



**United Nations Development Programme
Sustainable Livelihoods**

**Basic Education for Sustainable Livelihoods:
The Right Questions?**

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Discussion Paper presented to the
United Nations Development Programme
International Working Group on Sustainable Livelihoods,
Pearl River, New York November 19-21st, 1997

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"Outsiders who come with ready-made solutions are worse than useless. First, help us to ask the right questions. Next, help us to articulate these questions better. And then, help us to find the right answers."

**Tilakaratha
An African King**

"There is no complete escape from the way outsiders project their ideologies and values into analysis and prescription , but at least we have identified two antidotes: first, repeatedly to enquire and reflect upon what poor people themselves want; and second to return again and again to examples of the unacceptable, and to analyze these rather than theoretical abstractions. A continuous enterprise of seeking to learn from the rural poor and of exercising imagination in seeing what to do is one way of setting directions and correcting course."

**Robert Chambers.
Rural Development:
Putting the Last First
Longman Scientific and
Technical, Burnt Mill,
Harlow, Essex, England
1993**

Basic Education for Sustainable Livelihoods

1. INTRODUCTION: BASIC EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT FOR LIVELIHOODS

The Jomtien Conference in 1990 reoriented the attention of international organizations concerned with education towards meeting basic learning needs as a global goal. Advanced knowledge development and technical/scientific education and training are no less important to the development of human resources in these swiftly changing times. But to continue to neglect the fundamental task of education for all, and to provide educational opportunity at least through primary school, for every child worldwide, was to shortchange development at its base. Jomtien reminded the education community of several important principles: to look beyond mere enrollment as a measure of educational success to assess what is actually learned; to focus not only on learning substance, but also on developing continuing capacities to learn; and to place basic education higher on national agendas.

Now, almost eight years after Jomtien, the record is mixed. A mid-decade review reported in Amman in 1996 produced evidence of some increases in primary enrollments, little evidence of improved quality, and (with conspicuous exceptions in some regions) a growing gender gap. The Paris (September 1997) meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (EFA) noted two particular deficiencies, one at each end of the basic learning continuum. Firstly, evidence is steadily accruing for the importance of nutritional, cognitive and social development in early years (1 to 3) for successful maturation. Thus human development strategies, especially those addressing poverty, must pay more policy attention to this issue. Second, basic learning needs of adults remain largely unmet in less developed countries. Rapid changes are occurring in working environments, basic literacy and numeracy have been transcended as basic requirements for obtaining formal sector employment, and much of traditional basic education curricula lack relevance to actual livelihood strategies of those living in poverty.

If the two ends of the continuum exhibit shortcomings, the middle (public formal and non-formal education at basic levels) is weak too. Dropout rates remain unacceptably high (as high as 45% in Pakistan^{1/}). The phenomenon of 'pushout' is now referred to (e.g. in Botswana) as a result of reduction in secondary schooling from three to two years, forcing downward pressure on those already enrolled. Teachers are often not present, and when present are sporadically paid, and often underqualified.

Yet there are encouraging examples too, for instance where communities are closely involved in the basic educational process (e.g. Escuela Nueva in Colombia; Shiksha Karmi in India). In a recent EFA meeting of the nine largest population countries in Islamabad, among the key future challenges noted for Indian education were: sustaining community interest, motivation and participation, community ownership, strengthening decentralization, and nurturing community-based innovations^{2/}. Emphasis is on tapping the creative energies of each community into the basic education effort. This takes deep involvement of people, and above all, close relevance of the basic educational experience to peoples' lives and livelihoods. 'Livelihood' is a timeless term, but has been brought into new prominence in development strategies by UNCED and Agenda 21, and most recently by the Social Summit Declaration at Copenhagen in 1995, where it was explicitly linked

^{1/} E9 Ministerial Review Meeting in Pakistan. Country Report for Pakistan. Ministry of Education. Islamabad. 1997. p 31.

^{2/} Political and Social Mobilization for EFA. The Indian Experience. Country Paper. Presented at the Second E9 Ministerial Review Meeting, Islamabad, Pakistan. 14-16 September 1997.

with employment in Commitment 3. This paper explores the human resource development aspects of livelihood strategies, and in particular the relationship with basic education. It frames the search through examining knowledge streams and posing questions. It begins by a preliminary review of relevant literature/research, and concludes by suggesting new lines of inquiry (all of which UNDP is currently exploring) as to what needs to be done to make basic education more livelihood-friendly. It is intended for discussion only, and has been prepared especially for this International Working Group session.

2. PERSPECTIVES ON LIVELIHOOD

Before reviewing the knowledge streams which intersect on the relationship between education and livelihood, it is perhaps useful to state for the purposes of this paper what livelihood is and is not. Robert Chambers, (1993, 1997) who brought forward the idea of livelihood for new and intensified discussion in the development community, also was candid in his concern about the use of the word. "To stress livelihood", said Chambers, "can, then, only be a working hypothesis to be confirmed and refuted case by case. If the word is used broadly, it means the antithesis of what many rural people and outsiders will agree in saying no to".^{3/} He acknowledges "livelihood" in the evolution of ideas about rural development but cautions that it may mean "desirable change in rural areas" and that what is considered desirable differs by country, region, person and over time.

