**Education for Peace Building and Sustainable Development:
Delusion, Illusion or Reality?**

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The Honora Deane Memorial Lecture
University of Tasmania, Launceston, 22nd September, 2008

The William Oats Memorial Lecture
University of Tasmania, Hobart, 23rd September, 2008

Abstract

What role can education and schooling play in contributing to a just, equitable and peaceful world, where there is sustainable economic and social development? Although the Millennium Development Goals, Education for All (EFA), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) provide a useful foundation for action, they are not sufficient. It is also important to give greater attention to ways of promoting social justice and peace building, through means such as lifelong learning, values education, skills development for employability and education research, in the light of political realities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be invited to deliver the Honora Dean and the William Oats Memorial Lectures. Both Honora Dean and William Oats were very important opinion leaders in their respective communities, particularly with regard to their support of education for international understanding, peace and values education. They were both positive role models for their students and colleagues in education to emulate, and were enthusiastic supporters of the World Education Forum, which, along with the University of Tasmania, supports these lectures. The topic of my lecture deals with a matter of great importance to both Honora and William.

Introduction: Issues and challenges concerning sustainable development and peace building

Worldwide, there are currently several major challenges being faced which threaten achieving sustainable development and peace building. These include:

- turmoil in the global financial markets and an uncertain outlook for the world economy;
- worldwide, a rapid rise in food prices by more than 40 per cent per year. (In 2008, global food prices in Asia-Pacific rose an average of 91% in the year to August);
- the rising price of oil and a dependence on petroleum products which increases pressure on the need to develop and utilize renewable forms of energy
- Various forms of national, regional and global terrorism and other forms of armed conflict
- Climate-related problems such as global warming and desertification.

These problems are particularly marked in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region, which is home to 60% of the worlds population of 6.3 billion.

For example, concerning food security and rising food prices, the President of the Asian-Development Bank, Haruhiko Kuroda, in a keynote speech to delegates at the ADB's 2008 Annual meeting in Madrid, called for determined action to secure food supplies for Asia's poorest people. He said:

'The fight against poverty will be won or lost in our region. ….Soaring food prices are hitting the poor very hard. This price surge has a stark human dimension and has greatly affected over a billion people in Asia and the Pacific alone. ….Money and ideas are necessary to boost development and rescue millions of people from poverty. ….. The absence of such measures could seriously undermine the global fight against poverty and erode the gains of past decades.'[1]

Asia is home to two-thirds of the world's poor and risks rising social tensions as a doubling of wheat and rice prices in the last year has hit people who spend more than half their income on food.

A second example, in the area of climate change, concerns Desertification. Over 250 mission people are directly affected by Desertification and some 1 Billion are at risk. By undermining the productivity of land, Desertification generates widespread poverty.

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[1] *Brunei Times, 6 May 2008, page 13 (www.bt.com.bn)*

One hundred and ten countries are currently affected, and the number is rising. Desertification further exacerbates climate change and a loss of biological diversity; and there is now an increasing awareness of the relationship between Desertification, the movement of people and conflicts.

In this presentation I will argue that education is the key to achieving sustainable development, to promoting international understanding and to peace building. The reality is that we already largely know in specific terms what needs to be done to promote peace and sustainable development, through the reform, and strengthening of education and schooling. The question that needs answering is: do we have the courage and commitment to take the necessary action? This is a moral issue rather than a technical one. In my (and UNESCO's) view there is a need to reassess our priorities and in so doing invest more resources in 'weapons for peace' (education for all; universal health care; clean water and sanitation) rather than weapons of war (military expenditure on armaments of various types).

There are some countries in the Asia-Pacific region (allbeit not most) where the percentage of Gross Domestic Product spent on military expenditure is currently equal to, or greater than, their level of public expenditure on education (UNDP, Human Development Report, 2006).

Changing meaning of development:

What do we mean by development, and what is the purpose of development? In addition, what are the keys to development?

The vast majority of countries want development, since this implies improvement, and they want development that is sustainable and so long term in nature.

