<u>Section Three: Cultivating Learning Ecologies</u>

The End of Planning: Notes on Public Policy and Educational Plans
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This article is about the disconnect between what is known about human potential for learning and the systems of educational planning and public financing supported by international agencies and nation states. The national plans required as a condition for the international financing of education systems in developing countries are based on presuppositions, concepts and practices that undermine rather than support learning communities. This is a highly important and complex issue: human capacity and well-being are both the means and the end of what is called development. Public resources, whether international or national, are needed. How can this be done in ways that support what is known about human capacity and learning? This article embarks on this inquiry with humility, recognizing the immense political, economic, social forces involved, while also believing it is vitally important to confront these issues.

We know, both from direct experience and research evidence, that all children are natural born learners. Each child is potentially a genius, capable of creative learning, possessing a growing capacity for love, service and heroism. With nurturing relationships and stimulating environments, children can realize their inherent potential. Further, this learning is not an end in itself, but contributes to the evolution of democratic, diverse and caring communities.

Such a perspective requires that we shift our understanding from conventional concepts and definitions of learning. Learning, as embodied by the typical operations of the school, is about the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The measurement of learning achievement determines how much of the curriculum has been mastered. Two presuppositions about learners are inherent in the measurement of learning through standardized tests (and in the psychometrics on which standardized test measurement is based). First, the transformation of raw scores into the 'bell curve' ranks students against each other, into those who are deemed dull, average and bright. This ranking and classification occurs no matter what the range in raw scores – that is what 'standardized' testing means. A second presupposition is that learning is a 'zero-sum', competitive process. For one student to do better on a standardized test means that another will do worse – that is how the tests are constructed. This structure, whatever the intents of policy makers and teachers, essentially pits students against each other in a competitive, Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' regime. Those who survive are those selected for the limited places in higher education institutions.

However, the perspective that all children are natural learners is based on a different understanding of learning: ***We learn through a process of personal transformation in relationship with others, and what we learn increases our capacity to participate in and contribute to society.***[1] By personal transformation, I mean more than the acquisition of a specific body of knowledge or skill. It involves developing new insights, capacities, and powers. The relationship with others may be based on direct contact, as between teacher and student, or through indirect communication, as through correspondence or reading. The relationship may be inspirational, incidental or intensely personal. But what happens in learning is that experience rewires the brain and nervous system (and probably cells

throughout the body). Increasingly, research in the cognitive and neurosciences is beginning to reveal some of these processes through electron scanning. Images show changes in neural chemistry and circuits occurring during the learning process.[2]

The second part of this definition is that learning enhances our capacity to contribute to society, to communities of practice. Learning transforms our social identity, whether in the work place, in social activities, or at a personal level. When we learn to play the flute, we can join others in making music, and when we learn to speak in a new language it opens up opportunities for dialogue.

The proposition that all children are natural learners and potential geniuses is not a utopian vision, it is a belief based on our understanding about the nature of learning, and the increasing evidence from research. The word genius strikes a warning note. Surely only exceptional human beings are geniuses. Yet what do we really mean by genius? Thomas Armstrong, in a delightful book titled <u>Awakening Genius</u>, cites Latin roots of the word "to come into being, to beget," while also related to the word *genial*, "festive," "enlivening and jovial." Combining these definitions, he determines that the word *genius* means "giving birth to one's joy," and in education it means "giving birth to the joy in learning." Armstrong describes twelve qualities of genius: *curiosity, playfulness, imagination, creativity, wonder, wisdom, inventiveness* (hands on creativity), *vitality, sensitivity, flexibility, humor and joy.*

Before undertaking to look at what we might mean by educational planning, and specifically what the purpose of that planning might be, it is essential to be clear about what we mean by learning, what are the purposes of education, what is it that is to be planned? I believe it is useful to conceive that the purpose of education is to **give birth to the joy in learning**. An educational system within a learning society – a society committed to diverse forms of learning - would support this purpose. Education systems, including what are called schools, teachers, management, planning and policies, reflect political and social decisions about learners and learning. These decisions, in virtually all educational systems in the world today, obviously do not reflect the educational purpose of generating joy in learning – with learning understood as a process of personal transformation leading to greater participation in and contribution to society.

