Concluding Discussions

Forum Moderator
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Keynote Speaker
    Fay King Chung,   Former Minister of Education, Sports and Culture of Zimbabwe

Moderator of Session 1
    Prasad Sethunga,   Head, Department of Education, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Moderator of Session 2
    Akira Ninomiya,   Director, Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan

Kazuhiro Yoshida (Hiroshima University, Japan)

Thank you to all the speakers who have participated in today's forum. We would now like to conclude with a special interactive dialogue session among the participants. We have heard from a special speaker and keynote speaker this morning and had two panel sessions in the afternoon. I would like to ask at this time for the moderators from both panel discussions, Dr. Sethunga from Sri Lanka and Prof. Ninomiya as well as this morning's keynote speaker Dr. Fay King Chung to all come forward so we can share our opinions together. Although we don't have much time as we would like to conclude by 5 o'clock, let us make the most of this opportunity to summarize the day's event and look to the future.

There are no rules in conducting this concluding discussion but we will look back at the discussion of today. In the morning we heard about EFA from Dr. Matsuura and the remaining challenges we face. This is not only from the impact of the financial crisis but he also expanded on what new challenges have emerged. Then we heard from Dr. Fay King Chung, in the keynote address, and she said the challenges change depending on the role of development and the scale of the impact. The basic theme of the forum is to look at our priorities up until 2015 and then beyond to post 2015 and examine these two periods as to how we can separate them to meet the unique challenges each period brings. So then looking back at our panel discussions we find one interesting situation. Schooling for tomorrow, whether within the current developing countries or developed countries, still needs to take into consideration the problems that these countries face today when we face the future.

So to expand on this point, I would like to first ask Prof. Ninomiya to summarize the second panel session and having done that we will talk about schooling for tomorrow. Perhaps we can identify what is missing in regards to EFA so for that I would like to call upon the moderator of the first panel session to briefly summarize that discussion and perhaps Prof. Ninomiya may want to respond to that. So this interaction will take place and then we would like to ask Dr. Fay King Chung and the audience to respond to our interaction. Then we will open the floor for general discussion.

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

In Session 2 what we found was the scenario model for the future does not apply to the developing countries in the same way as for the developed countries. In the case of Mexico, the flexible schooling provided can be called personalized education and in Malaysia the Internet has created sharp changes in society to which education has responded. Emerging issues in the future, post 2015, probably include the need for training of teachers and in the case of Burkina Faso, Africa, the major point was whether the national government will be responsible for the development of education. Then Dr. Mutch commented on autonomy and in particular questioned if school based autonomy is maintained, at the same time, does this improve the quality of education?

By inviting the participation of the majority this is possible and yet she didn't say if it was or wasn't successful to do so. Then I don't know whether this has succeeded or not either but these approaches deserve attention. The second point was that when we make these simple assumptions hopefully this will lead us to being able to see these possibilities and our thinking will be revised not to look at things as inputting our own values but perhaps to use a different methodology. Possibly, with the probability likely high or low based on that, we should discuss which phase education should go.

Prasad Sethunga (University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka)

What should a school education be? There were some proposals on school education based on different situations in different countries and in my situation in session one the presentations on practice showed how the current situation is and how it should be focused on in the future. Then I tried to answer questions from the floor based on access as not just

access to education but access to quality education which is what we are attempting in Sri Lanka. Often access has been achieved but in reality access is there for some but there are also some groups who are neglected. Even though access has been achieved some conclude however that the quality is still very poor and the teacher training is still lacking.

Other presentations emphasized the same point. I talked about mainstreaming but Mr. Charles Aheto-Tsegah from Ghana emphasized that teacher training should not be the only focus but rather complementary and non-formal education needs more input and resources and this is often not included in the mainstream data. This has a very significant role and it applies to Sri Lanka and many supported this.

The third speaker talked about parents and how do you train or educate the parents as well and in this regard JICA has emphasized teachers are the key. It is also this area of teaching practice that should be changed as was mentioned by Ms. Carolyn Rodriguez and we do this in Sri Lanka and we have done this so teachers can teach inclusively.

And if I may quote Mr. Charles Aheto-Tsegah, a good teacher makes a good difference. Then there were two speakers who supported a two-way dialogue between schools and policy makers. The JICA representative said it may not be as popular but policy makers and schools must be connected and both supported equally when we develop policy. It is very difficult when we go to schools to make visits but if we want them to make policies with maximum input from the schools this two-way input is very important.

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

Thank you very much for your question. Collaboration with NGOs is still a challenge for JICA, to be honest with you. But as I said in my presentation, especially for non-formal education and early childhood development, NGOs and other international organizations have their comparative advantage. So when we are approaching these areas, we are looking for possibilities for collaboration with NGOs.

Fay King Chung (Former Minister of Education, Sports and Culture of Zimbabwe)

One thing which has come out from this discussion is that we have different demands. The demands on professionalism of teachers and education, the demands of nation and national development, and the demands of the community, all these need to be considered and linked up to the global and international community. With different demands being made on the schools and teachers, the teacher is the link between the school and community. And we also have the needs of the child and the parent in the midst of all this.