There has been a change over time in what is meant by development. There is a new paradigm of development where economic criteria are no longer accepted as being the sole or main indicator of the level of development, and where a holistic approach which includes qualitative measures is now favoured. The changing definition of development involves the following:

- Gross National Product (and National Income) per capita (GNP, 2008). This measure refers to the average amount of income (or value of goods and services) per head of population. One of the limitations of this

approach is that it does not take into account income distribution in a country, where there can be, for example, a great disparity between a few rich and many poor people. In addition, when making comparisons between countries, what counts as a satisfactory income level to survive economically can vary considerably between countries since this is relative and depends on the economic context, because, in money terms what it means to be poor in Bangladesh is different to what it means to be poor in Australia. There is also a hypothesis that a persons level of well being and happiness increases up to a certain point with a rising income, but that beyond a certain level increasing income does not necessarily translate into greater levels of happiness and a sense of well being; and that although the rich are generally happier than the poor, those in rich countries do not necessarily get happier as they get richer.

- Human Development Index (HDI, 2008). This broader definition takes into account more than just level of income. It also includes measures of health care (life expectancy); and education (primary enrolments);

- Various other Indexes of Development (GPI, 2008)*.* Other indexes refer to a range of other matters that are regarded as measures of development. This includes environmental issues such as levels of pollution; infrastructure provision, such as roads, telephones, and ICT's; and level of personal security including the crime rate;

- Happy Planet Index (HPI, 2008)**.** This index, which is an extension of the concept of gross national happiness, as developed by the (previous) King of Bhutan, has provoked considerable discussion, interest and controversy.

'Happiness is the ultimate desire of every human being. All else is a means to achieve this end. It should logically follow then that all individual and collective efforts should be devoted to this common goal'. *His Excellency Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley, Head of the Royal Government of Bhutan, 1998, Keynote Speech at UNDP Meeting in Korea. (UNDP, 1998)*

While the income per capita and Human Development Index approaches seek to 'measure' development objectively, the Happy Planet Index seeks to ascertain the more subjective aspects of development including the perceptions of individuals and groups concerning whether or not they are happy in their lives.

The Happy Planet Index raises questions concerning the purpose of development: is it mainly to do with materialistic criteria in terms of income and access to material resources, or should an approach be adopted which also refers to the expressed levels of happiness of individuals?

Meaning and measures of 'peace'

"Peace building aims at preventing and managing armed conflict and sustaining peace for a decade after violence has ended."
(World Bank, *Civil Society and Peace Building*, 2006)

Peace can be defined, most simply, as 'the absence of conflict. A state of Harmony.' A Peace index has been developed to measure this matter.

There is now increasing reference in both the literature and in policy making, certainly within the United Nations, to a distinction between *negative peace* (absence of conflict) vs. *positive peace* (structures and institutions that create and maintain peace).

Asia is second to Africa in the number of conflicts over the past 60 years.
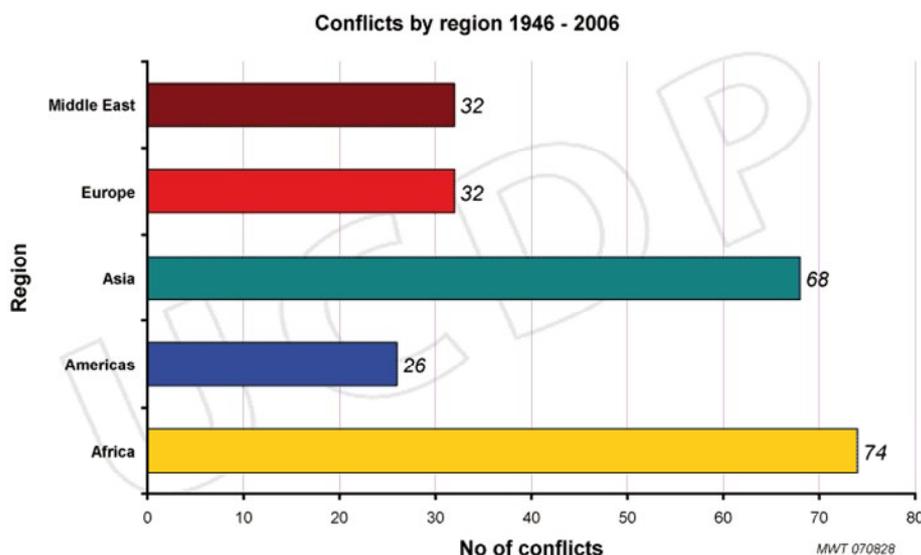
Meaning of sustainable development (UNESCO Paris, 2008)

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

(Bruntland Commission, 1987)

Although the term sustainable development has in the past mainly focused on the natural environment and issues such as pollution, more recently there has also been a broadening in how this idea is interpreted, to include all aspects of development including economic, social and political aspects, and also notions such as peace building as a pathway for achieving harmonious, sustainable societies.