I do not believe the concept of learning and education advocated here is simply a utopian vision. It is based on a growing understanding of human learning, it is articulated in the media[3] and in political forums, and it is embodied in the practice of actual schools in an increasing number of countries. Schools like the Sudbury Valley School in Massachusetts.[4]

At Sudbury, and the some thirty schools in a variety of countries based on the Sudbury model, students and staff form an intentional learning community. They work out the rules and support needed for the world of work, for developing personal responsibility for the quality of community life, for achieving cooperation and mutual support, for assuring personal rights, and for making community decisions democratically. If this sounds hopelessly idealistic, the evidence that it works can be seen by the graduates, who range from research scientists to auto mechanics, from dancers and musicians and novelists, who become political activists and often go into helping professions.

THE SUDBURY VALLEY SCHOOL

The Sudbury Valley School is a place where children are free. Their natural curiosity is the starting point for everything that happens at the school.

Students initiate all their own activities. The staff, the plant, the equipment are there to answer their needs. Learning takes place in formal and informal settings, in large and small groups, or individually. All ages are free to mix at all times. The dynamics among students of different ages, helping each other learn about everything from human relations to math, is one of the greatest strengths of the school. No one is required to attend classes and, indeed, classes are rare and bear little resemblance to the usual notion of a "class". There are no tests or grades of any kind. Students and staff (teachers) are equal in every regard.

Students share responsibility for their own environment, and for the quality of life at school. The school is managed by the weekly School Meeting, where every student and staff member has a vote: an education at Sudbury Valley is also an education in hands-on democracy.

A graduate (one 'graduates' after applying and receiving the approval of the school community) says,
"I didn't really think about getting an education. I didn't understand the idea of having to artificially 'get' an education. I thought that you lived in the world and you got smarter because every day you were learning. I thought that there was no way you could get dumber unless you were erasing stuff out of your brain. It seemed to me that one day you were talking to someone about one subject and another day you were talking to someone about another, and eventually you'd get around to all of them."

State-sponsored schooling as presently practiced is the problem, not the solution, for enhancing learning and community well-being.[5] Schools in the great majority of countries and settings, whatever the stated policy intentions, maintain relationships of power and authority that stifle self-directed learning, deliver official syllabi and knowledge that actively discourages critical reflection and analysis, synthesis or valuing. Schools' central social and political function has been to provide a vehicle for sorting the population, and selecting a limited few for further formal educational opportunity and employment within the formal economic sector.

This paper advances the proposition that public policy and public resources can support learning communities based on the educational principles exemplified by the Sudbury Valley School. This is not to advocate that the Sudbury Valley School should be replicated in other countries, rather that the principles that have informed its development can be usefully applied to the development in other cultures and national contexts. The 'end' of planning would signal on one hand the demise of the mental and spiritual prisons known as schools, and on the other, the emergence of public policy and resources to support learning communities such as Sudbury.

To start, I will describe current global concepts and practices in the formulation of educational policy and planning. These will be situated within the context of development assistance. I will then speculate about how public policy and planning might support learning and learning communities, rather than schools as they currently exist. The gap between what is currently understood and practiced under the rubric 'educational planning' and what is proposed to support the development of learning communities is so great that it seems appropriate to describe this as 'the end of planning.'

The Dakar Framework
The World Forum for Education for All was a gathering in Dakar last year of some 1,600 representatives of national governments, development agencies and NGOs, to reflect on the status of the global commitment to Education for All made at Jomtien in 1990. The Jomtien Conference of 1990 represented a shift in thinking. There was increasing

attention paid to the quality and relevance of education, not just the quantitative expansion of schools; decentralization and participation, rather than technical expertise and plans from the center; use of incentives to communities and regions, rather than just state supplied inputs; increased focus on out of school and non-formal education; participation of NGOs in planning and delivering educational services.

