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Contextualized Education in Global Schools: Conceptualizing School Systems in a Global World

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Abstract

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Education has been prioritized by global agencies as a universal right and current trends in the United Nations global benchmarks and development agencies call for education for all and a set of global values to guide educational policy and practice. This paper aims to problematize the current understanding of schooling and educational systems in a globalized world while demonstrating the need to move away from a global curriculum based on homogenized values and towards a contextualized education system. By looking at the evolution of Western Education, the use of education by colonial powers, and an in depth case study of the evolution of the Cuban schooling system this paper will explore the danger in subscribing to a one size fits all schooling system.

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Introduction

The role of education is, and always has been politically charged (Illich, 1971; Freire, 1970). While the discourse of the global curriculum seems progressive at first glance, the linked agendas to social, economic, and environmental change make it as politically charged and capitalist based as any previous educational shift (Bowles, 2011). *Education for All,* a movement to promote equal access to education worldwide*,* in many ways replicates the colonial agenda, which is captured in the logic of neocolonialism and in post-colonial theory. The current education system instills institutionalized capitalistic values of economic worth that are unrealistic to systemic power structures and unhelpful in local contexts. Many of the economically driven education systems follow a linear model that assumes more education means more job opportunity without accounting for other intersectional factors that affect output. These linear schooling systems simultaneously discredit local knowledge systems and displace people within societies when the promise of economic gain is not met. It is essential in the era of Education for All that schools and education systems, globally, are allowed to develop contextualized curriculums that fit the needs of the time and place and people that they are serving. The dream of *global curriculum*— a set of universalizing values that guide education policy and practice—defines the

current era of education. The push for a global curriculum however has homogenized the way that school and education are defined and created a pattern of global benchmarks, aid distribution practices, and global policies surrounding education that fail to prioritize context driven education systems. This paper will explore the danger in subscribing to a one size fits all schooling system by looking at the evolution of education in the Western world, the use of education by colonial powers, a case study of Cuban education and begin to conceptualize what truly alternative ideas of education, schooling and development might look like.

Modern education, which is often conflated with Western education, has been predominantly defined by schooling— a physical space and compulsory time spent learning a set canon of knowledge, good citizenry, and ultimately training to be an economically productive member of society. So called alternative pedagogies of education focus efforts on decreased classroom size, altering teacher-student relations, and child centered learning but are still bound within the framework of a capitalist society. The discipline of education offers few examples of modern education from non-capitalist worldviews. In this paper I will present an argument for how the success of global education will be dependent on creating a new educational model that does not favor private interest or discredit non-Western knowledge, but allows countries to build context specific programming into the global curriculum agenda. First I will examine the historical background of 'global education' starting with education being declared a basic human right in

1948 to the present United Nations goals for global education. Second I will explore the current trends in Education for both the global north and global south to give context to the different 'alternative' teaching methodologies that have arisen, and how they have moved us to the new idea of a global curriculum. Finally I will explore Cuba as a case study of a non-capitalist alternative education system and use its successes and failures as one illustration of the importance of contextualized schooling. By examining the historical role of education, current trends in alternative methodologies, and practices of outlier nations, this paper will explore ways in which the purpose of education can truly be redefined.

The Evolution of Education For All

"Everyone has the right to education", so states Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights set out by the United Nations in the 1948 Paris Conference. Article 26 also asserts that elementary education should be free, higher education should be accessible, that education is for development of the whole person, that parents have the right to choose, and that it will "promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace." (United Nations, 1948). These are the tenets that have shaped the evolution of education as multiple UN conferences have attempted to make this human right a reality in all corners of the globe, highlighting areas of interest and directing funding to specific educational objectives.

In 1990 Jomtien hosted the UN conference that started the Education For All movement. Participants at this conference created a ten year plan that focused on universalizing primary [1] education and reducing illiteracy. The next ten years of educational development focused heavily on primary education, promoting equity, and enhancing efficiency (Jomtien, 1990). As a result the next ten years saw an 82% increase in primary school enrollment worldwide, but even with this tangible improvement it was clear that many of the goals of inclusivity and equitable access were not being reached (Dakar, 2000). The heavy emphasis on primary education had also inadvertently removed attention to youth and adult education. In April of 2000 nations reconvened in Dakar to create a new action plan for the next decade of Education for All. At this conference they identified six goals (See image 1) that better incorporated youth and adult literacy development, gender disparities, and equitable access and overall quality of education. These six goals then helped to shape the simultaneously developing United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

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[1] IMAGE http://images.slideplayer.com/16/4892581/slides/slide_2.jpg EFA Global Monitoring Report

The Millennium Summit convened in at UN Headquarters in New York September of 2000. This summit constituted the largest gathering of world leaders in history with approximately 150 high ranking officials representing 40 countries in attendance (United Nations, n.d). At the summit the UN General Assembly approved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with eight quantifiable targets to reduce extreme poverty including goals for health, education, environmental sustainability, and global partnerships (United Nations, n.d). The MDGs included the principles of Education for All in the incorporation of Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education. The next fifteen years saw an increase in enrollment, though notably not of quality, from 82% to 91%, but the disparity of access between rich and poor households remained pronounced and the amount of children out of school in conflict areas increased from 30 to 36 percent (United Nations, n.d).