Is "livelihood" enough? According to Chambers, definitely not. It is important to note here what livelihood does not include and the importance of these exclusions. Livelihood

"can include food, health, a strong family, wealth and income. It can be described as a level of wealth and of stocks and flows of food and cash which provide for physical and social well-being and security against impoverishment. To this may be added access to basic goods and services, but while these are important, for the poorest they may only come second to subsistence and security. 'A plate of basic needs does not whet the appetite while the prospect of a secure a (sic) plentiful livelihood according to a familiar pattern is an everyday motivation' (UNRISD, 1979, p. 10) Nor are livelihoods and basic needs everything. There is also the quality of living and experience...the value people set on the familiar, on being needed, on a purpose and role in life, on love, on religious observations, on dancing and song, festivals and ceremonies, on things in their seasons, and bringing in the harvest. Perhaps the most one can say is that for the full enjoyment of these, secure and decent livelihoods may be necessary but not sufficient on their own."^{4/}

Livelihoods, however, are necessary, and if the poor are to be put first, then the growing interest in sustainable livelihoods is an important step in the right direction. It is at this point a working hypothesis "to be confirmed or refuted case by case" but the cases are accumulating in favor of using this concept.

^{3/} Robert Chambers. Rural Development: Putting the Last First (Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex, England: Longman Scientific and Technical, 1993) p. 148.
Robert Chambers. Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last. Intermediate Technology Publications. London. 1997.

^{4/} ibid

Chambers moves to a sharper definition of livelihoods in relation to jobs and employment (1997 pp 47-9). The concept of `job' has emerged as a central element in human resources strategies and policy. Education systems are expected to be able to prepare people for jobs, individuals make job choices, media (and in many cases public and private labor exchanges) publish job opportunities, statistical systems count jobs (usually rather imperfectly) and currently, job creation is high on the priority list of governments worldwide in both the north and the south.

Yet fundamental questions should be raised regarding this traditional, unilinear person-job relationship which forms the foundation of so many of our human resources development approaches. Is it already outmoded even for the modern sector applications for which it has always been the unit of any occupational statistics or analysis? Furthermore, is it (and perhaps has it in the past been) irrelevant to the majority of `workers' who live in poverty, make up the world's `workforce', and for whom the concept of A (single) JOB has been, at best, a distant goal? Paradoxically, even modern sector employment is no guarantee of an adequate livelihood for a single wage-earner supporting a family.

Livelihoods systems and strategies (coping and adaptive) are suggested by Chambers as a more useful concept than employment per se for those living in poverty. Livelihoods have been recently defined by UNDP (in terms of a development goal, (subsuming but not limited to employment) as "the activities, means and entitlements by which individuals make a living" and "sustainable livelihoods are derived from people's capacities to exercise choice, and to access opportunities and resources, and use them for their livelihoods in ways that do not foreclose options for others to make their living, either now, or in the future".^{5/} "Livelihood systems" are the "sets of economic, social and physical elements and interrelationships which form the basis of livelihood decisions."^{6/}

3. LESSONS FROM LIVELIHOODS: THE KNOWLEDGE STREAMS

Learning about livelihoods is best done by talking to and observing the people who own those livelihoods. The lessons learned, however, depends into which knowledge streams one dips one's toes. Outsiders who talk to the owners of livelihoods or think about the meanings of livelihood, do so from a variety of perspectives. One way of trying to understand these various approaches is to review literature from relevant areas. We have taken some first steps in this search. The initial findings are useful in guiding future policy and programmatic directions.

The fields and disciplines that are the subject of this exploration are purposefully broad since both livelihood and education are both broad subjects in themselves. Key words for this review included livelihoods, sustainability, development, sustainability, environment, work, employment, economy, learning, schooling and participation, and relate to the following major topic areas:

^{5/} UNDP. "Adult Education and Jobs, or Sustainable Livelihoods? Unpublished Manuscript. Presentation at UNESCO CONFINTEA V panel on Changes in the World of Work, Hamburg, Germany, July 12, 1997. p. 6

^{6/} Ibid

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- ECONOMICS
 - Economics of Education
 - ANTHROPOLOGY
 - Economic Anthropology
 - Educational Anthropology
 - SOCIIOLOGY
 - Sociology of Education
 - EDUCATION
 - Learning
 - Basic Education
 - Adult Education
 - Distance Learning
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Continuing Education
 - Vocational Education
 - Training
 - SUSTAINABLE
 - Educational Evaluation
 - Economic Measurement
 - EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT
 - Educational Evaluation
 - Economic Measurement
 - FUTUREOLOGY
 - PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
 - GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT/ WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT
 - DEVELOPMENT
 - Development Education
 - Economic Development
 - Participatory Development
 - Collaboration
- LIVELIHOOD SYSTEMS
 - LIVELIHOOD SYSTEMS

There are educational elements in all of the above, and the `northern' or `western' bias is readily acknowledged, so feedback from the working group is openly solicited. The strategy is to approach traditional learning/education areas through a review of relevant literature on development, sustainable development/environment/ecology, and economics. The aim is to identify, briefly, key concepts which link learning, schooling and education in relation to sustainable livelihoods, rather than any in-depth review.