The Dakar Framework, the body of recommendations of the WEF and the international working group formed at the 2000 summit, calls on all nations to develop a National Plan of Education for EFA by 2002. Each national plan should:
- Be developed by government leadership in direct and systematic consultation with national civic society;
- Attract co-ordinated support of all development partners;
- Specify reforms addressing the six EFA goals[6];
- Establish a sustainable financial framework;
- Be time bound and action-oriented;
- Include mid-term performance indicators;
- Achieve a synergy with all human development efforts, through inclusion into a national development planning framework and process.

A central message of the Dakar Framework is the centrality of civil society for the forming, implementation and monitoring of national action plans: *plans and action should emphasize participation, partnerships, transparent democratic processes, and mechanisms to ensure greater accountability.* James Wolfensen, president of the World Bank, promised that any needy country that prepared a comprehensive plan would be assured of international financing to carry it forward. Other multilateral and bilateral development agencies reiterated that pledge.

Education Plans within the Context of Development Programs
The key requirement for poor countries to access international financing for education and other social services is the comprehensive national plan. By comprehensive here is not meant only the criteria defined by the Dakar Framework, but an integrated multi-sectoral strategy for macro-economic reform and poverty reduction (termed the PRSP).[7] The nations in the *less developed country* category can hardly afford to reject this guidance and the financing that is tied to it. The financing of public services in the less-developed countries is in a state of crisis.

Take the example of Ghana, which has been considered an excellent example of a country that, during the 1990s, developed what were believed to be enlightened macro-economic policies. Ghana in 1995 prepared a program for the country to transform from a low-income to a middle income country by the year 2020. The plan is called *Vision 2020*. The vision is that Ghana "*will have an open and liberal market economy, founded on competition, initiative and creativity, that employs science and technology in deriving maximum productivity from the use of all our human and natural resources and in optimizing the rate of economic and social development, with due regard for the protection of the environment and to equity in the distribution of the benefits of development.*"[8] A principle theme of the program is human development: "*the basic goals of human development are to improve the health, life expectancy and capabilities of all individuals, to eliminate extremes of deprivation,* [and to] *reduce poverty.*" This plan was met with accolades and received financing from international donors.

However by 2001, five years following the formulation of *Vision 2020,* Ghana faces a financial crisis. The budget speech of the newly elected government reveals that virtually all domestic public revenue must be spent to pay down huge international and domestic debt. There is little left, internally, to pay for government services, including health and education. This shortfall needs to be financed by external funds (or by increasing public domestic debt, which would trigger increased inflation). There are a variety of causes for this crisis, but a principle one has been the sharp decline in the price of cocoa, Ghana's largest export, and an equally sharp rise in the price of imports, particularly oil. These price shifts reflect global markets and relationships.

The HIPC (highly indebted poor countries) program is a mechanism, sponsored principally by the IMF and the World Bank, to forgive multilateral debt for countries that are prepared to introduce macro-economic reforms and prepare comprehensive development plans targeted at poverty reduction and human services. For Ghana, participation in HIPC will alleviate about one-third of its debt burden. Ghana can hardly afford **not** to fully participate in the HIPC program, and to prepare a PRSP. Ghana is now using both national and international experts working to meet a deadline for applying for HIPC debt relief.

The 'developed' world, as a condition for debt relief and development assistance, requires poor nations to prepare national policies and plans. A large proportion of the finances for these plans is external, based on guidelines set by multilateral and bilateral agencies. The organization and implementation of these plans is inevitably top-down, driven by 'experts', often prepared for the most part by international consultants, that provide 'solutions' for a receiving population that has not been much involved in defining the problem. ***The fundamental problem is that this planning process does not engage the people as full human beings*** – as persons and communities with creative intelligence, deep and valued cultural life, and capacity for self-determination.