The United Nations and its specialised agencies: peace building and sustainable development

The United Nations (which consists of 192 member states) is committed to promoting sustainable development, international understanding and peace building, with particular reference to poverty alleviation. This is the *raison d'etre* of the United Nations.

With regard to promoting sustainable development, the U.N.'s policy and practices in this regard are summarized in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). The MDG's provide a conceptual framework which refers to the main matters which the United Nations believes need to be effectively addressed to achieve sustainable development, and attaining these goals is seen as a pathway which contributes to peace building.

The Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health
Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 9:	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
Target 10:	Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water
Target 11:	By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Target 12:	Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
Target 13:	Address the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries
Target 14:	Address the Special Needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States
Target 15:	Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
Target 16:	In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth
Target 17:	In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries
Target 18:	In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

(Source: United Nations, 2000)

UNESCO's Mandate: the U.N.'s specialised agency for education and schooling

In promoting peace building and sustainable development UNESCO works with its 193 member states in five main programme areas, these being : culture; the natural sciences; communications and the free flow of information; the social sciences; and education.

Education is the largest part of UNESCO's operations, in terms of allocation financial and staffing resources. UNESCO seeks to help its member states strengthen and upgrade education and schooling, with particular reference to promoting best and innovative practices.

> "Development and economic prosperity depend on the ability of countries to educate all members of their societies and offer them lifelong learning. An innovative society prepares its people not only to embrace and adapt to change but also to manage and influence it. Education enriches cultures, creates mutual understanding that underpins peaceful societies. UNESCO is guided by upholding education as a human right and as an essential element for the full development of human potential."
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> UNESCO Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013, para. 32)

Although there are many keys to development, such as improved infrastructure such as dams, roads, telecommunication facilities, ports and the like, education is regarded as being the **master key** to economic and social development. High quality and relevant education and schooling has been shown to open the doors to:

- poverty alleviation
- sustainable development
- equity
- justice
- mainstreaming of the marginalised and vulnerable groups in society

Education is seen as essential to peace building. As the constitution of UNESCO puts it:

'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences for peace need to be built'. (Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution, 1945.)

UNESCO views strengthening and upgrading education and schooling as providing an essential foundation for peace building.

Education as a human right

Education as a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, world-wide is regarded as crucially important to the welfare of humankind. The reason is that effective education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance, and international cooperation. It contributes to economic, social and political development, to rising income levels and to improved standards of living. Sound basic education is also fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education and of scientific and technological literacy and capacity and thus to self-reliant, sustainable development. In addition, as the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Delors Report, 1996) has so persuasively argued, education is not just a human right but is also fundamental to the survival of our human societies.

More than 50 years ago, the nations of the world, speaking through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asserted that 'everyone has a right to education'. Yet world-wide, and particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, the current provision of education remains seriously deficient. The situation is so serious that many governments and members of the international aid community believe that more decisive and better coordinated action must be taken if education and schooling are to be made relevant, to improve qualitatively, and to be universally available to all.

UNESCO and education in the Asia-Pacific Region

In this presentation I plan to focus on the work of UNESCO in the area of education, as it relates to promoting peace building and sustainable development. In doing so I also plan to mainly examine the situation in the Asia-Pacific region with particular reference to the less developed countries, countries in rapid transition and those that are (supposedly) in a post-conflict situation.

The Asia-Pacific Region (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008; UIS, 2008)

The region of Asia-Pacific, which is home to some 60 per cent of the world's population, is outstanding for the vast range of diversities that encompass almost all aspects of life, whether geographical, socio-economic, cultural, political or developmental. In this region there are countries of vast landmasses (China, India and Australia) and also island countries lying in expansive ocean areas (the Maldives, and Pacific island countries). Countries with the largest populations (China – 1.3 billion; India – I billion) and the most rapidly growing mega-cities are to be found in the region, as are countries with relatively small populations (Bhutan, 600,000; Niue in the Pacific, with just 2,300 inhabitants). The levels of economic development also vary widely, with some of the richest countries (such as Japan and Australia) and some of the poorest countries (such as Bangladesh and Burma) on earth.

The enormous disparities between rich and poor are brought home graphically if one considers that it is estimated that 60 per cent of those living in the region have never used a telephone, while at the same time millions of others can afford access to the latest computers and communications technologies in their own homes, and use these facilities.

