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**‘South-South’ Borrowing:
Lessons from the Caribbean and implications for post 2015 agenda
Emprunt ‘Sud-Sud’ : Leçons de la Caraïbes et implications pour un agenda post-2015**

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Abstract

This article aims to draw attention to complexities of ‘education borrowing’ and outline considerations for setting education goals beyond 2015, the projected expiry date for Education for All goals. While policies from multilateral agencies advocate sharing best practices between developing nations to support improvements to quality education, qualitative research in Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago indicates that best practices are not shared nor implemented. At best, foreign ideas from industrialized countries are used to legitimize local policies. It appears that directives aimed at fostering ‘South-South’ cooperation do not account for cultural differences. Findings also suggest a lack of cross-national attraction as developing nations are more concerned about ‘international standards’. Policy development considerations for 2015 include a stronger emphasis on identifying locally driven approaches and goals in place of ‘South-South’ borrowing rhetoric. Abandonment of a common realm of values is not necessary; however the reduction of interventions by multilateral agencies may be a worthwhile goal for post 2015.

Résumé

Cet article vise à attirer l’attention sur les complexités de l’« éducation empruntée » et à exposer les considérations en vue d’établir des objectifs éducatifs au-delà de 2015, date d’expiration prévue pour les objectifs de l’Éducation pour Tous. Alors que les politiques des agences multilatérales préconisent le partage des meilleures pratiques entre les pays en voie de développement afin de soutenir l’amélioration la qualité de l’éducation, une étude qualitative en Barbade et à Trinité-et-Tobago indique que les meilleures pratiques ne sont pas partagées ou implémentées. Au mieux, les idées étrangères venant des pays industrialisés sont utilisées en vue de légitimer les politiques locales. Apparemment, les directives visant à favoriser la coopération ‘Sud-Sud’ ne tiennent pas compte des différences culturelles. Les résultats suggèrent aussi d’un manque d’attraction cross-nationale, vu que les pays en voie de développement sont davantage préoccupés par les ‘normes internationales’. Des considérations de développement de politiques pour 2015 consistent à mettre davantage d’accent à identifier les approches et objectifs locaux, au lieu d’une rhétorique d’emprunt ‘Sud-Sud’. L’abandon d’un domaine commun de valeurs n’est pas nécessaire ; toutefois, la réduction des interventions des agences multilatérales peut être considérée comme un objectif digne d’intérêt pour l’après-2015.

Keywords: Education borrowing, Caribbean, Education for All, small states

Mot-clés: éducation empruntée, la Caraïbes, Éducation pour Tous, petits états

Although the notion of ‘sharing best practices’ is used by UNESCO (2002), other terms such as ‘education borrowing’ (Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) are recognized in the field of education, denoting the process of identifying practices that resulted in positive outcomes elsewhere and applying them to policy development in the home context. One purpose of education borrowing is to advance the Education or All agenda in developing countries to aim to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. Originally set in 1990, EFA’s timelines have been extended twice and the time is ripe to discuss new paradigms to support the Global South in reaching their own education and development goals. The six goals of EFA are as follows:

- Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

- Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes
- Goal 4: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

For the Caribbean region, the central concern is quality education as articulated in Goal 6. Quality education is emphasized in strategic plans developed by the Government of Trinidad & Tobago (2002, 2004 and 2007). Improvements to teaching and learning are outlined throughout planning documents developed by the Government of Barbados. For example, authentic learning is stressed over automatic promotion: **“Children will be promoted in the main only after they have demonstrated satisfactory performance in their subject disciplines”** (Government of Barbados, 2000, p.13, bold and underlined letters in original). This was echoed in the qualitative research undertaken by the author. One respondent who worked for an international organization was critical of teachers' agenda to push the curriculum along: “[The] teacher is knowledge, needs to push class along... Not child centred, not participatory, not very experimental”. A Barbadian teacher acknowledged the limitations of ‘chalk and talk’: “One of the drawbacks is that it usually pigeonholes the students into adopting specific approaches to particular problems.... We are directing the course of the lesson instead of students having their input to the lesson”.

