty and poor. Some huts are in a terrible condition. You believe them to be abandoned when you suddenly discover someone coming out of what once had been a door. Other huts are better, and there are also small houses made of concrete.

In a village outside Maputo lives one of my best friends. She is a girl of some seventeen years of age. Her best friends, besides her mother and what is remaining of sisters and brothers, are her two legs made of plastic. Some six years ago, Sofia and her sister Maria were running along a path. They knew quite well that they had to be careful and stick to the path because deep down in the soil on the sides of the path there were ugly and evil crocodiles of the earth, waiting to snap off their feet. It is normally said by representatives of the military and producers of weaponry that it takes a soldier's heavy boot to explode a landmine but this is simply not true, a child's foot is more than sufficient. Like that morning, six or seven years ago, when Sofia happened to leave the path. The mine struck hardest to the left where Maria was running. She was killed, Sofia survived but lost both her legs. At that time nobody thought she would survive but she was stronger than them all. All these forces that oppress the poorest of the poor to their miserable lives. Sofia survived and today she has a son. It is naturally so that if she one day gives birth to a daughter the name is already chosen. You know it and I know it. That daughter will be named Maria. The landmine took the life of her sister and took Sofia's legs. Imagine just for a moment what it means to a young African woman not to be able to dance. I have seen her eyes when people start to dance. I have seen them and I have seen how she turns her back on it. Not even plastic surgeons could do anything about that sorrow.

Sofia is one of the poorest among the poor. Yes, it was lucky for her that through coincidence she got to know me, or I would prefer to reverse that: I was lucky to get to know her. Her mother, Lydia, who is around forty, has given birth to nine children. Today five of them are

dead. The last one to die, Sofias elder sister Rosa, died of AIDS just a year ago. I think Sofia was the first one to understand what was wrong with her sister because she knew about AIDS. I had talked to her about it. And more importantly, she had learned to read and write; she could get hold of education, information. Sofia's sister, Rosa, who died, did not know how to read or write. She had never been close to a school. In Mozambique today, a fifth of all children will make it to school. A lot of the girls who start attending will be gone in a couple of years. They do not get any motivation from home, they get pregnant or they just leave. But Sofia has insisted. She goes to school. I believe she is carrying a secret, a dream that maybe one day, if she manages, she herself could be a doctor, like the doctors who saved her life.

But my story is not about this. Sofia is indeed a face of all these anonymous suffering children, the poorest of the poor; but a girl who in herself is a resistance movement. You find them everywhere. I do not think Sofia is especially brilliant. On the other hand she has shown tremendous capacity in mathematics, and God knows why. So maybe Sofia will realise her dream to become a doctor. I have promised to help her out, to pay for the books and whatever is needed. But there is something else that is the real problem and which is also my story. It is the story about the long distance Sofia has to walk to and from her school every day.

To get to school she has to walk approximately five kilometres there and five kilometres back. In the heat that is obviously very exhausting. In the rain that transforms the dirt roads to clay, anyone can imagine what it is like. Many such days Sofia simply cannot go to school. She sometimes gets a lift by a tractor-drawn wagon, but not on a regular basis. She mostly walks. And to walk with two artificial legs and crutches is not easy. You cannot say that she is "walking" to school. She is struggling, jumping, to school.

I was in her village one afternoon waiting for her to come back from school. Finally, I could see her coming. That very special way of jumping that is her way of walking. But when she came closer I could see that she had blood on her face. I asked if she had fallen and hit herself. "Oh no," she said. "It is just a nosebleed. I always get it when the day is too hot." Her face was sweating. And that nosebleed. She took some cold water to her face and lay down. "It is soon over," she said. "I am used to it. It is the price I pay, the price of going to school. I did not even mind bleeding in my ears, just as long as I can get to school."

Education, poverty and nosebleeding. Maybe this is a true and quite convincing story of our time. In the rich western world young people take school so much for granted that many of them do not even bother going, which they will regret one day. In a poor country like Mozambique, Sofia knows about all of those who would gladly take her place. So she struggles to and from school with her nosebleed. Maybe one day it will bring her to her goal of becoming a doctor. As far as I know there are more African doctors working in Europe than in the whole of Africa.

But I am quite sure that Sofia would be a doctor who stayed at home.

I have spoken to you about two old nameless men on a bench in Maputo. I have spoken about a street-child called Ricardo, and now I have finally spoken about Sofia. All of them could stand on different sides of the river of life and wave to each other, and to us. We who are storytelling man, steadily trying to find ways out of the poverty, into the world where there is a symbolic school bench for everyone.

That school bench will in the long run, together with the words of Yasar Kemal, be the salvation of man.

That is my sincere conviction. I wanted to end my speeches today with some hope. Sofia is that hope.

Thank you!