Asia contains the largest number of poor of any region in the world and in overall terms the number is increasing. The incidence of those living below the poverty line remains in excess of 40 per cent in some developing economies in the Asia-Pacific region.   Such widespread poverty is a destabilizing factor adversely affecting health, social and educational services, and levels of educational attainment. It also intensifies gender disparities.

Some of the major education problems currently facing humankind are evident in the Asia-Pacific region. Despite a commitment in 1990 by international aid organizations and the donor community to achieving Education for All by the year 2000, the Asia-Pacific region contains the largest proportion of the world's illiterates. At present there are estimated to be 625 million illiterates in the Asia-Pacific region: 71 per cent of the world's total, of whom 64 per cent are women and girls.

Some of the disparities that exist between sub-regions in Asia-Pacific are particularly disturbing. For example, for countries in South Asia the average literacy rate is currently 42 per cent compared with 72 per cent in East and South-East Asia; in South Asia, life expectancy is ten years lower than for those living in East and South-East Asia.

In Asia-Pacific, 56 per cent of the school-age population (6 to 11 year olds) is not enrolled in primary education. Of those who do enroll, at least one-third abandon, or drop-out, of school before completing the primary cycle. The reasons are compelling and well known: poverty, social exclusion, socio-economic gaps, urban-rural disparities, rampant mismanagement and lack of adequate and relevant educational programs. Moreover, gender disparities make the picture bleaker: of the out-of-school children in the region, 62 per cent are girls, concentrated especially in South Asia.

In spite of such challenges and diversity there is a common, positive thread in that all countries in Asia and the Pacific believe that in order to achieve poverty eradication, sustainable human development, justice and equity in all respects, there is a need to make greater efforts to improve the quality, effectiveness and relevance of education and schooling. The reform and re-engineering of education and schooling is receiving increasing attention from governments in the region, especially in the less developed countries, with particular reference to achieving universal literacy and Education for All.

Education for All and Lifelong Learning (UNESCO, GMR's; UNESCO Paris, 2008; UIS, 2008)

The Education for All movement has gained considerable momentum throughout the world over the past fifteen to twenty years, as countries work increasingly closely together to eradicate illiteracy and so empower individuals and their communities and help create a better quality of life for their citizens. This is to be expected, for as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has noted 'the attainment of basic literacy and numeracy skills has been identified repeatedly as the most significant factor in reducing poverty and increasing participation by individuals in the economic, political and cultural life of their societies'. (OECD/DAC, 1996)

This realization is certainly not new, and is not limited to organisations like the OECD. Many development agencies such as the Swedish International

Development Co-operative Agency, the World Bank, the Department for International Development in the United Kingdom, the Asian Development Bank and non-government organizations such as Oxfam, strongly share this same view.

Likewise, there is widespread agreement that Lifelong Learning is essential if EFA is to be achieved.

UNESCO leads the global Education for All movement.

The commitment of the international community to achieve EFA was expressed at a meeting of education and finance ministers, education policy makers, practitioners and researchers from around the world, held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. A Jomtien Declaration was passed, the aim being to achieve EFA by the year 2000. Although there was some success, the goal of EFA by 2000 was not unfortunately not achieved. A follow up meeting of the world education community was held in Dakar, Senagal, in 2000, at which progress was monitored and participants recommitted to achieving EFA, this time by 2015. This meeting also adopted the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA.

A *Global Monitoring Report on EFA*, which is coordinated by UNESCO, is published on an annual basis (since 2002), to report on progress in achieving the Dakar goals. A detailed analysis of progress to date, and on what remains to be done with regard to achieving the Dakar Goals for EFA, is provided by the GMR (UNESCO, GMR).

Briefly put, what can be said is that with 9 years left until the EFA goals are meant to be achieved, there is an urgent need for further concrete action if education for all is to be provided to all children, youths and adults by 2015.

Progress has been made, as indicated by the 2007 and 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Reports. Indeed primary enrollment rates have been growing, with an increase of 19 % between 1999 and 2004 in Southern and Western Asia. Yet these rates do not take into account the number of children who reach the last grade of primary school, and an increase in primary enrollments in Grade 1 does not necessarily entail the same increase in the number of children finishing primary school.