4. ECONOMICS, LIVELIHOODS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Livelihood has long had an economic connotation and it is from within the fields of economics and economic anthropology as well as from development philosophers, that the real backlash has come against thinking of livelihoods as having a purely market-oriented connection. Economic anthropologists such as Gudeman (1986) have argued that economies and economic theories are "social constructions" and that the central processes of making a livelihood are culturally modeled.^{7/} In this view, the activities of livelihood are taken from a symbolic scheme drawn from features of the social world, while western models of livelihood have used logical and mathematical schemes. Gudeman's point is not that one model is more valid than the other. The western model is "derivational" in that explanation consists of showing how one set of data can be derived from another according to a set of rules. This model works very well for certain uses but when used cross-culturally, understanding becomes subsumed as part of a derivational explanation. Using Western premises to rearrange local models often eliminates the true meaning of what is happening in a local economic system. The differentiation that Gudeman describes has important implications for the bases of development, particularly in the connections to participatory development and learning.

In 1944 the economist Karl Polanyi proposed the concept of an economy as a "material-means-provisioning process" for society.^{8/} Polanyi defined a substantive economy as having a physical base...nature... and a social, institutional organization. An economy is therefore "a process through which humans in society interact with nature...to supply the material means of livelihood"^{9/} and it also means that an economy is not a single institution but instead has many different institutional arrangements (kinship, political, magical religious) as well as the market. Economies, therefore, cannot be understood in isolation from societies. In addition, work can be organized in different societies in a myriad ways. Work may be organized for wages or, as pointed out by Halperin and Dow (1977), by nonmarket institutions (households, communities, kinship institutions) which do not use money at all or only minimally. Understanding how economies and livelihoods operate, and their participatory nature, is basic to the idea of sustainable livelihoods and to sustainable development.

Unfortunately, the term "sustainable development" has often been perverted over the years into "sustainable growth". This 'compulsion for growth' as Hoogendijk notes, is supported by many economists who believe that growth is generated in the "real sphere: more people, more wishes, technological development, new markets determine economic activity".^{10/} The financial sphere, according to this mode of thinking, simply follows or facilitates what is happening in the real sphere. Opschoor (1996) describes this type of process as "a permanent rat race: it has to grow in order to ensure full employment and growth reduces employment...and the market mechanism reinforces this reductionary tendency".^{11/}

7/ Stephen Gudeman. *Economics as Culture: Models and Metaphors of Livelihood*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986 p. vi

8/ Karl Polanyi. *The Livelihood of Man* Edited by Harry W. Pearson (New York: Academic Press, 1977)

9/ Halperin, Rhoda and Dow, James (Editors) *Peasant Livelihood: Studies in Economic Anthropology and Cultural Ecology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977) 2

10/ Hoogendijk, Willem. "Preparing for the Revolt" *Development* 3 (1995) 22

11/ Opschoor, Hans. "Sustainable Growth and Employment" *The Ecumenical Review* 48 (July 1996) 333

A British economist, James Robertson, proposes "decoupling the work people can do from what employers can provide, and decoupling local economic activity from what the national economy can provide".^{12/} This, he says, will be a liberation of work. In practice Robertson envisions this decoupling as leading to changes in perception and values ("people will seek opportunities to work at what they care for and think important) and changes in government policies. On such change, he says, would be that the "aim of education will be to enable people to manage their own lives, including their work lives, rather than preparing them to work for employers".^{13/}

Since the 1970s one of the few economists to address the sustainability of the 'growth ethic' in economic systems has been Herman E. Daly. In his many books and articles Daly has insisted that growth does not necessarily mean "betterment" and that what is really needed is a "steady-state economy"^{14/} in which the understanding of growth includes "some concept of maturity or sufficiency, beyond which point physical accumulation gives way to physical maintenance". Daly and Cobb (1989) liken this to a helicopter economy which can stand still or go backwards as necessary.^{15/} Relevant to learning and education, Daly states that "an economy in sustainable development adapts and improves in knowledge, organization, technical efficiency and wisdom; and it does this without assimilating or accreting, beyond some point, an ever greater percentage of the matter-energy of the ecosystem into itself...."^{16/}

An aspect of the economic development equation now receiving increasing attention is "globalization". This too has important ramifications for learning, schooling and education. The question asked recently in an on-line discussion was "Which Globalization? David Korten, a provocative development thinker, initiated the discussion in part to define the theme of a world conference of the Society for International Development. There are a variety of faces of globalization, according to Korten. "One face is a globalizing civil society. Another is an emerging global consciousness of our mutual dependence on the life support systems of a small planet. A third is the globalization of communications. A fourth is the globalization of the consumer culture. A fifth is economic globalization...the erasing of economic borders to allow the free flow of goods and money".^{17/} It is economic globalization which is causing the most controversy. Opponents of economic globalization see it as pressing people and communities "in a race to the bottom as they seek to outbid one another for corporate favor by offering lower wages, less restrictive environmental and workplace regulations, and larger tax breaks and subsidies for their neighbors"^{18/} Korten also examines economic globalization in depth in a book called When Corporations Rule the World.. (1995).^{19/}