Education and Poverty Alleviation – What Does Research Tell Us?

INTRODUCTION

Moderator: *Ingemar Gustafsson,* Department of Education, Sida
Introduction by: *Ian Christoplos,* Director,
Collegium for Development Studies, Uppsala University
Keynote speaker: *Nelly Stromquist,* Professor
at the University of Southern California

Researchers and policy makers agree on the importance of education in national development. Education of women, in particular, has been pointed out as the single most important factor in poverty alleviation. But there is a gap between research and policy, between research findings and existing development programmes. Research shows that there is a link between education and poverty. The link between literacy and poverty is not as clear.

At the Education for All (EFA) meeting in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, 155 countries signed an agreement with the goal to massively reduce illiteracy rates by the year 2000. At the time of the second EFA-meeting in Dakar 2000, the illiteracy rates had only been reduced, according to UNDP, from 33 percent to 26 percent. A new goal was set in Dakar to achieve a 50 percent improvement in literacy in 15 years, especially for women. The best road to follow would be to improve formal education systems. But in an era of shrinking public sectors, where education is highly under-funded, the poor often question education, or rather the cost of sending their children to school.

Ian Christoplos pointed out that poverty is about more than just money. It is also about enhancing poor people's opportunity, empowerment and security, three objectives that are not far from the objectives of poor people themselves.

The opportunities for the poor are changing, as increasing numbers of poor people no longer have any land to farm. The poor know they need to look for other forms of income.

In terms of empowerment, it was discussed whether we are empowering people to demand services we want them to demand. Education has been seen as an institution to empower the poor to live up to our expectations. Christoplos suggested that empowering people to empower themselves is something different. He also questioned decentralization,

wondering whether it actually changes power structures or if it only brings corruption closer to people.

Christoplos said that Sweden has been a major actor in linking education and security by providing education during humanitarian emergencies. Sweden's work in Afghanistan was mentioned as an example. But he criticised Sweden in failing to integrate security risks in strategies and programming frameworks. Christoplos said that policy makers fear acknowledging the risks that poor face, because they would then need to accept that sustainability is a vague and ambiguous term. He pointed out that poor people are more interested in reducing their vulnerability than they are in getting rich. Development programmers often view crises as annoying blips in the path to development. For the poorest of the poor, the crisis is just around the corner.

ON THE KEYNOTE speech, Professor Nelly Stromquist at the University of Southern California, said that there is not a single development agency that questions the role of adult literacy. Economic, social, emotional, and political benefits are considered to be unassailable. At the same time, the connection between literacy and poverty is not clear.

Stromquist outlined three different perspectives on literacy: literacy as a basic skill, literacy as a social practice and literacy for empowerment, particularly women's empowerment.

Governments and international agencies typically view literacy as a basic skill. According to Stromquist, they erroneously attribute minimum levels of literacy as a magic power that will change the world, while research shows that it is the number of years of schooling that has an impact on national development. For Stromquist this difference is fundamental, since literacy skills alone do not change and or improve understanding: "Literacy does not improve mental schemes. Schooling does."

The second perspective of literacy comes from the academic world. It argues that literacy is only one form of social communication. People with little or no ability to read and write can act effectively and in competent ways in their environment. This perspective highlights the existence of multiple forms of literacy, conveys the mediator role of people who know how to read and write, and states the fact that individuals are part of social networks.

The third perspective argues that literacy skills are not isolated from context. Stromquist explained that literacy has to be promoted as an individual possession when used as an emancipatory tool.

Time and distance are obstacles for women's participation in literacy classes. Because of the violence in women's lives, teachers have to take into account emotional and psychological dimensions, as well as addressing the asymmetry of power between men and women. Another important issue that Stromquist pointed to is women's ability to negotiate their sexual rights, especially in view of HIV/AIDS.

The connection between literacy and poverty exists, but it is not linear. Skills have to be translated into practices, because literacy in itself does not yield income. Many overestimate the power of literacy and confuse it with schooling. Policy makers continue to support small, isolated and under-funded literacy projects. The programmes typically do not consider sustainable livelihood, access to credit, food security or access to land.

The World Bank World Development Report 2000/2001, "Attacking Poverty," proposes to increase the knowledge of the poor, especially in rural areas. But, according to Stromquist, it fails to mention the need for changing the terms of trade and raising wages. She asked if knowledge really is the primary tool for social change. The World Bank does not acknowledge women NGOS or labour unions which, Stromquist said, are very important actors for the empowerment of women.

Literacy continues to be defended in public discourse and global agreements. Although research has identified the obstacles and proposed effective strategies to combat illiteracy, governments do not acknowledge these. Research findings are not used when governments design literacy programmes for women.