Similarly, although children from poor households living in rural areas may be enrolled in school, in reality they often do not actually attend school. Therefore a greater focus needs to be placed on these out-of-school children. Often, they may be from excluded and marginalized groups. Governments must therefore work more effectively towards including vulnerable groups, particularly by reducing fees and increasing accessibility. Alarmingly, public spending on education has decreased in forty-one countries between 2006 and 2007 (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007).

In addition, although there have been improvements with regard to gender equality, two thirds of adult illiterates remain women, with one in five adults lacking basic literary skills. Including women in education partly means increasing the number of women teachers in order to attract girls to school. Quality teacher education is a key to achieving EFA goals, yet there is a great lack of teachers, particularly in poorer regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

Although there has been progress towards achieving EFA, these goals will not be reached by 2015 without the help of governments and foreign aid. It is now time to act: governments committed to education for all need to develop the political will to make education more accessible and inclusive. The amount spent on the education sector must be increased, and a greater focus placed on basic education. In addition, the amount of foreign aid is nowhere near what is needed to achieve primary education for all by 2015. Governments of both developed and developing countries need to make EFA goals a priority if they are to be achieved by 2015.

Education for sustainable development (UNESCO Paris, 2008).

I have already spoken about the changing notion of development and the importance of achieving sustainable development worldwide. Education for Sustainable Development is seen by the United Nations and the world community as being an effective way of achieving such development and so in March 2004 the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was launched in New York.

UNESCO is the Lead Agency for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD).

The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development aims to: "encourage Governments to consider the inclusion …of measures to implement the Decade in their respective education systems … and national development plans." (United Nations General Assembly: Resolution 59/237)

Education is considered to be the master key to sustainable development. Placing education at the centre of sustainable development is seen as being an effective way to help promote new practices and encourage a change of behaviour, leading to the creation of a more sustainable future for present and future generations.

There are four key objectives to be achieved by 2014 (UNESCO Paris 2008; ADB, 2008):

- Facilitating networking, and collaboration among stakeholders in ESD;
- Fostering greater quality of teaching and learning of environmental topics;
- Supporting countries in achieving their millennium development goals through ESD efforts;
- Providing countries with new opportunities and tools to reform education.

The focus of UNESCO's work with Member States within the framework of the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development is on improving access to education, and reviewing and updating curricula to include sustainable development. UNESCO believes that the development of an understanding and awareness, as well as the orientation of all forms of education and learning towards sustainable development, will contribute to a more sustainable future for all.

Skills development for employability (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2008; ADB, 2008).

Effective skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods is essential if sustainable development is to be achieved, and this also provides a foundation for peace building through contributing to poverty alleviation and rising levels of income. The reason is that work is a major feature in most people's lives. Not only does it provide them with the means of survival in terms of food, clothing and shelter, but the type of work

undertaken by individuals and groups has a major impact on their self identify, social status and standard of living.

As countries world-wide seek to achieve sustainable economic and social development, increasing attention to being given to strengthening the bridge between education/schooling and preparation for the world of work, with particular reference to upgrading systems of technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Vocational education and training for the world of work has been identified by UNESCO Member States as a priority area within UNESCO's range of programme activities. This is to be expected since it has been estimated that overall about 80% of jobs world-wide require technical and vocational knowledge and skills. There is also overwhelming evidence to demonstrate that TVET can play an essential role in promoting economic growth and the socio-economic development of countries, with benefits for individuals, their families, local communities and society in general. Improving education for the world of work can help improve the incomes of poverty stricken farmers and so help alleviate poverty, provide citizens with more choices in their lives, and help empower individuals who would otherwise be marginalized. TVET for the world of work also helps promote good citizenship. Furthermore, most work opportunities in the twenty-first century are likely to be centred on new processes and services that require specialized knowledge and skills not yet available in general education institutions. In least developed countries more effective TVET skills are especially needed to best cope with the demands of the informal sector.

All of these factors point to the growing importance of TVET for work and responsible citizenship in the contemporary world.

TVET has long been considered by UNESCO as a key area in education. For example, the report to UNESCO of the independent International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Delors Report, 1996) identified 'Learning to Do' as one of the Four Pillars of Education; while the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), in identifying six key goals that need to be met if Education for All by 2015 is to be achieved, stresses the importance of life skills development for employability, for both youth and adults.

The area of strengthening skills development for employability is also seen as important in developed countries. At a recent meeting organised by the OECD in Denmark, January 2007, the following were seen as the key concerns and priorities of developed countries with regard to employment requiring vocational and technical skills, all of which have important implications for skills development for employability.