The failure to reach these goals by the original target date of 2000 and the anticipated failure of reaching the extended end date of 2010 have been due to several key reasons as outlined by UNESCO: “...weak political will, insufficient financial resources and the inefficient use of those available, the burden of debt, inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor and the excluded, a lack of attention to the quality of learning and an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparities” (UNESCO, 2000: 12). While Jules (2008) agrees that EFA focuses on the problem of illiteracy and the social exclusion of children from education, he argues that EFA can become “...a hegemonic construct that constitutes the measure of all educational advancement in developing countries and on the basis of which international aid and lending will be prioritized”. (p. 206)

This article aims to explore the complexities of education policy transfer as a guiding rhetoric to meet the EFA agenda determined by multilateral agencies. Writers such as King (2007) note that the role of developing countries was “minor, if not minimal” (p.381) in EFA goal setting. Among the plethora of approaches explored to implement EFA, one particular perspective that will be examined in this article is the use of ‘education borrowing’ or ‘policy transfer’ for the developing south to draw positively on lessons learned from other developing countries that have experienced success in implementing processes to reach goals (see Rose and Greeley, 2006). Amoako (2012) notes the complicated nature of policy transfer in the Global South due to donor funding, using Ghana as an example:

Through global programmes and policies that attracted donor funding and technical support, policies were transferred... through ‘agenda-setting’ approaches in transnational and supra-national contexts like the EFA goals and MDGs set under the leadership of donors in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 respectively (p.66).

Certainly, it can be argued that policy transfer is a byproduct of the 'global architecture of education' (see Chisholm, 2007, Schriever & Martinez, 2004, Schriever, 2000), a web of ideas, networks, financial arrangements and multilateral organizations which work together to cause systems convergence. Jones (2007) argues that global power relations exert a dominating influence on how education is shaped internationally. For the purpose of this article, the focus will remain on the micro level of policy transfer of best practices that contribute to student achievement. Two types of 'education transfer' are identified. The first involves 'South-South' transfer, in which developing countries share EFA implementation best practices as suggested by UNESCO and Commonwealth Secretariat policy documents. (see UNESCO 2000, 2002, 2006, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003). The second involves 'North-South' transfer in which states are influenced by policies from developed nations, usually countries of global significance or in the bid to raise achievement. Certainly the literature related to south-south transfer can be perceived as another form of 'north-south-south' borrowing.

The work of Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004) marks a systematic approach to understanding the process of policy borrowing by outlining four stages: cross national attraction, decision (including theoretical agreement, quick fix and 'phoney'), implementation and internalization/indigenization. It is of note that support or resistance typically happens in the third stage where policymakers assess adaptability, suitability of context, identify speed of change and significant actors. While the model outlines one theoretical approach to understanding borrowing, the two authors focus on trans-Atlantic transfer and examples from the UK and Europe. A model exclusively designed for south-south transfer is lacking, perhaps due to the dearth of examples of successful implementation of best practices between developing countries. Theoretical approaches to education transfer may be complicated when considering the development context. Steiner-Khamsi (2006) points out "...the limitations of policy borrowing research focusing exclusively on cultural, social and political dimensions of transfer, and neglect the economics of policy borrowing" (p. 666). Countries dependent on aid are impacted by the "donor logic" of development banks which tend to export 'best practices' from their own systems (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006, p. 675). Schweisfurth (2006) in reference to her research on the complexities of international influence and policy reform in Rwanda concludes the following:

What emerges bears little resemblance to the traditional Comparative Education domain of policy 'borrowing' or policy 'transfer', which is relatively tame and linear; the extent of challenges, and the diversity of global and cross-national currents has created a much more turbulent picture. (p. 707)

Little has been written on the process of 'South-South' transfer and the extent to which sharing best practices between developing countries can be used for reaching international education goals such as those set forth by EFA and Millennium Development Goals. This article attempts to provide some insights on the complexities of education based on research on the implementation of borrowing policies promoted by the multilateral organization in the Caribbean. The author's research questions were as follows: "To what extent are borrowing policies implemented in the Caribbean and what are the implications for a post-2015 agenda?" The following sections of the article will provide an overview of policy documents that promote 'South-South' borrowing and highlight research findings from Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago on the extent to which borrowing policies are put into practice. Finally, some implications will be outlined for a post-2015 world.

