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4pp. The paper traces the origin and growth of UNICEF's concern with development education activities, and discusses current trends. How can development education be applied in the South? UNICEF must also work with national change agents in the North to assure its programmes of adequate governmental and public support. This task is huge and urgent. We live in a world of economic crisis, a world groaning under the threat of excessive armaments, a world of North-South gap as well as East-West gap. The paper defines "education for international understanding and peace" as bridging the need for literacy in the South and awareness raising/participation in development decisions and action in the North.

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UNICEF's Development Education Policy

UNICEF's development education activity began to take a specific shape some six years ago when a staff member in the Information Division in Geneva was assigned full-time to service the growing interest of national committees in this subject (especially in the Nordic countries). A full-fledged programme grew up over the years, including the establishment of a resource centre and of a clearing-house in development education materials, servicing expanding from the national committee network to NGOs, professional groups, teachers students and others.

While national committee approaches differed widely, the main objective was agreed to be to raise awareness in Europe of the causes and consequences of mal-development and world poverty, to increase understanding of development issues, and to change underlying attitudes in the "North" which caused racist and intolerant reactions to relationships with people of "developing" countries. It was felt that, since attitudes are formed at an early age, children of 9 - 13 were an important target both in and out of school, but in practice it was found that to reach children it was necessary first to reach the adults who were influencing them - teachers, parents, television producers, children's book publishers, and so on. Non-governmental organisations came to be recognised as very important partners in this effort, both at the national level and internationally.

In recent years there has been a growing tendency in New York, and among some field information officers, to consider development education as valid also in developing countries. This has inevitably led to confusion, not only about the meaning of the term but also about UNICEF's policy, and it is clearly necessary to clarify both.

Development education in the South ?

It is difficult to see how the definition given in paragraph two above could be applied to developing countries, which hardly suffer from an unwarranted superiority complex, or can be considered responsible for the colonialism and exploitation which has caused the imbalance in development between North and South. Textbooks used in schools, inherited from colonialist regimes, urgently need revision, but this is a matter for UNESCO, not UNICEF. Curriculum reform in schools, encouraging development subjects, are also a matter for UNESCO, which certainly considers these aspects its own concern.

Community education, through which people at the community level are given the tools to enable them to take their own decisions and shape their own future, is obviously a matter for project support communication - an approach which should be an integral part of all UNICEF programmes, and especially of training and formation.

The closing of the gap between rich and poor within developing countries is, perhaps, the very *raison d'être* of UNICEF's whole programme, and it is a major part of the work of its representatives to advocate to governments that more emphasis be given to basic services for children and women - to better community health services, nutrition, education and so forth. The art of gentle persuasion is what UNICEF, of all agencies, is perhaps best at.

Governments in most of the 110 countries in which UNICEF has programmes are formed from élites - the wealthiest, or the most educated, or advantaged in other ways. Such élites form something like 2% of the population, on average. Non-governmental groups in developing countries draw most of their members from such élites, many of whom have been educated in schools and universities in the "North", and maintain contact with that part of the world.

If "development education in developing countries" is taken to mean the changing of attitudes and the recognition of what is needed to "close the gap", this can clearly only be done through UNICEF's advocacy with governments and through operational partnership with non-governmental bodies at the national level: that is to say, it must be an integral part of UNICEF's programme activity within the country.

To call it "development education" would not only arouse great suspicion on the part of assisted governments, which might view it as subversive and only too likely to lead to revolution! - it would also arouse the justified ire of UNESCO which considers itself the educational arm of the United Nations.

The term "development education" has already caused friction with UNESCO for this reason, but since that agency has already indicated it does not wish to undertake development education in the North it should be possible to reach an agreement with them on an inter-agency basis, as has eventually been the case with environmental, health and other forms of "education".

Development education in the North

Just as UNICEF must work with national change agents in the "South" if its development aims are to be realised, so UNICEF must work with national change agents in the North if its programmes are to receive adequate governmental and public support. These are, par excellence, its network of national committees, plus the wide range of non-governmental organisations and development action groups, professional societies, religious and women's groups, youth organisations, etc. In such a relationship it is necessary to deal with all aspects of international imbalance which relate to, or affect, development, and thus the future of the child and indeed of humanity. The link between development and themes such as environment and disarmament are likely to be of overwhelming importance to the present and future generations, and are thus part of UNICEF's concern as the United Nations' lead agency for children.

The task is so huge, and so urgent, that it would seem only intelligent to concentrate upon it so far as UNICEF's specific development education activities are concerned.

Learning from the South

Much of the desire to "do" development education in the South stems from an inability to understand that, in this area, it is the North which has to learn - a concept which those in industrialised countries find very hard to accept, the emphasis for so long having been on what the North can teach the South. Part of the development education programme in Europe, for example, is to stand this concept on its head, and to show how indeed maldevelopment has taken place in the North because, inter alia, it has closed its collective mind to the traditional wisdoms.

An even greater danger is posed by the seizing upon development terminologies as catchwords by those who wish to use them to prove the opposite of what is intended. For example, the term "self-reliance" is being used by the present US administration to justify a reduction in IDA loans by the World Bank, on the grounds that developing countries must be self-reliant, i.e. "stand on their own feet".

Many see in the attempt to extend development/education to the South yet another example of paternalism, of the North "talking down" to the South; At the same time, public perceptions of the United Nations generally tend to be somewhat negative, and it is inevitable that UNICEF will suffer from this. Development education efforts, which lead towards a greater public understanding of UN efforts towards development, can play a major role in changing public attitudes towards government development policies.

Political realities

It is surely unnecessary to point to the fact that we live in a world of economic crisis, a world groaning under the burden and the threat of excessive armaments, a world in which both the North-South gap and the East-West gap seem to widen daily. To speak of "global" development without recognising these gaps, and trying to do something about them, is to verge on the naive. These are the gaps UNICEF is trying to close, involving people in all parts of the globe in its endeavours. Let us not imagine that what is good in one part is good in another: a totally different effort, and mentality, is required to tackle the huge, the urgent problem which faces us in the North.

To establish a strong, active DevEd programme, in partnership with our non-governmental allies, clearly oriented towards changing attitudes in the North, could be the best investment UNICEF ever made. It should be based upon the closest possible links with the South.

Jeanne Vickers
UNICEF/OE
Geneva, 22 February 1982.

- 1) Development Education
- 2) Education for International Understanding and Peace
- 3) Education for Development

Making Two Worlds One

The UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding and Peace (EIU) is just that: a recommendation to governments. Its implementation depends upon not only a greater understanding of different cultures, lifestyles, traditions, etc., but also of far greater understanding of, and participation in, development issues both North and South.

The two concentric circles below show how development education in the North, and education for development in the South, are linked by EIU. The closure of the North-South gap, and the merging of the two worlds, is required in order to achieve "one world" based upon international understanding and peace.