- An adequate pool of skilled and flexible workers whose skills are portable and recognised;

- Developing and investing in training to meet the expected future skills needs of tomorrow as well as for today;

- Ever more responsive methods of engagement and involvement to ensure employer, and student, needs are understood and adopted;

- Continuous innovation in educational processes and flexible pathways to provide quality, relevant learning outcomes;

- Equalisation of benefits of VET, across all groups in society.

In the face of a fast changing workplace there is a need to make a distinction between training for employment and training for employability, between a trained recruit for the workforce and a trainable recruit.

In the early days of the industrial era, it was realistic to provide a specific set of skills that an individual would need and use for much of their working life, and he/she would be certified upon leaving formal schooling as having the required skills to be an accountant or an engineer or electrician. An employer would generally be satisfied with the skill sets acquired and set the person to productive work immediately. Nowadays, the skills sets of jobs are changing so rapidly; and indeed, with altogether new types of jobs being created, employers are aware that formal schooling can no longer keep up with the changing demands of the workforce.

The implied framework is thus one where education provides more generic employability skills, whereas training (whether in-house, sub-contracted, or free standing—even if delivered by academic institutions) is for specific employment skills.

An analysis of the specific learning needs of the target group served should dictate the content, methodology, and even the delivery mechanisms of the education/training program that should meet these needs. Some of these skills are best developed in the context of formal schooling, others *in situ* at the workplace. Some are developed over a long period of time; some are acquired in a matter of weeks or even days. Some have substantive theoretical underpinnings; others are strictly dexterity skills. It is therefore impossible to formulate a one-size-fits all recipe for shaping the education and training landscape that would suit everyone.

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Education, in Bonn, Germany, helps UNESCO Member States strengthen and upgrade skills development for employability.

Values education

It will be apparent from what I have said throughout this presentation that values is at the core of education for peace building and sustainable development.

As the UNESCO Commission on Education for the 21st Century (1996), has stated:

"Often, without realizing it, the world has a longing, often unexpressed, for an ideal and for values that we shall term 'moral.' It is thus education's noble task to encourage each and every one, acting in accordance with their traditions and convictions and paying full respect to pluralism, to lift their minds and spirits to the plane of the universal and, in some measure, to transcend themselves. It is not an exaggeration …. to say that the survival of humanity depends on it." (page 18)

Delors also refers to the need to nurture the human spirit. In what is an increasingly materialistic world there is a values-based longing for the notions of justice, fairness, equity, and for promoting harmony rather than discord.

The Delors Report (1996) also refers to emerging values-related tensions that need to be resolved concerning values, with regard to what is often a tug-or-war between:

- *Localization* and *globalization*

- *Competition* and *cooperation*

- *Individual needs* compared to *group/societal needs*

- Needs of the *majority* and those of *minorities*

- Meeting the expectations of *different stakeholders*

Many developing countries in Asia-Pacific are concerned about how they can achieve the benefits of modernisation without westernisation. In this regard they stress the importance of carefully choosing teaching modalities, and considering the impact of the hidden curriculum, to try and avoid excessive Western influence.

A case can be made that here is a need to adopt more of a holistic approach to education, which brings together the education of the head, the hand and the heart.

Developing countries in particular are also concerned with Globalisation. concerning its impact on values transmission: with, for example, the values embedded in the internet; in media such as CNN and BBC; and in imported computer software. They argue that much of the current Western mass media mainly operates to promote lust, greed and envy.

Because of the importance of values as a part of ESD and peace building for many countries in Asia-Pacific, UNESCO works closely with the Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (UNESCO-APNIEVE, 2008).

Some snapshots of UNESCO programme activities concerned with Peace Building and Sustainable Development (UNESCO Paris, 2008; UNESCO Bangkok, 2008; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2008)

- *Education of Girls.* Projects in Ganzu Province, China, are concerned with increasing the participation of girls in school in rural areas, to attract them to attend school and to reduce the high drop-out rate amongst girls. Also concerned with values education, since the

aim is to encourage families and the local community to value the education of girls.

- ***Education of demobilised and physically challenged soldiers, with particular reference to youth (Afghanistan and Timor Liste).*** These projects focus on skills development for employability, with particular reference to assisting demobilised soldiers, especially youth soldiers, achieve gainful employment in civil society. Assistance is also provided for soldiers and others who are physically challenged due to the problem of land mines.