^{12/} Robertson, James. " People and Places: Beyond the Dependency Culture" Development 3 (1995) 8

^{13/} Ibid

^{14/} Daly, Herman E. Toward a Steady-State Economy (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co, 1973)

^{15/} Daly, Herman E. and Cobb, J. For the Common Good (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

^{16/} Daly, Herman E. "Sustainable Growth: an Impossibility Theorem". (First published in Development in 1990) Development 40 (March 1997) 123

^{17/} Korten, David. "Which Globalization?" Development 40 (1997) 56

^{18/} Ibid

^{19/} Korten, David. When Corporations Rule the World (West Hartford, Ct.: Kumarian Press and San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 1995).Also: Korten, David. "When Corporations Rule the World" Noetic Sciences Review 34 1995 4-10

At a 1996 conference on Development Thinking and Practice sponsored by the Inter-American Foundation in Washington, D.C., Harvard professor of economics and philosophy, Amartya Sen, the focus in the 21st century will not be the state versus the market but rather a "hard" versus "soft" perspective on development. The hard view, which Sen dubs "BLAST" for the blood, sweat and tears required. According to BLAST, a period of sacrifice must be suffered today in order to achieve successful development in the future. BLAST overlooks "social obligations to the present generation in favor of its responsibility to future generations. Moreover, it ignores the relationship between quality of life today (health and education) and productivity tomorrow, and the growing body of evidence that social development facilitates rapid, participatory growth".^{20/} The soft view of development, which Sen calls GALA (from the Beatles song "getting by with a little help from my friends") redefines development from the growth of economic development to the expansion of human capabilities and freedom. The social aspects of development, it was concluded, have often been referred to as the 'soft' issues, but they are really the hardest issues to confront.

5. DEVELOPMENT AND LIVELIHOODS: A STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING

Development thinkers have, in one way or another, been contemplating livelihoods and sustainability for many years. Denis Goulet did so in *The Cruel Choice* (1973)^{21/} and so did Dennis Rondinelli in "Why Development Projects Fail" (1976).^{22/} James Kearns and Turid Sato looked at "New Practices for Development Professionals" in 1989^{23/} and found an overabundance of the 'rationalistic tradition' in development work and workers; a Cartesian world that operates like a machine. Specific problems are logically framed and issues to be addressed by a project are rationally defined. Facts are assembled. Terms of Reference are prepared. Reports are written. And the professionals are blind to the "world" that exists in social interactions and relationships.. Kearns and Sato also make note of Winograd and Flores' explanation of "the floppy-disc theory of learning", where people are thought to be like computers with floppy-discs for minds into which data is inserted for processing by a computer-like brain. This is how the West, state Winograd and Flores, believe people acquire the knowledge to take new actions. Learning, they say, takes place in social interaction and doing.

Jeremy Seabrook (1995) reexamined the "lexicon of development"^{24/} and caustically found it full of cliches and dishonesty but he also finds hope in a new worldview that is struggling to find expression. The new view, he says, has at least three major objectives: (1) to make visible all that has been suppressed or elided in the existing ideology; "giving true value to the work of women and children in the world, to count the true costs of the industrializing of our humanity...; (2) empowerment; and (3) maintenance of real living diversity at every level. Martin Khor, of the Third World Network, based in Penang, Malaysia, chastises development for the "filtering of wealth" from the rich to the poor at an estimated annual drain of \$250 million (in the form of debt

^{20/} Funaro, Rita. "Balancing Out the Development Equation". Grassroots Development 21 (1997)
49

^{21/} Denis Goulet. The Cruel Choice. (New York: Atheneum, 1975)

^{22/} Dennis Rondinelli. "Why Development Projects Fail". Project Management Quarterly VII (March 1976) 10-15.

^{23/} James Kearns and Turid Sato. "New Practices for Development Professionals" Development 4 (1989) 111

^{24/} Jeremy Seabrook "Reexamining the Lexicon of Development" Resurgence No. 61-62, Sept-Oct, 1995. 13

repayments, terms of trade, brain drain and internal pricing mechanisms by transnational companies. ^{25/}

Hope and sustainable livelihoods rise, however, in The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief (1995) in which capacity-building and education are seen as central to Oxfam's methodology. "Sustainable livelihoods" is described as taking a systems approach, "looking for impacts on social and gender equity, patterns of resource use, and the creation of opportunities that do not involve cost-shifting and that make people's lives better without impoverishing others or the next generation". ^{26/}

