



## IJED vol 100 editorial

## 1. Executive summary

It seems astonishing that a journal with such a modest origin in 1981<sup>1</sup> should survive, much less prosper. Developing from its original emphasis on the demands for improving education in low-income countries, the journal has expanded. We are summarizing the material from the 100th volume of the IJED. The material itself, in both quality of discourse and heterogeneity of format, represents the success of the enterprise and its likely trajectory. The IJED has called for public schools to prepare students to recognize untrustworthy information sources. It has inaugurated a criticism of the 'aid architecture' and the reluctance to hold aid recipients to account for inadequately financing their own priorities. The editors have joined together in an editorial on the need for to re-open school systems only after addressing the cognitive damage from the COVID closings.

The IJED has launched special issues on education and incarceration (children in jails), the intractable education conflict in Israel, the effect of COVID on education (with UNICEF assistance), on reading Literacy (schooling but not educated). Currently, IJED has 10 new special issues under development. One will revisit the vocational training given new digital labor market demands; another the debates over SDG 4. There is a coming special issue providing advice to junior colleagues. The articles are authored by 'educational warriors' (each required to have a minimum of 40 years' experience working in the field of education and development).

Of the 27 manuscripts in Volume 100, one is an editorial on the moral purposes of higher education, another is a review of a book which takes India to task for failures to deliver quality basic education, then there is a comment on that review by an IJED advisory board member. These are followed by three articles from the special issue on faith-based education, three on issues of corruption and ethics, and five articles on the problems of re-starting school systems following the COVID-19. Only then do we turn to the manuscripts which arrived, were reviewed, revised, and appear as contributions on individualized themes.

In essence IJED has expanded beyond its birthright of being a journal principally serving an academic audience focused on improving education in low-income countries, to one which attempts to address the interests of a broad range of educational actors in policy decision-making, administration, and educational delivery. It has incorporated views which challenge powerful traditions and institutions; encouraged research from a wide spectrum of geographical locations and on a plethora, issues employing a definition of 'development' broader than the limitation of traditional low-income countries. Finally, volume 100

announces the results from the associate editors who were asked to suggest a past article, in their experience, with the most important impact. The titles and rationale for highlighting them appear at the end of this note.

## 2. Universities and Leadership

In his essay on "Universities and Leadership" Quentin Thompson reminds us of the unique responsibility of universities, quite apart from the much-lauded economic development impact. His view is noteworthy in part because he is not associated with a development assistance agency whose affiliation may bring financial rewards accompanying their advice. To Thompson's recipients, his advice is costly. The fact that his advice has been requested by 50 countries (including his own) and three development assistance agencies, suggests that his perspective may differ from the norm of the development assistance community. But it does. Here is, for instance, how he characterizes the moral role of universities.

"As important institutions and seats of learning, universities can have a major influence on the values of society – 'a moral force' as one country put it. Even some large private companies now exercise a sense of 'corporate social responsibility'. At its most effective, a university can hold, and be seen to hold, the moral high ground on important issues. For example: it can promote the importance of social cohesion; it can provide an authoritative voice on major matters of public concern; it can promote the principles of what is right, and it can support the rule of law, with a visible stand against corruption, social injustice, and discriminatory persecution. In these ways, a university can help underpin a nation's sense of its own cultural identity, for example as a counter to pressures for uniform globalization.... For centuries, universities have had respect in their societies as searchers and promoters of truth and have exerted a moral and cultural influence in the development of their societies: it being 'the duty of the intellectual to speak truth to power'. That role is particularly important in today's climate, when so many cultural values are being implicitly questioned, or even undermined, by commercial and similar pressures.

There are good reasons to embrace the value that universities can bring to economic development, but that is but a pale shadow of what a university can truly be, and it should not be at the expense of the ethical and cultural values that universities have stood for over the centuries. Courage will be needed from university leaders to stand up for what is right and effective management is needed for universities to set a good example to the rest of society. Only in this way will universities have the

<sup>1</sup> Publications on the history of IJED can be found in Taylor (1988), Vulliamy (1988), Watson (1990), McGrath (2010), and Oxenham et al. (2020).

right and the strength to speak in such terms. Their leaders should aim high.”