- ***Values education for community development (Afghanistan and Philippines).*** In Afghanistan radio was used to produce a soap opera about family and community life which became a very popular 'must listen to' programme throughout the country. This programme promote values such as the importance of the role of women in the family, and importance of girls education. In the Philippines, APNIEVE has developed with UNESCO-UNEVOC a manual for teachers on values education, that is concerned with promoting desirable values in the workplace and in particular the need to counteract the widespread problem of xenophobia.

- ***Educating street children to become functionally literate (India).*** Promoting functional literacy for the world of work, with particular reference to street children. This has been achieved by assisting youth to establish and operate modest bicycle repair businesses, using micro-credit, as an incentive to developing literacy, and enterprise/entrepreneurship skills.

- ***Professional development of teachers (Maldives).*** Distance education projects to deliver high quality teacher education programmes to teachers living in remote islands as part of a programme of in-service professional development for teachers. This was a modified version, to suit conditions in the Maldives, of an approach used in China to reach teachers in remote villages. This was adapted with great success for use in the Maldives.

- ***Information and communication technologies to support rural populations (Thailand).*** Use of computers in rural schools and adult

learning programmes using satellite communications in communities with no supply of electricity, through using solar panels to provide electricity. This has enabled learning to continue, between the intermittent visits of teachers, who are part of the 'teachers on horseback' programme.

- *Vocationalisation of secondary education (Marshall Islands).* This project has involved assistance to the Ministry of Education to rewrite the countries Education Act to make the education system more relevant to meet the employment needs of the country, with particular reference to skills development for the employability of young people. This had involved the vocationalisation of secondary education, to help fill the skills gap, reduce the problem of youth unemployment and less dependence on foreign workers who generally repatriate their income to support family back in their home country.

- *Skills development in the water and sanitation industry to improve health (Vietnam).* UNESCO-UNVOC, with overseas development agencies in Germany, Norway and Vietnam has developed a multi-million dollar training the trainers project to equip technicians to work in the water and sanitation industries in Vietnam. This project is designed to impact positively on poverty alleviation, and is part of UNEVOC's EFA and Lifelong Learning initiatives.

Importance of high quality, relevant educational research

In a significant number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region, much education policy making is (regrettably) based on the intuition and gut feelings of those in leadership positions, rather than on reliable, up-to-date research evidence. There is therefore a pressing need to improve the coverage, scope, relevance and quality of education research, to better inform policy makers and practitioners, as they go about their work to promote ESD and EFA. This requires addressing the following key issues:

- More reliable statistical information to diagnose problems, and to assess what changes are occurring over time. Currently there are great gaps in the available statistics, and what evidence is available to promote ESD and EFA is often dated and not reliable. Countries need assistance in improve the quality and reliability of their data gathering and statistics.

- Much of the education research used in Asian countries originates outside the region, in North America and Europe, although research from Australia is gaining an increasing influence. Researchers in developing countries need to be nurtured so that there is more high quality indigenous research undertaken.

- Policy makers to be encouraged to make decisions in the light of high quality education research. If this is to occur researchers need to make grater efforts to stress the policy implications of their research to increase the likelihood that policy makers and practitioners will listen to them. There is therefore a need to build an effective bridge between education researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

- There is a need for policy and output-orientated research that impacts on day to day realities. For example, the research of Howard Gardner concerning Project Zero in the United States, and his ground-breaking research on multiple intelligences which has had a profound affect on curriculum development, teaching modalities and approaches to evaluation and assessment in schools and classrooms throughout the world.

- So called pure research can also be important, and have important policy implications. For example, the research findings on brain research (REFERENCE), which has demonstrated the plasticity of the brain, have been very important when it comes to devising effective approaches to lifelong learning involving adults.

It is because of a commitment to the importance of improving the quality and relevance of educational research in the Asia-Pacific region, with particular reference to meeting the needs of developing countries, that UNESCO was instrumental in establishing in 19XX the Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association, which since 2002 has published a journal called *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*.

What are the future possibilities and where do we go from here?

Let me return to the title of my presentation, namely:

Education for Peace Building and Sustainable Development:
Delusion, Illusion or Reality?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, *Delusion* refers to 'a false belief or persistent opinion not supported by sensory evidence', *Illusion* refers to 'an unreal perception', while *Reality* refers to 'the state of things as they actually exist. A think that is actually experienced or seen'.