'South-South' borrowing in international policy documents

UNESCO can be viewed as a broker and clearinghouse for 'best practices. One of its aims is 'sharing what works and what has not worked in a spirit of mutual learning and concern to adopt and disseminate good practice" (UNESCO, 2006, Annex 1, p. 11). Through 'best practices', it views itself as providing intellectual support to education policymakers to 'buttress' strategies and reforms. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 24). 'Wise practices' are used to ensure that UNESCO objectives, principles and priorities are followed by other multi- and bilateral projects and programs (UNESCO, 2002). It also supports regional EFA forums to exchange leading practices and other activities, as follows:

...Co-ordination with all relevant networks, setting and monitoring regional/subregional targets; advocacy, policy dialogue; the promotion of partnerships and technical co-operation; the sharing of best practices, and lessons learned; monitoring and reporting for accountability; and promoting resource mobilization (UNESCO, 2000, p. 10).

Similarly, the Commonwealth Secretariat (2003) aims to "facilitate the sharing of knowledge with Ministries of Education to keep them up to date on latest issues, and trends, related to MDGs" in order to "better promote and publicize innovative examples of educational practices" (p. 25). Further, by sharing practices, it hopes to "stimulate faster and wider replication across the Commonwealth" (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003, p. 26). Outcomes include the publication of recommendations, strategies and guidelines that describe examples of programs and innovative projects that furthered EFA goals for replication (see Burke-Ramsay & Degazon-Johnson, 2004; Williams, 2006). To develop the initiative of sharing best practices, the Centre for Commonwealth Education was established for primary and secondary education as well as the training of teachers through disseminating expertise, research and consultancy projects: "It will assist in the delivery of knowledge so as to deliver best practice in individual countries... CI/CEE [spell out acronyms here in brackets] will position itself as a key player as a catalyst for action" (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003: 31).

'South-South' cooperation has an apparently broader focus and "offers opportunities for exchange and mutual learning through a range of mechanisms" (UNESCO, 2006, Annex 1, p. 17). To help overcome similar challenges, opportunities, constraints and context facing developing nations, UNESCO (2006) believes that cooperation among developing nations of the South would further the development agenda (Annex 1). Through 'South-South' partnerships across the wide range of developing country needs, there will be support for learning best practices, strengthening institutions, such as financing developing capacity, and technological innovations (UNESCO, 2006, Annex 1). Certainly there is plenty of rhetoric on policy borrowing by multilateral agencies. Further, Jules (2010) has written on the complex nature of cooperation in the Global South which he refers to as a new type of 'trans-regional regime', where sovereign nation-states "contribute resources to the development of a group through a regional mechanism" (p.403), facilitating the exchange of policy ideas, among other functions. For more analysis on the role of regional agencies such as CARICOM (spell out acronym here), see Jules, 2010 and 2013.