### 3. Review of India's record in Basic Education

In his review titled: “Basic Education: India's Shameful Failure: a review of Asoka Mody (2023) *India is Broken: Independence to Today*,” Stanford University Press, John Richards first provides a summary, then a commentary. He says that Mody's book centers on two ‘accusations’: that (i) India failed to place priority on social services and (ii) failed to control education corruption – bribes for contracts, teacher placement, admissions and examination questions. The combination of these two failures has been catastrophic for basic education. Most children remain illiterate and those who manage to finish schooling, except for the elite, remain in ‘learning poverty’.

The review is assessed by Kenneth King, a member of the IJED advisory board. In his note titled: “Education: India's Shameful Tragedy: A Comment”, he notes that illiteracy long predated independence; that it varies widely from one state to another; and that it cannot be attributed to independent India alone without including responsibility from British colonialism.

### 4. COVID and education

The effect of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic is and will remain a dominant theme for many years. Four manuscripts in volume 100 address it. One attempts to measure learning declines by calculating the changes in academic achievement on the university entrance examinations in Columbia. The manuscript is titled: “How Did COVID-19 Affect the Academic Performance of Colombian Students?” Authors Luz Karime Alvarado, Silvia Soler, Juanita Gonzalez find significant declines over the time of the pandemic. In their article titled: “Learning Inequality During Covid-19: Evidence from Secondary Schools in Colombia,” Lucas Marin Llanes, Mariana Pico, Dario Maldonado and Sandra Garcia find that learning inequality across social groups increased by a range of 48–372 %. Surprisingly however, they discover that the inequality across genders declined during the pandemic. In the paper by Claudia Martinez, Susanne Duryea, Maria Contreras titled: “The Effect of the Pandemic on the Transition to Tertiary Education in Chile: A Focus on Students with Disabilities” the authors find that the differences in graduation from secondary school was only two percent between students with and without disabilities. However, in the transition to higher education during the pandemic, the difference climbed to 17 %.

Katsuki Sakaue, James Wokadala, and Kenichi Ogawa try to assess the degree to which children are assisted by their parents during the COVID lockdowns in Uganda. Their paper is titled: “Effect of Parental Engagement on Children's Home-Based Continued Learning During Covid-19-induced School Closures.” They report, unsurprisingly perhaps, that as parental engagement goes up, home-based learning activities go up. With respect to maintenance of service-learning programs, Paul Khiatani, Minnie Heep Ching She, Oriana Yi Yin Ho and Jacky Ka Kei Liu in their article titled “Service Learning Under Covid-19: A Scoping Review of the Challenges and Opportunities for Practicing Service Learning in the ‘New Normal’” find that service-learning programs were effective in spite of COVID's challenges.

Finally, there is the question of school opening following COVID closures. Are they uniform? Do some schools open earlier? In the paper titled: “Socioeconomic Disparities in the Re-Opening of Schools During the Pandemic in Chile,” authors Juan Pablo Claro, Andrea Canales, Eduardo Undurraga, and Daniela Cerda point out that once the 190 countries and 1.6 billion school children began returning to school, the question became who was kept out longer. In the case of Chile, they argue that it was the schools which served low-income students, and that the cause of their slow opening was due to ‘administrative factors’ rather than economic or epidemiological ones.

### 5. Faith-based schooling

Historically schools were the responsibility of churches, mosques, and temples. While the shift to the state differed by time and country, today the predominant mode of delivery is through government. This does not suggest that governments are the best provider of education, the most popular, or the most equitable. Because faith remains a universal human norm, it is natural for many to seek to educate their young children and their college students through schools and universities associated with faith-based organizations. Today schooling associated with faith-based organizations is common across all regions and growing in popularity. This popularity, however, may raise controversies and problems. Three are addressed by manuscripts in volume 100.

One concern is how religious curriculum should be managed. In their article titled: “Towards a Reform of Religious Teaching in the Chilean School System,” authors Carmelo Galioto and Cristobal Bellolio observe that the religious curriculum is managed in three ways: through exclusivism (one faith assumptions), through confessionalism (directed to believe only in that faith); or through illiteracy (absence from all faith classes). Public schools, they note, handle the religious curriculum by mandating faith-based classes which include all faiths, and non-confessional fashion (i.e. non-directive). They suggest that what has been designed for government-managed schools should be extended to schools managed by faith-based organizations on the grounds that the non-directiveness philosophy and including all faiths is justified on the grounds of child-centered curricular excellence.