Stromquist wondered how literacy can be so important when both understanding and implementation of it are so neglected? One explanation, she said, is that literacy is seen as an easy fix. By offering literacy projects you don't have to redistribute resources and there is no need for land reforms, higher wages or progressive taxes. The rich are not threatened.

IN THE DISCUSSION that followed Eva Zetterberg, member of Sida's board of directors and of the Swedish Parliament, asked if Stromquist had studied Sida's budget in the context that very limited resources go to women literacy programs. Stromquist answered that five years ago, Sida distinguished itself by addressing adult literacy education. The development cooperation view today is very narrow, but that is not a problem mainly with Sida but more so with the larger agencies.

Many were concerned about the increasing use of school fees, and the fact that education, more and more, is becoming an issue of money. Stromquist stressed the need to make education available to everyone, and especially to girls and young women. She said resources must be available to all and stated that school fees discriminate against the poor.

One participant wanted to know if there are any positive or negative examples to learn from in education and empowerment of women especially in the area of sexual rights. Stromquist said that women NGOs have done successful work in teaching women to negotiate, and understand, as well as to deal with spouses. Stromquist mentioned a study she did the work of women NGOs in the Dominican Republic.

ANOTHER ISSUE THAT was brought up was media and literacy. The importance of TV in poor people's lives is growing. What role do new media like Internet play in literacy? Stromquist pointed out that it is important to understand media and how they are presented. But to affect change, you have to know and use the tool of the dominant classes, i.e., the written language. For Stromquist, print literacy is the key to empowerment. Internet is part of the print media.

Carol Coombe asked what kind of education is available, to whom, and at what cost. For most of the poor countries nothing is affordable or sustainable. So what can a country do to insure a sustainable education? Ingemar Gustafsson answered that within Sida there has been a shift on the agency's view on sustainability. There's a growing understanding of the need for a steady flow of resources.

The problem with formal adult literacy programs was also discussed. Attendants of short-term literacy programmes often relapse into illiteracy. Professor Tilak pointed out that these programmes are needed because formal education has failed. Stromquist argued that literacy programmes can be seen as a reallocation from formal education. She said that if there are no literacy programmes for adults, those who go through childhood without education risk being forgotten.

Education – for Whom and on Whose Terms?

Sten Hagberg, Research Fellow in Cultural Anthropology,
Department of Cultural Anthropology & Ethnology, Uppsala University
Carina Jahani, Associate Professor,
Department of Asian and African Languages, Uppsala University
Aminur Rahman, Department of Economics,
University College, London (& Tony Addison, WIDER, Helsinki)

Sten Hagberg explained that formal education in Burkina Faso is often perceived as a costly burden without future gains. People feel that their children are educated to leave, not to live within the community. In contrast, Carina Jahani showed that education has strengthened the cultural identity of the Baloch, an ethnic minority group divided between Iran and Pakistan. Finally, Aminur Rahman presented a study on why politicians spend so little on primary education. Primary education for the poor is not expensive, especially not compared to military spending. It is simply a question of priority.

Only about one third of the children in Burkina Faso are enrolled in school, girls even less so. One reason is it is considered too expensive, Sten Hagberg explained. He quoted an old man: "I put all my six children through school. I paid all the books, all the fees. And what did I get? Nothing. I will not spend any more money on education."

Traditionally, education is viewed as a way to find new sources of income. But there are simply not enough jobs in the public sector to absorb the educated youth. For those with a formal education, going back to farming is a failure. Therefore, many children leave the villages for urban areas. Many land in the informal sector or engage in illicit activities. They feel disconnected from the global world.

Different groups in Burkina Faso perceive formal education and knowledge differently. Some favour education while others reject it. Many see it as the way of the whites in contrast to the indigenous education, the way of the natives.

All people do not want to become modern. Hagberg believes that teaching basic reading and writing skills in the native languages would be effective. The words in the local languages are also the words of the ancestors, the past. Learning to read and write in their own language would give them a place in history.

Someone queried whether we should ask why poor people go to school instead of asking why they do not. Hagberg replied that formal education is necessary when addressing political issues. Many rural communities lack representation.

CARINA JAHANI EXPLAINED that the present border dividing Balochistan was drawn up by Britain and Iran. The Baloch minority in Iran has a higher standard of living then they have in Pakistan. In both countries, the Balochs have higher rates of illiteracy than the rest of the population. For women the situation is particularly bad, only 12 percent of the Baloch women in Pakistan are literate, while the figure is 25 percent in Iran.

Earlier, only the sons of tribal leaders or feudal lords went to school in Balochistan. Since the independence of Pakistan, the situation has improved, mainly for boys. In Iran, more Baloch girls attend school after the Islamic revolution. Parents are more willing to send their daughters to school now that boys and girls are kept apart.