The stream of Gender and Development/Women in Development yields much concern about sustainable livelihoods. One example is the 1995 Declarations from Global Human Security: Pre-Conferences on Sustainable Livelihoods and Gender (1995; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) defined livelihood as 'a means of living or of supporting life and meeting individual and community needs' ^{27/} The pre-conference also defined a set of principles of sustainable livelihoods, including the principle of "secure access to opportunity and meaningful activity in community life". The principles are seen as a "holistic set of values that are non-exploitative, promote participation in decision-making, emphasize the quality and creative nature of work, place needs over wants and foster healthy, mutually beneficial relationships between people and their environment (especially domesticated animals)". ^{28/}

One of the very best explanations of the economic differences between the *exchange value* and *use value* production, fundamental to understanding sustainable livelihoods, comes from Lourdes Beneria in her chapter on "Accounting for Women's Work" in Women and Development . The production of exchange values is viewed as an economic activity; production of use values does not. Use value production takes place outside of market exchange both in the household and in the subsistence sector. It generates "social relations between people" and therefore forms part of the "categories of economics. Because it does, states Beneria, use value production, often the labor of women, should be a part of the definition of "active labor". ^{29/}

Paulo Freire taught that we should listen for *palabras generadoras* or charged "words that generate" our worlds and how we imagine improving them. The short review above has many such words....a stream of consciousness-raising. Some of the linkages with learning and education have already been implied; the next step is to explore these relationships more closely.

^{25/} in Jeremy Seabrook "Re-examining the Lexicon of Development" Resurgence Sept-Oct. 1995. No. 61-62 13

^{26/} Deborah Eade and Suzanne Williams. The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief. (Oxford, England: Oxfam, 1995)

Kathryn Shaw-Gardner. (Book Review) The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief. in Grassroots Development 20, (1996) 43

^{27/} Pre-Conference Workshop on Civil Society, Sustainable Livelihoods and Women in Development. "Declarations from Global Human Security" Development 3 (1995) 67

^{28/} Ibid

^{29/} Lourdes Beneria . "Accounting for Women's Work" in Women and Development: The Sexual Division of Labor in Rural Societies. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982) 127-129

6. LEARNING, EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

"Learning", "Schooling" and "Education" are charged words. The anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson has mused on their meaning and found herself drifting into "the insidious equation of learning with education and, more narrowly still, with schooling":

" Trying to understand learning by studying schooling is rather like trying to understand sexuality by studying bordellos. Certainly schooling is part of the spectrum of learning in human lives, but it is not the model for all learning, only one of the byways. Learning and teaching are both fundamental for human adaptation, but not all societies segregate them from the flow of life into institutional boxes."^{30/}

It is interesting that the differentiation among learning, schooling and education is so similar to the clarity now being sought among "livelihoods", "jobs", and "employment". Sustainable livelihoods would seem to have closer kinship to learning (sustainable learning/lifelong learning). Bateson notes that "preoccupied with schooling, most research on human learning is focused on learning that depends on teaching or is completed in a specified context rather than on learning that takes place spontaneously because it fits directly into life." Schooling and education are, however, part of the "byways" of learning and cannot be ignored but paying greater attention to the myriad learnings that occur outside of institutional contexts fits nicely with the concept of sustainable livelihood.

One early attempt to look at the relationship between development and learning/education is by Ralph Miller, writing in 1972 ("The Meaning of Development and its Educational Implications") in which he notes, "it might seem strange if we said our objective was not development, but life. Yet, surely, this is the issue".^{31/}

"More generally, a broader approach to development will be 'uneconomic' in that it will not aim primarily at economy and efficiency. it will not be deliberately wasteful, but it will take as its objective the welfare of human beings and will recognize that human welfare does not depend upon increased cash flow or greater success in international markets."^{32/}

Miller perceived four educational implications of a broader conception of development:

1. Education must become less formal.
2. Education must be freed from system restrictions and be developed through a variety of specific projects on a smaller scale.
3. Education projects must be recognized as experimental and must be monitored so that we may find out what works

^{30/} Mary Catherine Bateson. Peripheral Visions: Learning Along the Way (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994) 196

^{31/} Ralph Miller. "The Meaning of Development and its Educational Implications". in Perspectives on Development (New York: The Agricultural Development Council, 1972. 5-10

^{32/} Ibid

- in specific situations.
4. Education must become more of a service within a complex of development efforts and less of an instructional program for the sake of instruction."