The reality that there are 'less developed' countries reflects a disordered world. A world that has divided itself into parts, each part claiming a unique identity, with hugely unequal resources and capacity, with wealthy nations defending their prerogatives through the exercise of economic and military power. Unless leaders throughout the world, and particularly within the most powerful countries, cease to view the world as a Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' terrain, with winners and losers, there is no prospect that human development and poverty alleviation for all countries and peoples will be realized. It is increasingly clear that this must be based on the recognition of the reality that the world is a single organism, a single family, in which hurt, violence, hunger and want for any single community is a reality for all communities.

The exploration of how this world change will ultimately happen is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the link between the way schools induce a competitive, zero-sum world-view, and the behavior of world leaders is not accidental. The challenge of creating change in educational systems, so that they begin to reflect realities of human capacity for caring relationships and learning, is clearly daunting.

The Practice and Experience of Educational Planning
National educational plans are not something new. Since independence, most Third World states have prepared and implemented development plans, with education playing a prominent role. Nations have planned education by determining what was to be taught, to whom, how, when and by whom for what purpose and at what cost. Since the 1960s education planning has been seen as the means to wisely allocate scarce public resources in the face of enormous demands on the state.[9] These plans have involved determining, at the national level, the curriculum, the nature, training and numbers of teachers, the distribution, size and physical requirements for schools, the texts for each grade and subject area, the organization of supervision and inspection, and the financing required to build and sustain the system.

At national and international levels, planning involves the commitment of publicly accountable finances. Guidance from international financing institutions, such as the World Bank, the EU, and UNDP – as well as bilateral donors (now called 'development partners') – requires that policies and plans specify inputs, processes, outputs and expected outcomes, measured by indicators, to be monitored and evaluated. In recent years there has been an increased emphasis placed on *results* – those social benefits that the program asserts will follow from the inputs provided. These are articulated in terms of enrolment rates, persistence of children in school, and achievement measured by national assessments of learning.

In the 1960s education planning was conceived as a set of technical analyses such as: projecting the school-age population; estimating the degree to which the state could support the expansion of schooling to meet that social demand; and then projecting forward required classrooms, teachers, instructional materials and of course capital and recurrent financing. Of course, this is a simplification of what actually happened. There were real issues to be negotiated between those who favored and argued for a larger share of public resources going to higher education or to technical education; or those who argued for a more equitable allocation of resources and effort to regions lagging in educational attainment. But the fundamental paradigm was directed towards a supply-driven provision of schooling facilities, teachers and materials as a means of expanding educational opportunity. Recent work in the concepts and practice of planning have shifted this top-down, expert driven model and advocate a more experimental, demand-driven, grass-roots approach.[10]

On the whole, experience in implementing national educational plans has been disappointing. Many plans have been frustrated by failures of institutions to function efficiently, shortfalls in financing, and lack of public responsiveness to state-initiated programs. These weaknesses have characterized even those plans with a supply-side, input

orientation. State planning to reform the content, processes and quality of public education has had even less success. More fundamentally, the whole enterprise of social planning has been challenged, based on a more profound understanding of the complex, dynamic character of the living world. Theoretic work in Chaos Theory and Complex Adaptive Systems, has shown us a world that is less like a machine than an organism, or an ecology of organisms. It is non-linear, complex, nested, interconnected and above all dynamic.[11] In Margaret Wheatley's (1993) provocative and poetic language,

> "*An emergent world asks us to stand in a different place. We no longer stand at the end of something we visualize in detail and plan backwards from that future. Instead, we must stand at the beginning, clear in our intent, with a willingness to be involved in discovery. The world asks that we focus less on how we can coerce something to make it conform to our designs and focus more on how we can engage with one another, how we can enter into the experience and then notice what comes forth. It asks that we participate more than plan… We acknowledge that we don't know how this work will actually unfold. We discover what we are capable of as we go along.*"

The Dakar Framework (and the HIPC requirement for a PRSP) with its guidance on the preparation of national plans of action, sends a very different message to poor countries. This is not a message that honors Wheatley's vision, nor is it likely to **give birth to the joy in learning.** Although the Framework includes such language as "emphasize participation, partnerships, transparent democratic processes," this is not going to happen while governments are pressured to produce externally mandated, expert-driven education plans, providing for the delivery of curriculum and resources from the central Ministry of Education to the schools.