Education has brought political ideas to Balochistan. The young see more opportunities to advance in society. In Iran, children learn Persian in school and watch Persian TV-programs. This fact is alarming to intellectuals who fear the Baloch language may disappear in three generations.

The Baloch consider themselves oppressed, primarily by the Punjabi majority in Pakistan and the Persian majority in Iran. But there is also oppression within the Baloch society itself, generally described as a very hierarchical and male-dominated society. Most people in Balochistan feel culturally deprived through language, history and customs. Many Balochs hope the war in Afghanistan will lead to the disintegration of Pakistan.

The question was raised why the Baloch elite value education when the community leaders in Western Burkina Faso do not. Jahani emphasised that for the Baloch, education is viewed as a tool to express and gain political rights. At the same time, the Baloch can get much richer through drug trafficking than through education. Hagberg saw similarities in the view that education does not automatically lead to wealth. As an example, he said that two out of the three richest people in Burkina Faso did not spend a single day in school.

TOO LITTLE IS spent on education for the poor, Aminur Rahman argued. In their study, he and Tony Addison of WIDER, Helsinki, confront the fact that politicians find ways of funding the military while very little is spent on educating the poor. Primary education, which most benefits the poor, does not require extensive resources.

According to Rahman, public subsidies to secondary education are roughly three times higher than those for primary education. Subsidies to tertiary education, universities, are 30 times as high.

But why do these inequalities persist? Rahman's explained that the problem is the priorities of politicians. The rich can buy policies that favour them while the poor lack resources for lobbying. In countries where wealth is more evenly distributed, more is spent on primary school.

Also, Rahman said, there is less redistribution of public goods in societies with ethnic conflicts. Fragmented societies lack consensus and people tend to be more narrow-minded and less benign towards other groups. Politicians often favour their own ethnic group.

Carol Benson, however, argued that statistics often mask reality. Her point was that these kinds of generalizations tend to change policy. Rahman asked for a more constructive criticism based on the data presented.

Benson also argued that the cost of educating teachers should be shown as part of primary education rather than of higher education. Rahman did not agree and said that their recommendation was to shift military spending to primary schools rather than spending less on secondary or tertiary education.

Increased multi-party politics and democracy would solve conflicts, he said. What matters are the powers of bargaining that the privileged and the elite enjoy. "We have to deal with the elite class as well as the military class," Rahman ended.

Summing up the presentations, Ian Christoplos stated that there seems to exist a relationship between education and empowerment. But is education a priority of the people? And do the politicians want the populace to be educated? Some societies may not want change and therefore avoid western education. Some unprivileged groups take pride in being able to get rich without going through formal education. At the same time, they do value the ability to read and write.

WORKSHOP: Education for Empowerment

Carol Benson, Ph.D, Assistant Professor,
Centre for Research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University
Hans Blomkvist, Ph.D, Researcher,
Department of Government, Uppsala University
Holger Daun, Professor, Institute of International Education,
Stockholm University
Charlotta Widmark, Ph.D Student, Department of
Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, Uppsala University

Mother tongue is not only a question of learning, it's also a question of identity. Bilingual programs were in focus in the workshop Education for Empowerment. Carol Benson argued that bilingual programs increase girls' school participation. Charlotta Widmark presented a study including interviews with bilingual Aymara-Spanish urban dwellers. Hans Blomkvist talked about the effect of education on the political participation of an individual. Holger Daun's presentation on learning and development was based on his findings from a Senegalese study.

Using examples from work in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Niger; Carol Benson discussed connections between bilingual programs and girls' school participation. There are reasons to believe that use of the mother tongue has a positive impact on girls, especially those from rural backgrounds, she said. One advantage of bilingual programs is that students whose backgrounds are appreciated by the teacher are likely to have higher self-esteem. Also, they often get communicative competence and higher-level cognitive skills.

Bilingual programs increase parent access to information about schools and the schools respond better to what the community wants, argued Benson. This could mean that parents see the need for their daughters to attend school. Better communication could also mean that parents trust the teacher not to take advantage of their daughters, sexually or otherwise.

Another hypothesis, according to Benson, is that girls might stay in school longer if they have bilingual classes. Since girls are more closely associated with home tasks they may have less contact than boys do with outside languages, and they may feel more comfortable speaking their mother tongue. Both teachers and girls may see that girls are

more capable than they originally thought. Girls in bilingual programs also pass the exams more often, according to Benson.

WHY HAS EXTREME poverty not been conquered after half a century of democracy in India? Hans Blomkvist asked. Atul Kohli, among others, has argued strongly that poverty reduction depends on the political character of the party, or regime, in power. Blomkvist compared Kerala and West Bengal, states which for long periods of time have been ruled by CPM, the Communist Party of India. He pointed out the difference in poverty alleviation, in spite of the similarity between the regimes of the two states. The explanation, he argued, is big differences in terms of political mobilisation, civil society and social capital. His data comes from the Agora Project, which is based on interviews with 3,200 people in five Indian states.