Entering the next decade of development the United Nations released the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This set of seventeen global goals, with 169 indicators built off the principles of the MDGs, and laid out in a fifteen year plan to create sustainable development (United Nations, 2016). Sustainable Development in this new era of reform is viewed as finding an equilibrium between social, economic, and environmental justice. While these three pillars of sustainable development are arguably at odds with one another, the role of education as a key factor in achieving and sustaining all three is evident in most all

of the goals and targets. The principles of Education for All remain incorporated, though they are more widely expanded then in any previous development plan. SDG Four works to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The goal encompasses targets to include "free quality primary and secondary education", "increase the supply of qualified teachers", "eliminate gender disparities", and ensure equal access to "quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education" (United Nations, 2016).

The development and evolution of these global goals for education have given rise to the *global curriculum*, which aims to "promote a worldwide curriculum, unifying criteria, identification, and respect of regional uniqueness, and responses to a nations' distinctiveness" (Coolican, 2012). Despite nods to regional uniqueness, a global curriculum creates and one size fits all schooling system designed to create social ideology shifts that encourage global citizenry and capitalist agendas (Standish, 2012). A 'global curriculum' that is based off of the political and social views of a purely capitalist society raises the critical question of who decides what is of value, and why.

The Ideals of Education and the Institution of School

UNESCO defines education as a "means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of their societies" (UNESCO 2017). In 2000 as the MDGs were manifested, UNICEF worked to establish what factors created a quality education within a political, cultural, and economic context

asserting that a quality education includes healthy learners and learning environment, relevant content, child-centered teaching, and outcomes in knowledge skills and attitudes linked with national goals (Colby, 2000). The means to an education through schooling is accepted in modern society as a legitimate and essential institution that raises national status and directly contributes to "national economic growth and improvement"; a schooled society now being synonymous with an educated and civilized society (Carnoy, 1974, 2). The functions and ideals of what purpose a school serves however expand far beyond the definition of economically oriented school based education.

As societal institutions schools serve the purpose of transferring "the social and economic structure from generation to generation through pupil selection, defining culture and rules and teaching certain cognitive skills" (Carnoy, 1974, 13). As schools teach moral norms and social values they also inherently "channel children into various social roles", helping to maintain social order and promote good citizenry while ideally allowing for equal access to social mobility and personal development (Carnoy, 1974, 8). Within a perfectly operating capitalist society this model would "provide the most perfect form of individual and collective development" and bring people "into a condition of enlightenment and civilization" (Carnoy, 1974, 4-5).

These Western ideals of enlightenment and civilization through education have made schooling a powerful political tool over the course of history. Examples

abound from the 'Indian Self Determination and Educational Reform Act' of 1975 to the English Education Act of 1835 in India. All of these used school and the reeducation of colonized youth to "to train the colonized for roles that suited the colonizer", promote the language of the colonizer, denigrate previous social morals, values, and structures and establish new economic and political structures (Carnoy, 1974, 3). Even before schooling became mandatory the implementation of these institutions affected educated and uneducated alike by creating a new social structure that put value on being educated and stigmatized the uneducated as backwards.

An education is intangible- it is an ideal based around personal growth and empowerment. While it may in some instances involve hard skills and tangible outcomes it is an immeasurable and ever evolving life long process of knowledge acquisition assessment and growth (Smith, 2015). Schooling in contrast is an institution- it can be influenced, corrupted, altered, assessed, and changed and has clear political and economic goals. The acceptance of the institution of schooling as the best way to gain an education across the globe has fundamentally altered, and in many ways homogenized, the global social and economic structure into a capitalist hierarchy (Carnoy 1974). Despite the inclusive ideals of Education for All and the assertion that capitalism equalizes opportunities, economic and social disparities abound between and within the global north and the global south.