It would be useful to further understand successful cases of implementation, particularly in developing countries. While there are notable cases of borrowing between industrialized countries and 'North-South' borrowing in countries such as South Africa, Mongolia, Egypt and India among others (see Jansen, 2004, Spreen, 2004, Vavrus, 2004, Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2006, Ibrahim, 2010, Mukhopadhyay& Sriprakash, 2011), little has been written on the South-South approach. Two cases have been identified: Colombia-Brazil (see Luschei, 2004) and international influences on post-conflict Rwanda (see Schweisfurth, 2006). Brazil adopted Escuela Nueva, a model of unitary schooling from the Southern country of Colombia and enjoyed minimal success due to problems of implementation. Interestingly, this Colombian initiative was 'horizontally' introduced into

Brazil at a time when there were increasing doubts about the program (Luschei, 2004). On the other hand, Rwanda experienced the varying agendas of international influence in its post-conflict phase. According to the analysis by Schweisfurth (2006), Rwanda did not borrow a specific model during its time of reconstruction, but ‘education borrowing’ or policy transfer took the form of ‘second generation colonialism’, as it was “carried through returning refugees in post-colonial contexts, who have a comparative perspective and acclimatization in foreign ways of working” (Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 704). Returning individuals brought back ideas from other former British colonies such as Tanzania and Uganda (Schweisfurth, 2006). Certainly from a postcolonial lens, it can be argued that the transfer of best practices from former British colonies to Rwanda is in fact a form of ‘north-south-south’ transfer.

Education borrowing in the Caribbean

The role of borrowing in shaping education reforms in the Caribbean is an underresearched topic, as this region tends to exist on the periphery of global education world order. However, the identification and analysis of borrowed ideas in the region is interesting to consider as there is usually a strong impetus for small states to look beyond their national boundaries to avoid insularity. Global trends in education policy have a large impact on small states as they must seek ways to reduce their isolation by participation in the global community without increasing dependency and losing identity (Crossley and Holmes, 1999).

Given the policy imperative for South-South borrowing and the unique context of the Caribbean, the author undertook research for doctoral studies in education borrowing in an attempt to understand the extent to which South-South borrowing was occurring in Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago, arguably two of the more developed nations in the region that have nearly reached their EFA goals based on the EFA Development Index (EDI) (see UNESCO, 2014). Geopolitical and sociocultural similarities justified the choice for the island states. There is potential to share ‘best practices’ regarding education quality (EFA Goal 6) due to differences in teacher training and curriculum. There are commonalities in sociocultural aspects as they are both matrifocal societies with similarities in family structures, child rearing practices and both contain a Creole continuum. As Trinidad & Tobago has both resources and a baseline of stability in its education system, learning from Barbados may appear to be a possible choice due to relatively similar histories and cultural context compared to other small nation states. There are regional forums and working groups such as those initiated by EFA, UNESCO and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Additionally, *The National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2006-2025* illustrates its movement towards developed nation status certainly aims to export ‘the Bajan Way’ or the Barbados Model to other countries (Government of Barbados, 2007).

Data collection involved 52 semi-structured interviews with local teachers, school administrators, academics and policymakers within the Ministries of Education of Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago in autumn 2007. The interviews aimed to uncover the patterns of sharing between these islands, as well as the reasons behind resistance. Respondents are denoted from their place of residence by the following letters: B – Barbados, T- Trinidad & Tobago and I – outside region (notably, United Kingdom and United States). Implementation of EFA goals, particularly those centered on quality education (Goal 6) were queried in the interviews to understand the role of borrowing practices to improve teaching and learning. This section outlines some observations from this research as it pertains to implications for post 2015 agenda discussions. For a longer analysis of patterns of policy implementation, see Lam, 2011.

Three main patterns were identified: no evidence of South-South cooperation on the ground; foreign ideas from the ‘West’ were used to legitimize national policies; and

resistance from local education actors. These patterns indicate the need to reconsider the place of 'borrowing' rhetoric in the current paradigm EFA implementation to support the provision of learning in the Global South. Each of these patterns will be briefly discussed below, with reference to implications for post 2015 agenda setting.