A common understanding behind the calls for primary education is that education and social capital have effects on political participation. This, however, is not the case in West Bengal and Kerala, Blomkvist argued. In Kerala and West Bengal, the lower castes have asserted themselves. When poor people institutionalise their power through leftish parties or trade unions, the relationship between social class and political power disappears. This has swept away the impact of individual resources in terms of education. But a look at historical data shows that it might be the high level of education in Kerala that made this political advancement possible in the first place.

HOLGER DAUN DISCUSSED some principal ideas associated with learning and development against the background of the findings from a Senegalese study. People learn a great deal in alternatives to primary education, which does not attain its goals, he said. The life situation of the individuals in the cases are studied in relation to the different types of learning they have been involved in, Daun explained. Learning takes place in many different settings, for example indigenous arrangements of socialization, primary and secondary education, Koranic schools and Arabic schools.

THE POSSESSION OF knowledge and skills is embedded in a set of factors. One factor seems to be whether or not the knowledge is certified by the state. Not only are people with incomplete primary education considered as wastage from the official perspective, but they also seem

to be stigmatised in one way or another, Daun argued. Among those with indigenous or Islamic learning backgrounds it appears common to have knowledge and skills without being able to manifest them through reading and writing in a European language. Furthermore, many of the individuals with incomplete primary education have higher levels of knowledge and skills than others in the study but have not had the opportunity to convert this knowledge into life situation advantages. Instead, this category is considered to represent non-knowledge and is, therefore, prevented from entering certain fields that would improve their life situation. On the other hand, Daun argued, people can have a reasonable life situation without being literate in a dominating language.

CHARLOTTA WIDMARK BASED her experiences on anthropological fieldwork in Bolivia, mainly in La Paz. Her focus has been on bilingual Aymara-Spanish urban dwellers. Widmark discussed poor people's views and experiences of education and the role it has played in their life careers. Considering the unequal power relations and cultural differences in Bolivia, the role of education is ambiguous. On the one hand, school functioned as the prime representative and tool for the assimilation policies of the 20th century, whose aim it was to integrate the country's indigenous minorities into the Christian Western-inspired modernization process. At best, education gave poor people tools to enter the job market. In some cases, education functioned as an empowering measure, especially when there were of alternative, culturally adapted curricula and methods.

The Educational Reform of 1994 dealt with bilingual and intercultural education. The reform was debated and resisted by peasants, teachers and parents. Many parents did not see the introduction of bilingual education as a chance for their children to be better equipped for the future. Instead, the emphasis on mother tongue was interpreted as an attempt on behalf of the state to reinforce colonial divides and to keep the rural population marginalised. The struggle for education, and later bilingual education, has been an important part of the social movements, Widmark said. Aymara activists have been working for education since the beginning of the 20th century, promoting bilingual education since the seventies. Some of the activists see the current educational reform as the fruit of their long-standing claims. Others are

more critical and see it only as a prolongation of the governments' assimilation politics.

In the discussion following the presentations the focus was on the issue of bilingual programs. One participant had the same experience from Pakistan as the example from Bolivia. When a mother tongue program was introduced in Pakistan in 1991, many parents considered it a waste of time which wouldn't lead the children anywhere further on the job market. Benson stressed that the success of bilingual programs depends on what model is used. Using the mother tongue in school does not mean that the children cannot learn the official language as well, starting orally. Penina Mlama, moderator on the workshop, argued that teachers in developing countries often do not speak the official language properly themselves. Summarizing, she concluded that mother tongue is not only a question of learning, but also a question of identity.

WORKSHOP: Education for Opportunity

Alia Ahmad, Associate Professor,
Department of Economics, Lund University
Jonas Ewald, Ph. Lic. Ass. Researcher,
Department for Peace and Development Studies, Göteborg University
Sten Widmalm, Assistant Professor, Department of Government,
Uppsala University
Anders Närman, Ph. D., Lecturer,
Peace and Development Research Institute, Göteborg University

A central assumption in the workshop on Opportunity in Education was that household economics is the most important factor in deciding whether children go to school. Four speakers presented papers dealing with aspects of opportunity in education, based on field studies in African and Asian countries. There is a clear demand for education, which was shown through several examples from Africa where demand increased when fees were abolished and enrolment dropped when fees were introduced. For many poor households, however, the access is limited because of costs, whether they be actual school fees, other related costs or so called opportunity costs – e.g. lack of income from a potential child labourer.

In discussions following the presentations it was also stressed that the quality of education, as well as the relevance of what is taught, must be taken into account when looking into why children do or do not go to school. This relates to a shift from looking at education primarily as a basic human right to a question of human capital. Basic education was found to be good for social purposes while secondary education is necessary for the individual to benefit more directly.