Towards the 'End' of Planning

> *"The task of public agencies is not to invent policy or implement education reforms across the nation, but rather to develop and unleash a capacity to innovate throughout the system."*
>
> — Farrell, 1997

What would it take for public agencies, Ministries of Education with the backing of the Ministry of Finance and Planning for example, to 'develop and unleash a capacity to innovate throughout the system?' This question is central to an attempt to conceive of public financing supporting the development of authentic learning systems.

Clearly, there is a fundamental shift needed in the concept and practice of planning so that it would move towards an education system that enhanced learning, rather than controlled it, that built the capacity for innovation, rather than coercing the world to conform to pre-conceived designs. At present, the word 'planning' connotes analytic expertise, based on research to establish the most efficient combination of inputs and processes that leads to clearly measured and targeted outputs and outcomes. It is believed that the role of the planner is to provide the state with options for the most efficient use of public resources to achieve policy objectives.

A central difficulty is that the relationships between the state and communities, and between community authorities and those they are supposed to serve, are analogous to the relationship between the school, the teachers and the learners. The transformation of these relationships is what is fundamentally needed. To illustrate, support for authentic learning must begin with the transformation of the relationship between teacher and students. Rather than the teacher being the source of knowledge, the arbiter of the official syllabus, and the enforcer of discipline, the teacher's role must change to facilitate learning, which is a natural process and cannot be enforced by command. The teacher becomes a guide to knowledge building, rather than the source of information. This is part of what would be needed for schools to become communities of genuine human encounter and productive activity.

Likewise, for the places we call schools to become learning communities, supported by local communities and authorities, would itself require a transformation in the relationship between the central state and localities. Presently, the state (either at the national, or in some countries at the regional or district level) provides a plan, with predetermined inputs (teachers, curriculum syllabi, textbooks), regulations for organization and administrative processes (school timetables, keeping school records and accounts), and periodic oversight to assure compliance.

In reality, in poorer countries these 'plans' are seldom implemented. This failure is analyzed as of lack of institutional capacity (for planning and management) and inadequate finances. These are considered major problems of educational efficiency and quality. The Dakar Framework, and the financing that it promises, is intended to

address these inefficiencies, and to support the capacity and inputs that are believed necessary to expand access and improve educational quality. However, the real problem is not inadequate service delivery, but a failure in the relationship between the state and the people.

In the relationships between the teacher and the learner, the school and the teacher, and the state and the school, plans, directions, knowledge and resources flow from the source of power and authority to the recipient. The change of these relationships so that respect, appreciation and power flow between all parties is the essence of the transformation wanted. From this conception it is the child, the learner, and the community that is supported in self-organized learning, rather than 'taught', coerced, and 'developed' by the teacher, the school, or the state.

Some of this transformation has begun. The modern nation state is rapidly losing control of key instruments of power and authority – economic policy and information. As the global network of finances and information penetrate virtually all national borders, authoritarian states either disintegrate or are reshaped into more open, diverse political entities. It is estimated that networking and the international exchange of information is doubling every two years. From one perspective, this force is destructive, in that it promotes competitive, market-driven economic relationships, undermining the nexus of socially responsible, caring communities that are necessary for our well-being. On the other hand, some argue that the Internet erodes national sovereignty while strengthening the ability of non-Western powers to resist penetration by Western cultures, and instead to penetrate the West themselves.[12] It is a confusing time, with forces both leading to a world more diverse, more articulate of cultural identity, and yet with far greater interdependency.

The Dakar Framework, while it urges a participatory process, remains stuck within a schooling model which is to be expanded and improved, not transformed. It does not take seriously the changes in the world, and our emerging understanding of human potential and social networks. With the erosion of the powers of the state, planning as a tool to increase the participation in and efficiency of national education systems is dead, although like a headless snake, it has considerable force to keep active.