No Evidence of 'South-South' Cooperation on the Ground

The notion of 'sharing best practices' between Southern countries, while promoted among developing countries through EFA regional forums, does not seem to be implemented on the ground in light of a common set of education goals. Despite the presence of regional forums, teachers in both countries were not strongly convinced about possible avenues for sharing practices to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their classrooms. Although teachers in both countries identified teacher training in Barbados as strength, there appeared to be little motivation or urgency by the Trinibagonian government to improve training. Indeed, there is a dearth of cross-national attraction. Sharing best practices is, at best, limited to informal discussions in which islanders hear about developments in neighboring states through word of mouth. In other words, networks of travelling information exist but do not seem significant as substantial evidence of effective informal networks is lacking. Buzzwords such as best practices, peer review and South-South cooperation may be used out of necessity by aid agencies who feel they need to subscribe to the global aid agenda and EFA goals. Implementation of South-South cooperation appears to be far removed from the ground. While teachers in both countries are concerned about improving the quality of education, support for improvements is limited. Thus, there may need to be a heavier emphasis on empowering local education actors to implement quality education initiatives and focusing on localized goal setting in place of 'borrowing' rhetoric. While EFA goal setting by multilateral agencies can help to focus nation-states by providing a shared understanding of definitions of nebulous terms such as 'quality', create specific indicators and targets, the encouragement of borrowing as an approach to reaching these goals may not be appropriate.

Interviews with respondents such as T4 and T6 found that instead of looking towards each other, islands look to the 'centre', as this provides curriculum that is conceived as 'global' knowledge. Similarly, when asked about the place of Caribbean knowledge in curricula, one respondent replied: "We may try that approach then find ourselves limited and the quality limited and unable to produce that kind of students who can make it on a global market" (T6, teacher). While it may be argued that pupils should follow a curriculum that carries international currency, George and Lewis (2011) argue that this approach forestalls acceptance of local knowledge. The preference for a 'global' approach may override South-South cooperation due to the perception "...that if a nation fails to follow those trends it will become uncompetitive in the global economy" (Morris, 2012, p. 90). After all, EFA is an initiative that began with multilateral organizations gathering to discuss the large volumes of out-of-school children in Jomtiem, Thailand at the World Education Forum in 1990. The idea of a 'global' approach to education can be reinforced by regional forums. For example, small states may perceive the call to action of the 17th Conference of the Commonwealth Education Ministers paraphrased by Louisy (2011) to "continually extend their boundaries, look outwards and reach upwards" (p.xiv) as an action towards the 'West' rather than each other to combat insularity as the Commonwealth Secretariat was established based on a shared colonial history. Certainly, one may argue that Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago depend more on larger, economically developed countries such as the United Kingdom and United States than other islands for growth and stability.

On the other hand, the notion of 'global' is often defined domestically and both globalization and international standards are 'empty shells' filled with whatever content necessary to promote domestic reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). Chisholm (2007) notes the

complexities of 'institutional isomorphism' where there is little understanding of whether ideas have spread as a result of, despite or in tandem with mutual attraction or whether the influence of world powers and external agencies is a catalyst for this convergence of 'standards'. Jules (2012) offers a more complex picture of small states in the Global South as it relates to aid: "(R)ecipient states and regional regimes gladly accept being labeled small, fragile and vulnerable to bring donor funding to obscured and obfuscated projects while showing linkages and legitimacy with international mandates and targets" (p.6).

Another logistical challenge to South-South borrowing could simply be a dearth of documentation of best practices from developing countries. Steiner-Khamsi (2004) and Chisholm (2007) argue that institutionalized networks such as publications and conferences serve as platforms for sharing best practices. Academics from both countries referred to research in online journals from Australia, the USA and UK in which more has been written on national curricular initiatives and their resulting student achievement outcomes. Additionally, if Southern countries are looking for inspiration for reaching EFA goals such as quality education, it may be 'natural' for them to consider 'models' based on available literature and research rather than peers who are concurrently facing the same challenges. While it may be argued that EFA has existed since 1990, given the long implementation timeframes, there may simply be more data available from longitudinal studies from the USA and UK than developing countries undertaking their own system-wide implementation plans with evolving reporting tools. As a result, research from the 'West' may have a stronger influence than findings from neighboring islands. Electronic journals are easily accessible; one academic pointed to the benefits of low cost and physical access to both North American and Australian journals (T3, academic).