ALIA AHMAD PRESENTED a study of the impact of education on households in rural areas in Bangladesh (Education and Poverty in Bangladesh). Her main finding was that although there was some reduction in poverty through economic growth in the 1990s, the impact was limited because of inequalities in education. Ahmad pointed out that the quality of education offered the poor often remains very low and argued that the right to education should be the right to *good quality* education. She also stressed the importance of secondary schooling, to which poor households have limited access. Primary school is good for social purposes; it affects health, infant mortality rates and such. But an indi-

vidual needs secondary school to "get ahead" in society, she said. This applies particularly outside the agricultural sector.

She also found that girls gained increased access to education, as a result of government policies and work done by non-governmental organisations.

JONAS EWALD LOOKED at how the introduction of user fees, so called cost sharing, affects household access to education in Tanzania (Cost Sharing in Education and its Implication for Social Development in Pangani District, Tanzania).

Cost sharing was introduced to help co-finance a troubled public sector, but also to create opportunities for private sector providers. The study found that costs include not only school fees, but many other fees for things like sports, construction and maintenance of school buildings, uniforms, books, etc. In all, the costs become a major burden especially for large families. Poor households deal with this in a number of ways, including delaying the school start and concentrating on one child, in spite of the fact that school is mandatory.

Among side effects discovered in the cost sharing scheme was instances of hostility between the school and the local community, burdened by the demand to maintain the school and living quarters for the teacher.

Ewald also stressed that cost sharing is not the only thing that keeps poor households from sending their children to school. He pointed to quality and relevance in education, attitude and culture prevailing in school, and problems related to infrastructure, as some aspects that affect school enrolment.

ANDERS NÄRMAN ARGUED that there has been a clear movement toward discussing education as an investment in human capital (Issues in Third World Education – Attendance and Relevance), rather than an issue of basic individual rights.

During most of the past half century, education was considered a human right. This was clearly shown in the great emphasis placed on education in, e.g., post-colonial Africa, where primary education expanded at a tremendous rate in many countries following independence. Figures indicate a very clear and direct connection between fees and enrolment.

It was, however, impossible to keep quality increases at the same

level. In the 1980s, a financial crisis hit the education systems of many countries and enrolment levelled out or dropped. This was also when economists increasingly started to influence policy; the emphasis shifted toward education as an investment in human capital and the concept of cost sharing was introduced.

Närman cautioned against taking for granted any causal relationships between investments in human capital and actual results. He suggested a return to earlier ideas and ideals that were never realised and a closer connection between education and development theory. He also stressed the need for more ground level research, to get beyond statistics and out into the reality of schools.

STEN WIDMALM PRESENTED preliminary findings from a study of decentralisation processes in two Indian states, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala (Decentralisation and Development – the effects of the devolution of power on education in India). He discussed whether decentralisation helped fight teacher absenteeism, which was defined as a form of corruption.

It was established that people in general, even if illiterate, clearly distinguish between public and private sector initiatives, which is necessary in order to fight corruption. It was also concluded that the vast majority of people abhor corruption.

The study also concluded that the performance in the education sector was higher in areas dominated by middle caste groups, than in areas dominated by high or low caste groups.

This, it was pointed out in discussions, could support the theory that development depends on the existence of a large middle class.

WORKSHOP: Education for Security

Carol Coombe, Research Associate and Research Leader,
HIV and Education Programme, University of Pretoria
Phillemon Ndubani, Research Fellow, Institute of Economic and
Social Research, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia
Carl-Anders Säfström, Lecturer,
Department of Teacher Training, Uppsala University
Charlotte Wedin, Ph.D Student, Sociology of Law,
Dept. of Sociology, Lund University

Poverty and insecurity are closely connected. Natural disasters, disease and conflicts are constant threats to the livelihood of millions of people around the world. In the workshop on security, the discussion focused on security and education, as well as the cultural insecurity that minority groups face. Phillemon Ndubani presented a study on how HIV/AIDS has affected education in Zambia. Carl-Anders Säfström presented a theoretical study on the importance of content in education. His examples were from the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. Charlotte Wedin discussed the Tibetan minority in two Chinese provinces, Yunnan and the autonomous province of Tibet. Her presentation also took up the duality of the Chinese constitution.

In Zambia, an estimated 42 percent of the teachers are infected with HIV/AIDS. They leave the rural villages in large numbers, to get closer to family and health care. Between two and three teachers die every week. The data, presented by Phillemon Ndubani, showed the dark reality of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Zambia and its impact on education.