From these implications, it is a large leap forward in time to 1995 and the feisty thinking of educator, Neil Postman, in his book The End of Education. For Postman, the "god of Economic Utility" makes a covenant with the young which basically states that "if you pay attention in school, and do your homework, and score well on tests, and behave yourself, you will be rewarded with a well-paying job when you are done".^{33/} It follows, says Postman, that any school activity not designed to further this end is seen as a frill. He also observes that "there is little evidence (that is to say, none) that the productivity of a nation's economy is related to the quality of its schooling".^{34/} He concludes that

"specialized competence can come only through a more generalized competence, which is to say that economic utility is a by-product of a good education. Any education that is mainly *about* economic utility is far too limited to be useful, and, in any case, so diminishes the world that it mocks one's humanity. At the very least, it diminishes the idea of what a good learner is."^{35/}

Howard Gardner is another important American educator whose views can link with the concept of sustainable livelihoods. His pioneering research on "multiple intelligences" outlined in his early book Frames of Mind (1983) provides one such linkage. He has theorized that all human beings are capable of at least seven different ways of knowing the world (seven intelligences). These are language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical thinking, the use of the body to solve problems or to make things, an understanding of other individuals, and an understanding of ourselves.^{36/} Where individuals differ, states Gardner, is in the strength of these intelligences. These differences challenge an educational system that assumes everyone can learn in the same way, and that a uniform, universal measure is enough to test student learning. In his later work, The Unschooled Mind (1991) he believes that what is needed in education "is the creation of a climate in which students come naturally to link their intuitive ways of knowing with scholastic and disciplinary (knowing a discipline) forms of knowing. Needed as well is an educational milieu in which they use the resultant integrated knowledge to illuminate new problems and puzzles with which they have been presented....."^{37/}

Because the purpose of this paper is to focus principally on basic and adult education, the next sections are addressed to these sub-fields, and to the issue of participatory educational evaluation as a tool for policy guidance in the future.

A) Basic Education

^{33/} Neil Postman. The End of Education (New York: Random House, 1995) 27-28

^{34/} Ibid

^{35/} Ibid. p. 31

^{36/} Howard Gardner. The Unschooled Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1991) 12

^{37/} Ibid. 258

Notwithstanding the fact that increasing evidence from early childhood development research shows the importance of infant nutrition and stimulation in brain development, the first years of schooling are critical. For the majority of children in the world's poorest regions, a few years of primary schooling may be the most formal education they get. By far the best and most comprehensive review of basic education currently available appears as a chapter in the 1996 book by Beryl Levinger, Critical Transitions: Human Capacity Development. This is a carefully researched book which provides much in-depth material related to livelihoods. The section on basic education is not easily summarized because it is in itself already a summary skillfully woven from many other sources. While other sources on basic education have been listed in the bibliography of this paper, the Levinger work is clearly the most useful.

The focus of Levinger's chapter ("Basic Education: A Critical Participation Opportunity") is basic education's contribution to the (long-term) development process. The chapter answers a series of questions:

1. *What is the net value (expected benefits minus costs) to the individual and to the economy of different kinds and levels of education?*

In short, the answer to this question, based on a variety of research studies by Levinger, Psacharopoulos and others, is that "basic (primary) education yields higher *social* rates of return than any other level of education."^{38/}

2. *How does basic education influence labor force productivity?*

"A significant productivity differential exists between those with primary schooling and those with none at all. The difference is greater than the gap in productivity between primary-school graduates and those with higher levels of education (World Bank, 1994)" Four years of basic education significantly increases farm output. Basic education is thought to increase productivity in the *informal, non-farm sector*. but there have been few definitive studies on this linkage. Education has been found to lead to an increase in the duration of labor force participation among women.

3. *What relationships exist between basic education and standard measures of economic growth?*

Economists determine what portion of economic growth is attributable to education often involves study of the *residual* (that part of growth which cannot be directly attributed to capital and labor outputs. Illustrative findings include; (1) "primary education is the single largest contributing factor to economic growth in Asia's newly-industrialized economies (World Bank, 1994); (2) between 1850 and 1960," none of the world's most prosperous nations enjoyed significant expansion of their economy without having first achieved universal primary education."; (3) Primary education powerfully affected growth in 54 developing countries from 1945 to 1980; and (4) "threshold levels of basic education must be reached before a country experiences accelerating growth."

4. *What relationships exist between basic education and political or civic behavior?*

^{38/} Beryl Levinger. *Critical Transitions: Human Capacity Development Across the Lifespan*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, 1996) p 2 of Chapter 4.

"Various studies have concluded that educational attainment is the most significant factor in explaining political attitudes", and education has been linked with the general presence of political and civil liberties in society. However, it is also noted that while there may be interdependency between democratic forms of government and education, causality is difficult to establish.

5. *What are the social benefits associated with basic education including both intra- and intergenerational effects?*

"Many of the private and social returns to education are attributed to non-market benefits that are both intra- and intergenerational. These include improvements in life expectancy, family health and nutritional status, as well as decreased fertility rates for women.". The social benefits attached to education are "especially profound" when girls gain access to schooling." and a number of studies are outlined to confirm specific benefits.

6. *What are the development implications of inequitable access to education for girls, ethnic minorities or the rural poor? How does inequitable access to educational opportunity perpetuate "relative disadvantage"?*

"Because many of the effects of basic education are intergenerational, the inequities of one generation are visited upon the next." Maternal education benefits sons and daughters alike. Literacy is closely linked to strong school completion rates. "Rural Origin" is noted as a factor in student performance. Education may assist in the redistribution of income, the relationship between attainment and earnings is very complex. "Education alone is seen to be insufficient as a distributive measure."