The 'West' as External Reference Point

However, both Caribbean countries are developing their own national initiatives that draw on inspiration from foreign ideas from the 'West' as valid external reference points. For example, the government of Trinidad & Tobago found inspiration for their 2007 curriculum from the other side of the world in New Zealand, due to a perceived post-colonial similarity: "[The curriculum] seemed to be aligned to what we were thinking and some ideas on how to move forward...also it's a British model and also more closely with the British based system we have" (T1, policymaker). There is certainly the tendency to look abroad for inspiration, as T2, a policymaker states, "we look to a large extent outside the region, the New Zealand model, what's happening in the UK and USA and pulling together 'best practices' together and seeing how the ideas work together".

The use of foreign ideas such as references to New Zealand and Canadian education systems in Trinidad & Tobago may stem from the need to justify choices at the national level. For example, the Trinidad & Tobago NCSE curriculum justifies its six key learning outcomes by stating they are universally accepted and "...underscored by other educational jurisdictions and have been described as essential..." (Government of Trinidad & Tobago, 2002, p. 6). Regardless of whether the foreign policy was transferred or not, political discourse associated with the ideas may be transferred (Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). Steiner-Khamsi (2004) suggests that referring to foreign models helps to substantiate home education reforms: "...the *raison d'être* for externalization is the existence of a legitimacy crisis in an educational system..." (p. 204). This seems to be consistent with the interviews as, on one hand, respondents discussed how differences between the islands prevented borrowing but, on the other hand, talked about the similarities of the education systems of other Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand and Singapore. Yet it is possible that all of this discourse is simply rhetoric, as the mere mention of foreign ideas legitimates national choices, concomitant with Spreen's (2004) assertion:

In the field of education, circulating reforms internationally serves to reify the notion of international education relatedness and to legitimize the use of international competition and world-class standards in education. This is a bandwagon that most governments do not want to miss jumping on. (p. 221)

Home policies are justified in Trinidad & Tobago by drawing on examples of foreign ideas such as the mention of magnet schools (see Government of Barbados, 2007 and Government of Trinidad & Tobago, 2007) and constructivist philosophy (see Government of Barbados, 2007 and Government of Trinidad & Tobago, 2007).

Yet the tendency to look towards the ‘West’ may be a result of assumptions that education borrowing was undertaken by other countries that have managed to achieve success in particular aspects of education. Island respondents also noted they are more concerned with trends happening ‘elsewhere’ such as the achievement of South East Asian countries and the standards set by the American National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). In particular, one respondent suggested the lack of expertise in the Caribbean:

Perhaps because the Caribbean does not have developed nation status, we are not a force in where industry or technology is concerned.... perhaps tourism is the only thing we have international recognition in, because of our climate, our food and culture, as a Caribbean community. But in other areas, I don’t think we have that status just yet (T4, head-teacher).

While interviews centered on borrowing practices used to further EFA goals, there was often reference to the role of foreign influence in the creation of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) prior to EFA agenda setting in 1990. Expertise and training were received from Cambridge and London, according to B1, academic. The creation of the CXC exams also involved international acceptance from tertiary education: “this would have been sent out to universities and colleges overseas...to ensure this was at standard because we didn’t want them to be lower – we needed some comparability” (B1, academic). The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), an American association for Math education was the main reference point for the creation of the CXC exams (B1, academic). This could be viewed as ‘a quasi-external stamp of approval’ where policy actors refer to ‘international standards’ to “create a distance between themselves and the Other or to the Global, and make it purposefully appear to be ‘external’ or ‘out there’ in order to mobilize reform pressure from within the system” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, p. 469). Creation of examinations based on UK and American standards may be viewed as welcome due to the notion of legitimization.