Current Trends: What is Education Today

The Global North

      In the global North there are two distinct trends arising in education. The first began in the 1960's with freedom schools and marks the beginning of the 'alternative schooling' era that has regained momentum today (Raywid, 1981). These early calls for alternative education grew out of a belief that schools were "cold, dehumanizing, and irrelevant institutions largely indifferent to the humanity and personhood of those within them" and that a unified curriculum was inappropriate for all learners (Kim, 2008). These schools were widely supported by federal legislators and funded by leading education foundations leading to the emergence of well-known programs such as Head Start (Kim, 2008). These schools focused on problem solving, individualistic learning objectives, and leadership (Kim, 2008; Raywid 1981). By the early 1970's much of the research and practice was focused on displacing the classroom and finding new and unusual spaces and ways for students to learn (Raywid, 1981). Ultimately what arose from these experiments was the finding that there is no single variable that effects educational success and while alternative schools continued to form, in many ways they followed the structure of pre-existing schooling systems, failing to break free of the spatial and relational bounds of 'school' (Raywid, 1981).

      In the mid-1990s public schooling systems again saw a rise in alternative education largely in the form of public and private voucher programs, charter schools, and magnet programs as a reaction to increasing inequity within schools

as well as increased business interest in schooling outcomes (Kim, 2001). By the year 2000 "39% of all school districts [in America] offered alternative schools or programs, and this number is rising every year." (Kim 2001). The early 2000s also marked a distinct change in the language and operations of schools as business practices began to be applied to outcome measurements in education. With the implementation of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, business systems became "elevated above a background in education and teaching as the requisite for leading a school" (Stromquist, 2002, 44). Performance, privatization, competition, and accountability began to become common phrases in curriculum development and new policies led to the "incorporation of testing as a regular classroom practice." (Stromquist, 2002, 43).

While globally literacy rates and education levels continue to rise class distribution remains unaltered and as a result increased average levels of schooling simply maintain the status quo (Carnoy, 1974). This phenomenon is one being experienced across the globe and is what many alternative schools are still attempting to rectify. Highly efficient privatized schools have yet to account for disparities in access, attrition, and success upon completion.

The Global South

Global rates of mass schooling have been increasing steadily over the last 100 year (Dorius, 2013). As more correlations are drawn between education and both social and economic wellbeing the global call for mass schooling has been given more and more precedence on the world stage. The 2015 Sustainable

Development Goals expanded emphasis on education exemplifies this increasing push for literacy and education in the global south. The policies adopted by the global south are largely influenced by the trends of the global north and reflect the increasing interest of business in education.

'Knowledge' has begun to be commodified by means of patents, copyrights, and privatization. Examples of private companies replacing public government run schooling systems are occurring across the global south—with teaching methodologies and technology no longer being a public good. Perhaps the best example of this are the Bridge International Academies that have popped up all over Kenya and Uganda as a low cost alternative to public schools, or in areas where public schools are not yet reaching. Bridge uses a 'school in a box' approach that standardizes space and curriculum across its schools by providing "individuals from each community with technology, scripted instruction, rigorous training, and data-driven oversight." (Bridge International Academies). Bridge is one example of a for-profit company attempting to provide "knowledge for all" and meet the demands for a future workforce. While Bridge has undoubtedly been able to reach previously unreachable populations of students their methodology has been highly critiqued by those in opposition to foreign investment in schools and calling for a "greater focus on the right to free, quality public education" (Migiro, 2016).

While global strides in literacy, access, and attrition are indisputable the larger issue of inter and intra country equality have still not been addressed. Whether public or private, education has been touted as a means to a higher standard of living. Dorius states that, "As the world continues to converge toward universal literacy and enrollment…it is likely that new forms of education inequality will replace older inequalities in both access to education and quantity of education."(Dorius, 2013). Variations in educational outcomes—earnings, health, mobility—continue to display inequalities within and between countries and make it dangerous to rely in education as the sole solution to reaching sustainable development. Many of the current schooling systems in the global south are remnants of the colonial era and new systems of schooling are run by private foreign investment, begging the question of what an unimpeded education system would look like in these countries if left to develop without interference.