From all of this research, several proposals for the reinvention of education are outlined. These include:

- "Make equity and quality linked issues and build consensus for strategies that address them in tandem.
- Achieve consensus on the elements that comprise "quality".
- Promote community-based schools.
- Systematically change the culture of the classroom. (through the creation of teacher-support networks, training for school supervisors, and outreach to pre-service institutions.
- Assess the extent to which health, hunger and nutrition constitute barriers to basic education and develop systematic plans for resolving these issues."

The massive amount of research backing these proposals is impressive but it is also tempered by the market-oriented statistics and calculations, many of which are counter to the outlook provided in sustainable livelihoods thinking.

B) Adult Education

Adult education offers a hospitable environment for sustainable livelihoods thinking. Learning in adult education rests on a set of assumptions (not a theory) known as andragogy first described by Malcolm Knowles. These assumptions are:

- "Adults both desire and enact a tendency toward self-directedness as they mature, though they may be dependent in certain situations;
- Adults' experiences are a rich resource for learning. Adults learn more effectively through experiential techniques of education such as discussion or problem-solving.
- Adults are aware of specific learning needs generated by real-life tasks or problems. Adult education programs, therefore, should be organized around "life application" categories and sequenced according to learners' readiness to learn.
- Adults are competency based learners in that they wish to apply newly acquired skills or knowledge to their immediate circumstances. Adults are, therefore, "performance-centered" in their orientation to learning."^{39/}

While the assumptions on self-directedness and the application of learning within competency development categories has been questioned, the assumption of the importance of adults' experiences providing a rich resource for learning, is generally accepted. Experiential learning techniques are highly *participatory* and therefore complement the sustainable livelihoods concept.

Participatory training techniques are employed world-wide with adults through a wide variety of nonformal education, life-long education, and community-based education activities. An excerpt from an interview with the activist, politician and educator, Mel King, in the American city of Boston reveals sustainable livelihoods values:

"For me it starts with an understanding that the fundamental reason for community education is to facilitate the building of a community. I believe that building community ought to be the rationale for all schooling. Community education has as its ultimate goal the transformation of our society."^{40/}

C. Educational Evaluation

The always sensitive field of educational evaluation has developed a remarkable breadth and depth over the past decade. It nevertheless is difficult to escape the testing mentality for education. For nonformal and adult education programs, needs assessments are now conducted through the techniques embodied in RRA (Rapid Rural Appraisal) and PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal). At a higher level of impact monitoring and evaluation, there has been a move away from trust of international comparisons of school effectiveness and a move towards more qualitative types of monitoring and evaluation which do not directly look at pupil achievement (Example: Heneveld's

^{39/} Stephen D. Brookfield. *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1986) 92

^{40/} Harvard Educational Review " On Transformation: From a Conversation with Mel King". 59 (1989) 505

Primary School Indicators). The latest perspectives on evaluation now discourage generic school effectiveness studies outside the context of a particular country. ^{41/}

Educational evaluators have actively worked, with heavy discussion, to expand their field with new ideas. For example, Michael Quinn Patton's "developmental evaluation"^{42/} involves ongoing work with a program for continuous improvement. Such evaluation works well with programs which do not use clear, up-front and measurable goals because clarity, specificity and measurability are limiting. Such a technique would complement nonformal and adult education programs. Participatory techniques of gathering evaluative information in small groups (focus groups, discussion, critical incident techniques) are also increasingly used.

Mary Catherine Bateson provides a fitting conclusion to this short review of the literature on education and sustainable livelihoods:

"it is a mistake to try to reform the educational system without
revising our sense of ourselves as learning beings,
following a path from birth to death that is longer and more
unpredictable than ever before. Only when that is done
will we be in a position to reconstruct educational systems where
teachers model learning rather than authority,
so that schooling will fit in and perform its limited task
within the larger framework of learning
before and after and alongside."^{43/}

7. THE RIGHT QUESTIONS? IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Implications for basic education systems must include reassessment of not only the needs, but also the strengths of those currently underserved and unserved by such systems. Poverty eradication must become an explicit and priority concern for those involved in design and implementation of basic education programmes. That it has **not** been in the past, even in the world's poorest regions, is testimony to the systemic distortions which can perpetuate poverty by maintaining exclusionary attitudes and values.

Poverty in the past has been treated as too economics-specific a problem for educational action except in an indirect way, and subsumed under the more general category of 'educational disadvantage'. The belief dies hard that education cannot have anything directly to do with a hard core, economic problem like poverty, and that it can, at best, only play a secondary or marginal role.... [requiring] the conscious pursuit of empowerment of the poor as an overt objective of all basic education programmes^{44/}

^{41/} Amy Rubin Riddell "Assessing Designs for School Effectiveness Research and School Improvement in Developing Countries" *Comparative Education Review* 41 (May 1997) 203

^{42/} Michael Quinn Patton "A World Larger Than Formative and Summative". *Evaluation Practice* 2 (Spring-Summer 1996) 134

^{43/} Mary Catherine Bateson *Peripheral Visions* 212

^{44/} Basic Education for Empowerment of the Poor. APPEAL. UNESCO/PROAP and UNDP.