Resistance from Local Education Actors

Resistance to borrowing may stem from a preference for national autonomy from those on the ground. One respondent who worked on a regional project believed that the insularity of the islands might contribute to the lack of interest in sharing: “...every single political leader wants to keep his kingdom... They won’t want to unite – it’s so good to be king despite things like Caricom, etc.” (I3, policymaker). This follows Urwick’s (2002) comment that “(t)he assertion of national identity in a developing country tends to involve some negative reference to other countries that can be perceived as threats, such as a major industrial power or an acquisitive neighbor” (p. 158). Countries may need to compete against each other in the global education arena to increase their visibility, particularly in the instance of small states. In other words, their distinctiveness, illustrated through reluctance to sharing may assert their survival as a nation.

Interestingly, this resistance to cooperation was also evidenced at the individual level, suggesting that this may be part of the culture among educators. At least three teachers noted the lack of sharing among individual teachers. In response to a discussion about sharing on a

school level, one Trinidadian teacher stated, "...people are reluctant to use things created by others, some of that is jealousy or envy, and some of it is wanting to use their own things". Another Barbadian educator stated, "Sharing is not part of the culture here. This is why I'm interested in your study and will be interested in what you find" (B2).

Despite the lack of sharing between islands, policymakers operating on a global agenda tend to see the Caribbean as a region rather than individual islands. In the words of one international correspondent: "It is important that we treat the Caribbean as a region moving on the basis of greater cohesion and greater cross fertilization... and certainly I would stress the importance of regional integration in the way forward" (I5). Yet another respondent questioned the motivations behind South-South collaboration: "...the question is, are these driven by the interests of developed countries or is it that developing countries are preferring this way to organize the world, preferring them to solve their own problems...." (I4). Thus, the lack of regional sharing between Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago may be a form of post-colonial resistance in which both countries, in their quest for independence and autonomy prefer to remain separate entities. The construct of the Caribbean as a region was developed initially by post-colonial powers, with the failed political union of the Federation of the West Indies as a prime example (see CARICOM, 2008 for a historical analysis). Today, regionalization is encouraged through the British-based Commonwealth Secretariat and the EFA regional headquarters. The proacted nature of regionalization is contrary to the notion of cross-national attraction that is identified by Phillips and Ochs (2004) as the first step to education borrowing. As the mutual willingness to learn from each other, a necessary component of successful education reform, is absent, the ongoing encouragement of sharing best practices appears to be a moot point.

Implications for 2015 and beyond

Considerable discussion is needed on the presence of 'South-South' borrowing rhetoric in policy documents to reach EFA goals. To begin, this rhetoric appears to be very limited in effectiveness, as the notion of borrowing from the South is met with resistance from nation states due to the unique historical and cultural relationships. Education goals may be better reached through an emphasis on identifying local solutions rather than encouraging the cross fertilization of best practices between developing countries. Yet the issue of this policy rhetoric goes beyond the question of effectiveness, it can also be viewed as a slippery slope. What appears as policy rhetoric could transform into 'policyscapes' where international donors provide funding under the condition that 'best practices' are borrowed and implemented (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). Additionally, "(e)conomically, policy borrowing is often a transient phenomenon, because it only exists so long as external funding—contingent upon the import of a particular reform package—continue" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p. 324). Sustainability for these types of aid-facilitated borrowed solutions is called into question and may result in lost time in achieving access and quality education in developing countries. The impact of such rhetoric could also be implicit, such as donor-financed research to support adoption of a borrowed program (Samoff, 1993 as cited in Edwards, 2013). Further, countries could subversively react through 'policy bilingualism' where aid-recipient countries manage their economic dependence by redirecting funds into locally developed programs. While supporting local initiatives, they also adopt the language (such as buzzwords) but not all or any content of the imposed reform (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). As a result, this whole exercise becomes a game of appeasement/subversion between donors and developing countries resulting in meaningless outcomes and halted progress for education goals.