In place of the current emphasis on national plans, what is needed is a rethinking of relationships, a rethinking of the educational process. There is a growing consciousness that such rethinking is timely, that it reflects what is known about learning, and about social change.[13] This is an agenda for the international group of experts who meet to coordinate follow-up to the Dakar Framework, and to those members of the World Bank working on the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the national Poverty Reduction Strategic Plans. It is an agenda for national leaders that take policy intents about building human capacity seriously.

There are no clear steps to guide this rethinking. The process will be complex and requires honesty and humility – not qualities that have characterized international experts or national leaders. It will need a process of public critical reflection on the purpose, relevance and control of the education system, informed by current research and insights on learning. Such a public discourse implies a high degree of openness and commitment by the state to encourage critical social reflection. While I cannot describe here the details of such a shift, some of its key elements can be articulated. One useful characterization of the process comes from Dan Inbar(1996) who identifies five elements of a social change process: **understanding, vision, expectations, empowerment** and **support**.[14]

* Understanding: Margaret Wheatley speaks of the first stage of a social transformation as a voluntary letting go of current beliefs and assumptions to willingly create a new understanding of what's going on.[15] The first stage in a dialogue about the education system will link people's understandings about their futures, their childrens' future, and the kinds of learning that will truly support individual and community well-being.[16] This dialogue should confront the disconnect of economic and education systems that promote individual competition for material gain, in contrast to traditional economic and educational activities that provide opportunities to strengthen bonds of caring and mutual well-being.

* Vision: The transformation of relationships within schools, within communities, much less a nation, will not happen without leadership and political support. Creating the space and support for teachers, for schools, and for communities to begin the transformation process requires a collective commitment to a vision of the way things can be. This is not a 'plan' with specific outputs, processes and inputs. It establishes and articulates in culturally rooted

language and images the general shape of what is intended. The dialogue leading toward a collective vision might draw on (but should not depend on) a set of beliefs about learning, such as those formulated by the Global Alliance for Transforming Education. These, and other such formulations, may serve to stimulate reflection and the development of shared, compelling vision statements.

* **Expectations:**   The move from a collective vision to expectations is the first step towards realizing social transformation. It translates the general beliefs of the vision into the organizational forms, procedures, resources needed to move forward. At this stage it is critical that the perspectives of the various actors, stakeholders and beneficiaries are mutually heard and honored. The process is better characterized as consultation within a caring family than as a technical analysis and plan.

* **Empowerment:**   A fundamental principle proposed in this paper is that learning must be based on the natural capacities of learners to self-organize, within a supportive community. This follows from the premise that transformation of beliefs, in personal meanings and actions, have to be based on motivation and commitment, rather than on an externally created plan. A danger in the concept of empowerment, as it is generally understood, is the belief that power is a zero-sum entity: by empowering one group, another group is disempowered. It is this perception which will surely block the kinds of change advocated here. Empowerment can lead to local tyranny if it is simply a matter of devolving existing authority from the center to a region, district, community or school director. The belief that power grows through building trusting relationships is central to the process of transforming education (as well as economic and political) systems. The empowerment of learners, of teachers, of communities, of schools requires supportive, helping relationships, where accountability depends on the success of those one serves.

* **Support:**   Local initiatives, at the school and community level, in pursuit of the vision of educational transformation, should be supported by public financing. The state, despite how much it is weakened by global forces, has a responsibility to support equity, and to use public resources particularly to alleviate poverty. One approach to supporting local initiative is an incentive grant system that finances alternative forms of school governance and pedagogy. In the USA, the Charter School movement is an expression of this approach. An incentive grant is provided for innovative departures from standard school organization. Of course, a grant mechanism may simply support an alternative system of school governance, with little or no transformation of the educational process. But it can also be consistent with the principles of community and school self-organization for transformation advocated here.