Ndubani studied the situation over a period of 10 years. Almost all schools he visited had lost teachers. In the last five years, teachers have not received any government salaries. All funding comes from parents and the communities, but most of the money collected is not used for books or salaries. It is spent on funerals. The heavy cost of burying AIDS victims is diverting funds from education.

The quality of education has been highly affected. Teachers often have two classes at once and sometimes there are more than 80 children in a class. Since the teachers are not paid they have to find other means of income, and some end up abandoning the classrooms. Many schools do have anti-AIDS clubs but Ndubani found a strong need for better education on AIDS, not only for pupils but also for teachers.

It is obvious to Ndubani that more needs to be spent on education. The lack of knowledge on governmental policy also stands in the way of improving management and planning.

Ndubani was asked about the role of the teachers' union. He said it appears that the union neither has funds nor time to deal with HIV/AIDS issues. What money there is does not reach schools and communities, he said, and the same thing applies to ideas and knowledge.

Another problem related to the HIV/AIDS crisis is the increasing number of orphans in Zambia. Some children cannot afford to go to school because they have lost their parents. There are some orphan community schools, but the teachers are often volunteers and the quality is poor.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on education, Carol Coombe summed up, is very closely linked to its impact on other sectors of society. The problem is multi-sectoral and needs to be treated as such, she said.

CARL-ANDERS SÄFSTRÖM ARGUED that schools must deal with the real problems that children face. In war-ravaged Sri Lanka, the children are scared. They fear being killed on their way to and from school. Ideally, the school is a place where children can talk about their traumatic experiences and deal with issues related to the conflict.

Schools should address issues like ethnic identities, religion, language, culture and class. Promoting democracy means dealing with these issues, Säfström said. In reality, children are often separated in ethnic schools. They are not seen as individuals but as members of a group. Often education is an instrument of division.

Education does not only go one way. All information is actively used and there is no way to control how pupils will use what they are taught. Säfström stressed the importance of social interaction, to act openly and in a responsible way as an individual rather than as member of a group.

A question was raised on how these ideas can be used in practice in development cooperation. Säfström answered that many take it for granted that schools do good things when in fact they often harm and divide societies. The most important thing, he said, is to investigate whether education is harmful or can be of help in a multiethnic society.

CHARLOTTE WEDIN ARGUED that the Chinese minority language policies and practices differ between regions. She also showed that the Chinese

constitution is ambiguous towards minority languages. It protects the identity and the language of cultural minorities, but at the same time the constitution states that Chinese, Putonghua, is the national language and it should therefore be promoted.

For the central authorities the language is an important instrument in building and keeping together the nation. But the minorities view the language as an important symbolic value in strengthening a downgraded culture or an oppressed group, said Wedin.

Further Wedin said that there are different views on bilingual education within the Tibetan community. On the one hand it is viewed as a positive thing to learn Chinese in order to communicate with the Han, the ethnic majority in China. On the other hand, the Tibetans see the Chinese language as a tool of oppression. Chinese is considered the norm while other languages are seen as backward, according to Wedin.

In the rural areas of the autonomous region of Tibet the children seldom speak Chinese before they start school, Wedin explained. In Llasa, the capital, Chinese has become more frequently spoken among young Tibetans.

The Central Government treats the Tibetans differently, Wedin explained. In the Diqing prefecture of Yunnan, Tibetan culture and traditions are encouraged to promote tourism in the region. But in the autonomous area of Tibet, (Xi Zang) Tibetan culture is not supported at all and foreigners travelling in the area are restricted.

Following Charlotte Wedin's presentation, someone pointed to the Basques in France and Spain as examples of how to deal and not to deal with minority groups. The Basque examples show that repression of a minority language can create a current of violent reactions.

One attendant related his multi-language experience in Uganda where several languages are spoken, sometimes even within one family.

Another participant pointed to Ethiopia where an ethnic federation has been created. In Africa the importance of cultural identity is growing. The question was raised whether to look at the problem from cultural or state boundaries. Someone pointed out the importance of not excluding any group within a society.

In a discussion on the role of the media in issues related to ethnicity, it was stated that there is strong media influence on culture, making it difficult for individuals to preserve identity and culture.

PANEL DISCUSSION: How Can Research Contribute to Our Understanding of Education's Role in Poverty Alleviation?

Nelly Stromquist, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles
Carol Coombe, Research Associate and Research Leader, HIV and Education Programme, University of Pretoria
Penina Mlama, Executive Director, Forum for African Women Educationalists, FAWE
Hans Blomkvist, Associate Professor, Deparment of Government, Uppsala University
Carol Benson, Ph.D, Assistant Professor, Centre for Research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University
Moderator: *Ingemar Gustafsson,* Department of Education, Sida
Introduction: *Ian Christoplos,* Director, Collegium for Development Studies, Uppsala University

During the panel discussion that summed up the Poverty Conference, several participants addressed the need for more comparative studies. The debate on quantitative versus qualitative research continued with no winner, although many agreed that both methods are needed to grasp the complexity of reality.