Another complication is that countries are at different stages and different professional levels even within the same country. Teachers who are part of the community, teachers at the university level with an international background and are at the same economic level with people in this room, people who come from countries and receive a $360 annum where others receive $36,000 and one is one hundred times more than the other. What does that mean for education? Many of those with more education are those with more income and they have flowed to the countries where they can make $36,000 so is that a good thing or a bad thing? Is it positive aspects that from Zimbabwe 3million people have left out of a population of 13 million? Even up to a quarter of some nations' populations have left and this may be true of many African countries. There are more Nigerian doctors in NY than in Nigeria. This is a phenomenon that we see partly based on the economic and political realities of the world. Obviously our education systems for the privileged may be as good in Lagos as they are in NY but for the underprivileged, there are big differences so we have these different economic levels of development.

Someone asked me a difficult question about Islamic fundamentalism and obviously the issue of people having different values even within the same country, then we must think how this affects education systems. To complicate this we have societies that are changing so what happened in the U.S. twenty years ago is not the same as what is

happening today and this is the same with Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe. Our societies are changing quite rapidly and we need to be aware of what are the dominant values within the society because you might find that there are different values in the same nation.

How our values influence education is that they are an anchor for the nation and the people as a whole. Are there values that remain even after a lot of change? That brings us to non-formal and complementary education. In a changing society whatever education I received 20 or 40 years ago I need to complement it today. This may be philosophically or maybe technologically but things have moved on. I think 20 years ago I was not able to use the Internet and email and obviously I had to keep up with this technology. What about the philosophical values, are they the same as before? If I have retained the same values I am a dinosaur or the same as people who have become stuck in a way of thinking without adapting to these changes. We have to look at the education curriculum and can we say that mathematics and science have some core knowledge and skills irrespective of the country and culture? Can we also say that the values of certain religions may be shared? Maybe one can go back to the 10 commandments. Can we say that community values may actually be similar? I tried to say communities are all trying to overcome poverty and maybe that is a common value. Communities want to improve health and education, these are common community values. We can look at this from a global perspective. If you are a nuclear scientist you may find a community of nuclear scientists in many different countries. Similarly, if you are a plumber there is a community of plumbers. And innovations that cross all countries have been helped through the development of the Internet which speeds up our finding similar communities. I can speak with someone in Africa or the United States or Japan within seconds so there is no barrier and one can see the Internet as an enrichment of communication.

Finally we need to look at an important issue and that is the positive and negative donor intervention into education and development. Donor inputs might be negative and this could include in education. Some donor inputs could be very positive. How do we distinguish between the two, and would we share the same evaluation? We might find that Prof. Yoshida and I, looking at the same evidence, might have different evaluations of what has been achieved. When I was Director of Curriculum Development we developed equipment for agriculture based on the use of oxen drawn ploughs and people were horrified. How can a secondary education teach about oxen drawn ploughs? Why did the government not use tractors? And yet 75% of the population still has to use oxen drawn ploughs and not tractors. This opens up a lot of questions for us as to the stage of development and how we react as educationalists.

Kazuhiro Yoshida (Hiroshima University, Japan)

According to the program we must conclude now and I hope, having listened to the conversations between the moderators of the first and second panel as well as our keynote speaker, you now understand the connections or objections to what has been stated. Unfortunately our time is very limited but we do have time for just one or two comments from the floor.

As it appears there are no comments from the floor at this time I would like to close this summary discussion and by doing so there is no need for me to wrap up the session anymore. The feelings expressed reflect the goals for EFA and 2015 priorities and how we should handle those challenges. That having been discussed we realize it differs from country to country and schooling for tomorrow requires a long term view. Schooling and schools are different and it was also pointed out that there are different forms of education and schooling possible. This applies to the roles that are to be played by teachers as well in the development of teaching methods and means. Going back to today's agenda we looked at what is the role to be played by the community, parents and the policy makers. And when we meet the challenges, what is the role of global partners beyond the countries? Can we look at them from future perspectives? When we put together all these ideas what is the implication when we think about the current practices together with all of you and

develop our ideas further? If that can be done, then that is the success of today's symposium. It is very difficult to think ahead but I believe we are well on our way and thus I would like to conclude this interactive discussion by thanking all of the participants including the attendees of today's forum for your input.

With this I would like to conclude the JEF-VII Forum and thank the four organizations which hosted this event. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Matsuura and Dr. Fay King Chung and all the members of the panels who came all the way from your respective countries to Japan and all the participants on the floor for your participation. I would like to sincerely thank the United Nations University and JICA for their support. And last but not least I'd like to express my gratitude to the simultaneous interpreters. So with this I would like to conclude the program and ask that you fill out the evaluation sheet in the package and return your feedback to the receptionist which is very valuable for us in planning this event in the future.