There is, of course, the bigger issue of how education goals and 'standards' are defined. As the deadline of 2015 looms, a new framework for identifying locally driven goals and processes to reaching them may be required that draws on context rather than

'international' standards and practices that have worked in other jurisdictions. It may be necessary to consider who sets these goals and the place of national initiatives. Although the 'global' aid agenda was apparently built on by consensus, the participation of researchers, governments and NGO personnel from developing countries in creating initiatives such as the Jomtien EFA Declaration was lacking (King, 2007). While there has been progress in aid methodology away from top-down approaches, there is still a long way to go empowering and engaging developing nations. It may be necessary to consider an agenda for 2015 that is not facilitated by the international community but rather is locally developed and owned. There is usually widespread understanding that education supports "...universal good and a belief in "best practices" (Soudien, 2011, p.268). This conception legitimizes efforts to make mass education accountable to the international community.

As such, one key question arises for the post-2015 agenda: To avoid legitimization and politicization of education decisions, is there a place for localized goal setting to meet the needs of the world's poor? This approach would support local innovation and better engage stakeholders. Certainly there is no shortage of vision from local educationalists. Caribbean scholars such as Hickling-Hudson (2004) and Louisy (2004) articulate their visions for the future. Both strongly support the notion of multiple literacies for the future of Caribbean education. Hickling-Hudson (2004) envisions quality education that supports civic engagement, critical thinking and ethics while Louisy (2004) imagines a future focused on student well-being and respect for cultural heritage. Indeed, it appears that many small states are currently focusing on visions beyond EFA, as noted by Louisy (2011):

(M)any small states are already looking beyond the global goals and targets expressed, for example, in the Education for All (EFA) objectives and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to search for ways in which they can respond more meaningfully to the major external shocks and challenges of the contemporary global environment (p. xiv).

As there is work underway for goal setting, considerations and EFA coordination efforts for 2015 and beyond (Ito, 2012), the time is ripe to strongly reconsider the notion of standards as well as the use of borrowing as a process solution for reaching access, quality and equality goals for education. The relationship between education borrowing and development is underresearched given its policy rhetoric in international policy documents that set the course for the aid agenda. However this is not surprising as the academic and policy development world may be at odds on this matter. Comparativists since Sadler (1900 *cited in* Ochs and Phillips, 2004: 7) have long cautioned against policy importation on the basis that education cannot be separated for its social, historical and cultural context. However, "international agencies, think tanks and consultancies have been active in a search to identify the practices that can be borrowed from successful systems" (Morris, 2012, p. 90). More bridge building may be necessary to share findings and help to identify what we know and do not know in both the academic and policy worlds where education borrowing is concerned.

As noted by McGrath (2010), the challenge is to imagine a radical future where we purposefully "seek to build bridges with other disciplines, engage with new methodological tools and encourage fresh voices but above all else communicate more clearly what we do and do not know about the wonderful complexity of the education-development relationship" (p. 542). By outlining what we do not know, we begin to break down assumptions, question current approaches and develop new agendas that reflect the needs of nations and not the international community. Through appreciation of diverse values and conceptions of knowledge, the post 2015 agenda may be defined as one that is reachable by local educationalists and requires minimum facilitation from the international community.

It is imperative to engage a wide range of stakeholders outside of the global policy arena, particularly small states that exist on the periphery of world order. Soudien (2011) notes this does not necessarily mean we need to abandon the ideal of a common realm of values or standards, nor does this preclude the right to venture into each other's cultural frameworks. Instead, we can focus on ways to integrate different value approaches and break down assumptions of what we consider to be "good for all of us in the world community" (Soudien, 2011, p. 268). As a result, this could reduce the importance of 'international standards' and the need for one-size-fits all international and regional policy setting documents. To that end, perhaps one of the education goals for 2015 and beyond is the reduction of interventions by multilateral agencies.

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