Global Alliance for Transforming Education
Core Beliefs about Education

- The fundamental purpose of education is to nourish the inherent potential of human development, for all children, and all learners. Learning involves the enrichment and deepening of relationships to self, to family and community members, to the global community and to our planet.
- Each individual is inherently creative, has unique emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs and abilities, and possesses an unlimited capacity to learn. This implies fostering in each student a sense of tolerance, respect and appreciation for both the unity of humankind and for human diversity, starting with immediate community.
- Education is a matter of experience. Learning is an active, multi-sensory engagement between an individual and the world. The goal of education is to nurture wisdom through reflection on essential questions and exploration of experience. Education should link the learner to the wonders of the world through experiential approaches that immerse the student in social life and nature.

Note: These are three principles, drawn from a larger set of ten, with modifications and appreciative thanks. See <www.gate.org>.

For the process described here to be something different than a state-dominated public relations effort will require a government commitment to negotiate social conflict, rather than promise the solutions to problems. It will be an

intense, unpredictable, process, in which those initiating dialogue must act and be seen as facilitators, not bureaucrats. Further, the state must tolerate, if not actively support, the active role of the media in the critique and review of policy and local experience. This is a process for which there is usually little political enthusiasm. Furthermore, few public organizations, certainly few Ministries of Education, have the capacity to engage in critical social analysis, reflection and consensus building. This work may be supported by NGOs recognized for their integrity and advocacy on behalf of the disadvantaged. What the state, and international agencies, can do to facilitate this essential planning process is to provide the legitimacy and resources to carry out this work. There is a trend toward supporting this kind of policy dialogue from development agencies, reflected in such forums as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

The end of planning, if it is to become a means towards a more enlightened system to support learning and well-being, will be a search for common principles, the devolution of responsibilities locally, to the learners insofar as possible, and the use of public resources and financing to support this process. Which international leaders, which nations, and which communities, will be so bold as to pursue this social vision and act on this policy agenda?

Endnotes

[1] I am indebted to Etienne Wenger for this definition, see his article 'Communities of Practice: the social fabric of a learning organization.' Healthcare Forum Journal, July 1996, p. 20-26.

[2] R. Kotulak. Inside the Brain. Kansas City, Mo.: Andrews and McMeel, 1996.

[3] For example, see the ABC News Special with Peter Jennings and Bill Blakemore, Common Miracles: the New American Revolution in Learning, 1993 (from MPI Home Video: MP 6295D).

[4] See the website for the Sudbury Valley School at <www.sudval.org> for further description of their belief and practice, as well as links to associated learning communities throughout the world.

[5] See the critique of schooling provided by the 21st Century Learning Initiative at <www.21learn.org>, and the writing of John Abbott (1997), its founder.

[6] The six EFA goals are: 1) increase access to early childhood care; 2) access to free, quality primary education by 2015; 3) address learning needs of all youth and adults through appropriate life skills training; 4) 50% improvement in the level of adult literacy by 2015; 5) eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education by 2015; 6) improve all aspects of the quality of education, showing gains in measurable learning outcomes particularly in literacy, numeracy and life skills.

[7] The World Bank and the IMF have prepared joint working guidelines for the development of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper [plan], available on the World Bank web site.

[8] Government of Ghana. Ghana – Vision 2020 (The First Step: 1996-2000): Presidential Report to Parliament on Co-ordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies. Accra: Government of Ghana, 1995.

[9] The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), affiliated with UNESCO, has been the primary international center for developing methodologies and training national staff in educational planning. See their website at <www.unesco.org/iiep> for their research, publications and training.

[10] See, for example, Rondinelli (1993), who advocates that policy should be built on good practice at the grassroots level.

[11] See Waldrop's book Complexity (1992) for an excellent introduction to the science of Complex Adaptive Systems.

[12] Farrell, p.310.

[13] For example, the World Bank has recently promoted the concept of social capital – reflecting the insight that wealth is created through cooperative relationships based on trust. See <www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/library/index.htm>

[14] Dan Inbar. Planning for Innovation in Education. Fundamentals of Educational Planning. Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning, 1996.

[15] M. Wheatley. Bringing Schools Back to Life: Schools as Living Systems, 1999. See <www.berkana.org>.

[16] See M. Weisbord and S. Janoff. Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground in Organizations and Communities. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1995.

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