

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Sector-Wide Approaches in Education: Coordination or Chaos?

For much of the history of international development, the dominant operational paradigm has been the project approach. This method's hallmark is the direct provision of services, usually by a foreign agency, to a designated site in a specific country. While often debated, the shortcomings of this approach are well cited and range from duplicity of effort among many different but uncoordinated service providers to fears of cultural hegemony and transfer. Developed at least partly in response, the Sector wide approach (SWAP) requires several partners on larger scale policy and project development efforts, and places tremendous emphasis on the concept of partnership. This comprehensive approach seeks to include all actors in the education planning process and challenges traditional notions of "top down" and "bottom up" policy development.

This issue of CICE offers an analysis of the idea of this enlarged partnership approach in the education sector and the role of supporters such as the World Bank. The authors in this issue explore the theoretical and conceptual ground that "partnership" covers and the practical realities such endeavors encounter and produce. Many of the questions posed in our call for papers concerning the independence of the third sector, local capacity building, dependency and ownership are highlighted and addressed by these articles. Readers will see that while collectively these authors' contributions to the discussion surrounding the benefits and costs of SWAPs range widely in geographic context, they also reveal significant common experiences and questions for all concerned with educational development.

Bonnie Mullinix begins our issue with a thorough examination of the concept of partnership in educational development. In *Nurturing Partnership: A Southern African continuum of flexible stages in Partnership development*, Mullinix "shares lessons learned over years of working to create effective partnerships for development." Grounded in case studies from an international NGO working together with many Namibian partners, Mullinix offers a continuum which traces the development of partnerships throughout their many stages of flux. While highlighting the nonlinear form that partnership development inevitably takes, she simultaneously provides the beginnings of a useful map which lays out the costs and benefits for the increasing number of organizations travelling beyond cooperation and collaboration in educational development.

The case of Nepal, offered by Mary Ann Maslak, serves as a springboard from a generalized partnership discussion into a more specific description of the role that SWAPs have had in South Asia. In *The SWAP: One strategy for educational development in Nepal*, Maslak traces the evolution of development assistance in Nepal from the traditional project based approach to the sector wide approach. The distinctions between these two paradigms are well marked in the Nepalese system, and she finds that the implementation of sector wide approaches has created a whole new set of advantages and disadvantages for both donor and host agencies that need to be further analyzed.

John C. Weidman continues this volume's examination of the effectiveness of sector wide approaches in education, this time in the Mongolian context. In his article, *Developing the Mongolia education sector strategy 2000-2005: Reflections of a consultant at the Asian Development Bank*, Weidman provides an excellent description of the various stakeholders who become involved in the development of sector strategies. His research demonstrates that a myriad of viewpoints can help strengthen policy development but suggests that greater work needs to be done to identify "common issues and linkages across strategies." Weidman explores the interactions between these different groups and describes the greater considerations stakeholders must recognize as they shift from independent operation into larger partnerships.

However, in *World Bank development policy: A SAP in SWAP's clothing*, Steven J. Klees critically examines the rhetoric and reality surrounding partnership. He counters the notion that partnerships like those associated with SWAPs will change the nature of two decades of neoliberal economic policy. Klees argues, in particular, that the World Bank's extension of SWAPs as the basis for their development framework and poverty reduction strategies is yielding the same structural adjustment policies that have increased poverty and inequality, and devastated education, health, and other basic social services.

Thomas S. Popkewitz, in *Pacts/Partnerships and governing the parent and child*, gives needed attention to theorizing some of the problems educational partnerships can present. The article "offers a reading of Pacts and Partnership in education reform" and places the notion of partnership in the context of "salvation themes" which unite the individual to the nation. In doing so Popkewitz shows us how the relationship between the state and society (the Pact and the Partnership) is constructed through reform. By engaging in the politics of knowledge in education Popkewitz encourages us to see the overlap of apparent oppositions and consider processes we might otherwise take for granted.