One problem of managing faith in the general curriculum or in faith-based schools is the fact that the public's view of faith may shift. This is particularly the case in Europe. While religious affiliation was once the norm, today the dominant perspective is secular. This is the subject of the article titled: “Religious School in the Netherlands: An Analysis of Arguments and Assumptions in a Tense Public Debate.” Authors Esther Kamphuis and Gerdien Bertram-troost ask whether the norm of secularism runs the ‘danger of imposing a majority norm on a (religious) minority’.

Lastly, is the question of financing. Without tax-payer support faith-based private schools are perennially concerned about financial sustainability. The paper titled: “Innovative Structural and Financial Models in U.S. Christian Education,” authors Lynn Swaner, Jonathan Eckert, Erik Ellefsen, and Mathew Lee try to address that issue. They describe strategies of mergers, acquisitions, hybrid-school models, third source financing, and entrepreneurship.

### 6. Educational ethics

The IJED receives many manuscripts which follow in the traditions of educational psychology. For the most part authors are recommended to send their papers to a journal specializing in that field on grounds that the public policy implications from psychology are less clear than from other social sciences. But sometimes we receive a manuscript based on educational psychology in which we become quite interested. This is an example. In their paper titled: “Academic Integrity During Examinations, Age and Gender as Predictors of Academic Performance Among High School Students,” Moses Chukwugi Ossai, Nathaniel Ethe, Dennis Edougha, and Onomiroro Okech utilize the Modified Theory of Planned Behavior to design a method of assessing the likelihood of someone to cheat on examinations. They asked questions about a student's moral background, the level of exam anxiety, the attitude toward cheating, and the students' experience in cheating. They noticed that females had higher levels of academic integrity but scored lower on examinations, while boys had lower levels of academic integrity and performed better. When isolated as an independent influence, they find that academic integrity strongly predicts performance. The authors suggest that their findings raise questions about the legitimacy of the examination system itself. They believe that their findings have implications for test development and administration. They end their discussion by suggesting that

test developers should include a section of the examination which assesses academic integrity of the test taker to better understand a test's reliability.

Two other manuscripts center on issue of academic integrity. In the paper titled: "Factor Analysis of Causes of Corruption in the Educational and Scientific Sphere of Ukraine," authors Ihor Hasiuk, Iryna Darman-ska, and Yaroslav Nahornyi survey student attitudes toward corruption and corruption actions by administrators, awareness of key concepts of academic integrity. In the paper titled: "Developing a Multipronged Academic Policy Writing Tool for Secondary Schools," author Ozgur Celik breaks down the development of an academic integrity culture into separate steps (called themes), explains how each of them leads to the next and proposes a writing tool for followed by secondary schools with an objective of creating a culture of academic integrity.

## 7. Individual issues

Do children from low-income families integrate well into selective elite secondary schools? Today there is concern that their integration might be problematic. This issue was raised in a paper which reported on interviews conducted with low-income students who had attended an elite school in Chile in the 1960's and 1970's. In the paper titled: "The Machuca Experience: A Retrospective Case Study of the School-based Socio-economic Integration," authors Anthony Agostino and Cristobal Madero find that the experiences of low-income students were of multiple types. Some included bullying and discrimination; others included inclusion and friendship.

To point out that a pupil is physically disabled, is not sufficient to understand what they lack or how to assist them. There are many categories of disability. Some require specialized equipment; others require special spaces. Architects design schools to fit the needs of pupils, but how much do architects know about disabilities? In a paper titled: "Designing Schools for All: Indian Architects' Perspective About Physical Disability-Related School Design Needs," Navjit Gaurav, Heather Aldersey, and John Lewis surveyed Indian architects to discover that the architects had much to learn.

To what extent is academic freedom understood in Sub-Saharan Africa? In the paper titled: "Academic Freedom in Africa: A Systematic Review of Content Analysis Studies," Kofi Koeranteng Adu and Jonathan Odame find multiple areas of research concern: legal and constitutional laws, effects of colonialism, challenges, and intellectual engagement. Their analysis points to the many challenges to democracy in Africa and conclude that 'the future for academic freedom remains bleak'.

Teacher quality and the rural/urban gap in achievement. In the paper titled: "Can Improvements in Teacher Quality Decrease the Cognitive Gap Between Urban and Rural Students in China?" Lee Zheng, Xrang Qi, and Chongyu Zhang find that teacher quality accounts for 9 % of the variance in cognitive achievement between urban and rural areas.