In my considered opinion, Education for Peace Building and Sustainable Development is neither a delusion or an illusion, but very much a reality, albeit partial and incomplete. It is, if you like, a work in progress with the end result or goal yet to be fully realised.

It is widely recognised within the United Nations system and by the international community (and supported by research evidence) that education has a very important role to play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Education for All, sustainable development and peace: in other words education is fundamental for achieving *just, peaceful, adaptable societies without poverty,* and none of the international development goals can be achieved without education playing a major role.

UNESCO explicitly must ensure that lifelong Education for All (EFA) remains a priority on the global agenda and must support countries' efforts to meet the six EFA goals by 2015, with a specific emphasis on equity. UNESCO is focal point for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which runs until 2014.

But UNESCO's actions in education stretch well beyond EFA and ESD. Explicit attention is paid to education as a positive force for achieving social cohesion, social justice and peace building.

We largely know the range of problems and stumbling blocks that confront us and need to be addressed, not just within our own nation, Australia, but also on a regional and global basis, if we are to be successful in peace building and achieving sustainable social and economic development. These are well documented.

We also largely know from the evidence available what needs to be done to address these problems to promote education for peace building and sustainable development. But do we as a community have the courage and

commitment, and our political leaders the political will, to take the necessary action? We need to reassess national priorities, to invest more national resources in 'weapons for peace' (education for all; universal health care; clean water, and the like) rather than weapons of war (military expenditure of various types).

There are no lack of attempts to reform educational systems to address the types of changes referred to in this presentation. Some reform efforts, however, are based largely on improving existing practice, on efficiency rather than effectiveness, aimed at modifying or improving the existing paradigm, rather than coming up with a new paradigm. Thus, for example, some curriculum reform focuses on how to improve and sequence the teaching of specific subject matter blocks, rather than to question whether to teach that subject at all or replace it with new learning content. Another example of an inadequate approach would be proposals to expand access to an existing educational system without questioning whether the system itself is truly designed to reach the unreached. Reforms in university education frequently look to alternative financing mechanisms and equitable cost recovery measures without questioning whether expansion ultimately leads to an emphasis on credentialing rather than competence, and an eventual devaluation of such credentials.

Rather than 'tinkering with the system' I would argue that there is a need to 're-engineer education for change': that is, to examine the fundamental values and practices upon which current systems are built – to examine and consider changing these foundations.

An analogy from the shift in transportation may be helpful. The need for faster transportation over long distances was not met by building a better and better car, but by finally inventing the airplane. In a similar way, producing the written word was not improved by improving the typewriter, but by developing word processing in a desktop computer. In like manner, the task must now be, not the improvement of the education "car," but the invention of the education "airplane."

One caveat: in our increasingly diverse societies, it is unrealistic to prescribe a uniform new paradigm, one-size-fits-all, for every community. Diverse contexts, diverse learning needs, and diverse resources, should dictate as many new paradigms as there are contexts.

So in summary, what more can be done to help make EFA and ESD, in support of peace building, a reality? In my opinion, and in keeping with the points I have raised in my presentation, we need to:

- **First and foremost, place a greater emphasis on global and regional, rather than just national, perspectives.** Currently, in many countries national interests take precedence clear precedence over all other matters. We need to understand that what is good for developing countries with regard to EFA, ESD and peace building is also ultimately good for us in the developed world.

- **As a follow on from the previous point, to encourage our national governments to develop and exercise strong political will in supporting education for peace building and sustainable development, partly by allocating a larger part of national budgets to overseas development activities;**

- **The importance of achieving a paradigm shift in education: developing the 'education aeroplane', rather than seeing to improve the 'education car';**

- **Place a greater emphasis on values education;**

- **Take action concerning changing education to reflect the changing world of work, given the central importance of employment for individuals, their families and the community at large, in promoting economic and social development;**

- **Support and nurture reliable educational research in support of improving education policy making and practice.**

Let me conclude with the words of Professor Phillip Hughes.

'The future is not something that happens but something which is constructed – constructed on our choices, or our failure to choose ….

The nature of the major problems which face us show us clearly the nature of those choices. They are not technical but moral choices. They are a

statement of what we believe a good society should be.' *(Phillip Hughes, Australia 2000: A Shared Challenge, a Shared Response.)*

I believe that we have it within our power to construct a better future and a better world through education for all, peace building and sustainable development. The challenge is to make the choices, which are more moral than technical, and then to commit the necessary and financial resources to bring these to fruition.

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