Ian Christoplos introduced the panel discussion by linking research and policy concerns. Research can highlight the complexity of education and its role in development, and present positive as well as negative results of education. Christoplos also stated that education is worth investing in. He underlined the need for governments to prioritise education and pointed out the fact that the education systems of many countries are collapsing. Finally, Christoplos suggested that development cooperation take a broader approach in terms of education.

Nelly Stromquist stressed that there is not a one-to-one relationship between education and poverty alleviation. A person does not automatically move from education to wealth. There are other factors involved in poverty. She also pointed to the role of research in comparing similarities and differences around the world. She asked for better understanding of the new phenomenon of the educated working poor, and for a comparison of their situation in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Stromquist criticised the emphasis put on quantitative or empirical research. Researchers filter information and determine which data to use in social science reports. Qualitative research illuminates accounts that quantitative methods cannot catch, she said. The large institu-

tions, especially the World Bank, have an enormous impact on policy and research. They set the framework. Research other than that presented in the World Development Report is often neglected or forgotten, Stromquist said. Finally, she wondered what would have happened had the conference discussed eliminating debt, enhancing civil societies and making education available to all instead of focusing discussions on the World Bank catchwords opportunity, security and empowerment.

Hans Blomkvist countered by saying we need more empirical research, not less. He called the whole debate on quantitative versus qualitative research nonsense, and stated that we need both.

He also asked for more comparative studies across countries, regions and continents. He then asked for a better understanding of the mechanisms that lead to disempowerment as well as empowerment.

Blomkvist turned to the development cooperation sector, asking agencies to employ more people to implement existing research in aid work. The way it is now, the aid community does not have time to follow research. He argued that aid would be more efficient if it used existing research.

CAROL COOMBE DISCUSSED the difficulties in changing the focus of research communities. When joining the faculty at the University of Pretoria, her job was to introduce HIV/AIDS related questions to the faculty. She ran into difficulties because the faculty members had no knowledge or experience in HIV/AIDS. Researchers should deal with problems related to their environment, she argued. But since HIV/AIDS was not a major problem within the white Afrikaans community research on the epidemic was simply not performed at the faculty. Although people were willing to work with HIV/AIDS, they did not always know what they were talking about. She also addressed the difficulties in teaching professors, teachers and researchers, as well as improving the way they teach their students.

Finally she mentioned the need for faculties to monitor development. She asked what would happen if a faculty took on the job to monitor Sida's work in the area of health and education.

Penina Mlama spoke on her experiences from research, policy and development cooperation. A lot of development cooperation goes to research and very useful investigations have been conducted. On the policy side, Mlama said she has seen numerous reforms and ideas for

change. She mentioned especially education reforms. But when visiting schools around Africa, she finds nothing has changed. The girls cook for the men and pupils are forbidden to talk to anyone without permission, just as she remembers it from her childhood. The school organisation culture has not changed in spite of all the research, all the policy, all the reforms and all the development aid, Mlama said.

Carol Benson asked for a definition of the value of education. Is education really useful for the poor? Is it for learning things or is it for something else? She argued the need to listen to the poor in order to define what kind of education they really need. Benson was sceptic to numbers used in quantitative research, stressing that data is often distorted. Finally, she also underlined the importance of using experiences and previous examples in comparative studies.

FOLLOWING THE PANEL'S discussion, one attendant spoke about what he called cultural depravation and the development of cultural values. He pointed out that neither the people who crashed planes into the Twin Towers in New York, nor those who drop bombs in Afghanistan, are illiterate.

Aminur Rahman, commenting on the debate regarding qualitative and quantitative research, supported empirical research by emphasizing the enormous power of data. Without data research could end up comparing apples to oranges. His argument triggered a discussion on how and if quantitative methods can be used to make generalizations.

Ingemar Gustafsson ended the poverty conference by stating that concepts are multidimensional. There is a need to discuss what frameworks on poverty should be used. He also said that poverty is about seclusion and inclusion. Education needs to be included in a wider concept, it is not a panacea in fighting poverty. He added that policy makers are turning towards a more system-oriented view on education. Sida as an agency has become more aware of the fact that it is not working in a stable development environment, but also needs to address crises when they occur.

Education – a road out of poverty?

Vulnerability and powerlessness are words that often come up in the poor's description of their situation. To be poor is to be without the possibility to influence your life or immediate environment. Education however, can lead to empowerment and freedom in many different ways thereby helping to reduce poverty.

What are the connections? And how can they affect good development co-operation?

On World Poverty Day, Sida and the Collegium for Development Studies at Uppsala University invite you to take part in a discussion about the role of education in development.

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