In addition, the relationship between heightened levels of schooling, and aspirations for better jobs must be re-examined. Educating for 'jobs' (as an explicit goal for parents justifying educational investments in their children) while often controversial in the past, is today increasingly challenged by the need to build human capacity not only for employability, but for broader lifelong learning as well as for adaptive and 'coping' livelihood strategies in a fast-moving and complicated world.

The case for more integrated human resources development strategies, and several country examples of the application of the approach, have been put forward in the 1995 Report of the Secretary-General on Human Resources Development. HRD supply systems in the poorest countries, particularly formal education at the basic levels, are still designed primarily to prepare people for further education and for modern sector 'jobs' in contradiction to clear empirical evidence which shows that small fractions of primary school intake go on to secondary, and much smaller fractions to higher education and/or employment in the formal sector. Few opportunities now exist for adults, especially those with low formal skills, to recycle through education institutions, even though the need may be great. More effective linkage between education and sustainable livelihoods across a lifetime therefore becomes a central issue in social development and poverty eradication strategies.

Four questions are raised by UNDP and its development partners as particularly critical for basic education programmes in becoming more receptive to the livelihood system needs of poorer communities. The first is: how can the current policy shift towards decentralization of educational systems management heighten relevance of educational programmes to the feasibility and diversity of livelihoods in their own unique settings? As Carl Taylor and his colleagues documented in Zimbabwe^{45/}, a home science teacher was dismissed when she set up a traditional kitchen outside the classroom. She was tired of teaching girls who had often walked a long way to class how to make sponge cakes and macaroni cheese. The total pointlessness of these recipes for the rural homes and culture shocked her. So she broke away from the formal education system, and began to develop, through extensive participatory efforts, a whole new system of empowerment through access to information which became internationally known as the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP). Such entrepreneurial educational efforts are increasingly needed at grass roots levels if formal education systems of the future continue only to empower relatively few people in poor communities. Accordingly, in India, 'lokshala' (local community) efforts are being supported in meeting the basic learning needs of poor children and adults. UNESCO (PROAP) and UNDP have suggested that integrating other basic social services with education at the community level can contribute to improved health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. Awareness and knowledge bases of households can be substantively increased, potentially unifying parents, children and teachers around common problem-solving goals for community improvement.

A second question is: how can basic education enhance equitable, well-tailored access to information on peoples' rights, to participate in policy dialogue, to legal recourse, to protection of assets and entitlements, and to basic social services? The Human Rights education effort has provided some experience base on which to initiate these kinds of approaches, as well as pointing up some of the difficulties.

Bangkok, Thailand. November 1977.

45/ Partnerships for Social Development: a Casebook. The Independent Task Force on Community Action for Social Development. Future Generations. Franklin, West Virginia 1995.

A third question is: how can basic education inform poor people more thoughtfully on the concept of vulnerability and risk management in relation to livelihood systems? There has been little consideration of the tenets of insurance as applied to livelihood strategies, except in advanced industrial economies. Exposure to experience in spreading liabilities, anticipation of shocks/stresses to livelihood, and to ways of explicit planning for eventualities on the basis of collective cultural experience is a potentially new field for educational agencies in poorer areas. One aspect of this is to provide substantive information on good practices regarding health, gender equity, family planning, farming and basic trade practices. Another is to offer information on the concept of risk and risk management as a matter of family livelihood improvement and sustainability.

Finally, how can the promise of new information technologies open new doors in bringing information to the most remote communities? There is new evidence from North America that the number of people who regularly access the Internet through points other than home, office or school has nearly tripled in the last year. This growing phenomenon of "alternative points of access" such as libraries, museums and civic organizations, illustrates the heightened need for access to this medium, and suggests a burgeoning democratization of the INTERNET from personal to community life.

The rapid spread of INTERNET cafes and parabolic antennas in peri-urban, even rural areas in Morocco is one indication of the speed at which these technologies are permeating developing countries. A major brake on this process is insufficient rural electrification, solutions to which may of course pose further threats to fragile environments.

UNDP through its Sustainable Development Networking programme has provided INTERNET access for several developing nations, and through its LISTSERVS in connection with the Social Summit, Beijing and Toronto Conferences has opened up UN deliberative mechanisms to the nascent democratization and new ideas implied by this fresh and more participatory access. UNDP is also exploring with UNESCO and NGOs such as the International Council for Adult Education alternative means for bringing educational materials to remote areas through landbased or satellite communications, and for linking island nations and communities through INTERNET for example in the Caribbean region. These newly available methods can bring information out to people where they live. If they do not yet reach directly into the poorest areas, they offer new opportunities for 'railhead' strategies, where information can be packaged electronically via INTERNET or email to information 'railheads', for various forms of repackaging by dissemination strategies appropriate to that particular location/community (e.g. copying, newsletters, verbal summaries etc.). Articulation with educational systems becomes of course an essential part of any such strategy.