What happens when a school system is required to teach a topic which is deeply mistrusted by the public? This seems to be the case in the Philippines with respect to the teaching of Reproductive Health Education. This situation is analyzed in a paper titled: "Implementation of Reproductive Health in the Philippines: A Case Study," by Jin Kim, Jin Huh, and Sung Sang Yoo. Following the passage of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law in 2012, the ministry of education designed and began to implement a curriculum known as Reproductive Health Education. The authors describe what happened next. They found that teachers implemented only those parts of the curriculum with which they were comfortable. The authors suggest that there may be many reasons for this, but among them is the fear of the teachers that the curriculum itself would lead students to engage in sex. Among the more interesting and important issues described in the article is the conflict between the ministry of education and the ministry of health. The authors conclude by saying that policymaking alone is not enough. Amen to that.

When women become more educated it is common to find that there

is more household investment in the children's education. When women garner higher incomes, it is common to find that there is more household investment in education. But what would happen if women were suddenly denied a significant access to wealth which they had once assumed belonged to them? Would expenditures of children's education change? Chao Li and Daoming Sun respond to this question. In their paper titled: "Woman's Bargaining Power and Spending on Children's Education: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in China," they trace the effect on children's education after the introduction of the Chinese Marriage Law. This law restricted a wife's access to household property which they had once assumed was theirs. The effect of that law was to reduce the level of household expenditures on children's education by 35 %. The authors conclude by saying the laws which 'deteriorate' gender equality will create a decline in educational expenditures.

Public policies are subject to political winds; hence they may change on grounds of distant preferences. But what happens when they change. What is left behind when the pendulum swings the other way? In the paper titled: "Running on Two Legs: The Impact of Policy Oscillation on a Public Private Partnership School in China," authors Haiyan Qian, Allen Walker, and Xiahong Xu describe a circumstance of a continual internal debate over centralization and decentralization in which, having achieved considerable success, a local school in fact may have been unconsciously signaling that government should re-centralize.

How do teachers respond to the challenges of maintaining professional integrity in areas of armed conflict? This is a question raised by Kiruba Murugaiah. In a paper titled: "We Make Do: Experiences and Beliefs of Teachers Working in Conflict-Affected Niger," the author observes teachers protecting as well as teaching their children, and wonders what explains this dedication. He responds by describing the experiences of early teachers in local history, the origins of their professional beliefs, and their chronological histories, often neglected by 'humanitarian actors'. He explains why this historical approach is vital for tackling the cultural and ideological tensions on the purpose and value of education.

## 8. Articles to be highlighted

The associate editors have selected four titles to highlight with volume 100. These were not selected because they are popular. They were selected, taken together, because they represent the heterogeneity in our field. Each is methodologically rigorous. Some apply new means to expand a classic debate; others because they represent a novel social cohesion impact of public policy; others because they force us to be reminded of basic principles — the fact that schools can only work when teachers are present every day and when facilities such as clean toilets are the norm.

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Nunoo, J., Taale, F., Sebu, J. Sorekuong, A. and Adama, Y. (2023) "Influence of Teachers Absenteeism and School Distance on Cognitive Skills in Ghana," *International Journal of Educational Development* Vol. 97 No. 102715.

Taylor, S. and Spaul, N. (2015) "Measuring Access to Learning Over a Period of Increased Access to Schooling: The Case of Southern and Eastern Africa since 2000," *International Journal of Educational Development* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.12.001>.

Garcia, S., Harker, AS. And Cuartas, J. (2019) "Building Dreams: The Short Term Impacts of a Conditional Cash Transfer Program on Aspirations for Higher Education," *International Journal of Educational Development* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.12.006>.

## 9. Summary

Judging by the popular press, one might reach the conclusion that artificial intelligence was about to monopolize the field of education and development. The IJED now receives over 3000 manuscripts/year and, because of that, we have a rather clear finger on the pulse of the trends. Traditional problems continue. Intentions are confused with results, associations with causations, and aspirations with evidence. At the same time, there is progress, real progress and the effects of that progress are tangible for all to see. As C Arnold Anderson used to say: There is nothing more practical than a good theory. And the theory of education and development is among the good ones.

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Stephen P. Heyneman  
Professor (emeritus), International Education Policy, Vanderbilt University  
E-mail address: [s.heyne@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:s.heyne@vanderbilt.edu).