The Global Curriculum

Alternative and public schools worldwide are attempting to remedy the issues that have arisen in the current school system while incorporating the tenets of capitalism and the growing market demands of globalization by creating a global curriculum. The global curriculum not being a literal set of teaching guidelines but rather a universalized standard and set of ideas and values surrounding what schooling and education is and should be globally. Globalization is a growing trend in world markets, cultures, governments and economies. As capitalism and

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technology continue to grow the power of nation states have begun to wane and the idea of global citizenship has begun to form as the world cultures interact and integrate. In 1997 Oxfam released A Curriculum for Global Citizenship document defining a global citizen as a person whom

> "*Is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen; respects and values diversity; has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally; is outraged by social injustices; participates in and contributes to the community of a range of levels from the local to the global; is willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place; takes responsibility for their actions".*

This idea of a global citizenry has been adopted into the ideals of global curriculum and has guided the principles of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In many ways this definition meets the demands of passing along a new moral and social global order, and allowing for personal inquiry and growth in schools. However many critics feel that in pursuing global ethics a whole generation will be lacking in a culturally contextual way of knowing (Standish, 2012). There is growing concern that "global ethics…are antieducational because they replace academic knowledge with personal reflection as the goal of learning" (Standish, 2012, 153). The idea of creating a global moral code to be promoted in schools, in much the same vein as we have created the Global Rights, at face value seems like an easy way to prepare the next generation with the tools and language they will need in a quickly evolving highly integrated world. However the global curriculum in reality is in danger of replicating the same homogenized

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learning styles of the previous system that fails to account for cultural, historical or individual contexts in which students are being schooled. As we have seen in the advent of alternative schools and school reforms worldwide global curriculum development is on the path to becoming simply another means schooling in the exact same way.
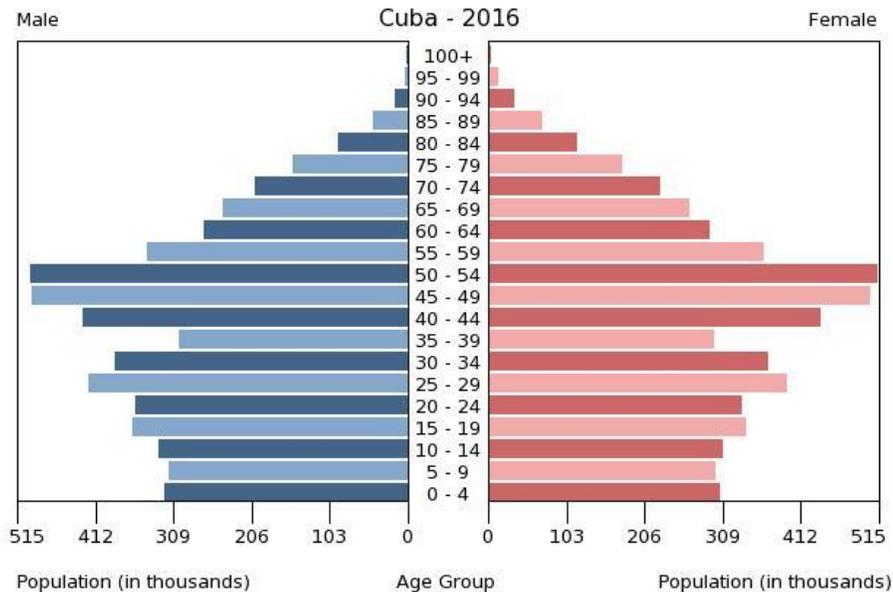
Case Study: Cuba

With this background of the evolution of Education for All and the global trends in schooling case study of an outlier country. In the modern era it is difficult to identify a well-established schooling system that remains outside the bounds of the capitalist agenda and offers a truly alternative schooling system. Post WWII the rapid spread of democracy coupled with advances in technology and communication have meant that capitalist ideology has had large influences in most every countries education system. Meaning in one form or another schooling systems have followed a Western model and are become increasingly influenced by corporate powers. There are very few modern countries that can be studied for their politically 'alternative' approaches to education, Cuba being one of them. This paper will therefore analyze Cuba's past and present education system as it offers a unique example on the global stage of a highly successful education system that has undergone multiple reforms and serves a non-capitalist country.

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean Sea located just miles from the southernmost point of the United States. Originally home to Amerindian tribes it

was colonized by the Spanish from 1492-1898 when it fell under US military rule. Cuba finally gained independence in 1902. After several failed leaders Fidel Castro, backed by the Soviet Union, led a communist revolution and gained power in 1959. Cuba remained communist and was supported by the Soviet Union until they withdrew causing a severe economic downturn in 1990. Despite the lack of funding from the Soviet Union, and the United States embargo Cuba continued to operate as a communist country and as such it public sector developed without capitalist intervention.

Despite its low economic ranking Cuba boasts a 99.8% literacy rate and is ranked number two in the world for education expenditures spending 12.8% of annual GDP on education (CIA, 2015, 2010). There are other anomalies for a seemingly 'developing' country as well. Cuba has high employment, low infant

mortality, high life expectancy and an age structure (as seen in image 2) that

mimics developing nations (CIA, 2017).

An in depth analysis of Cuba's educational reform from the early 1800's to

the present provides a unique case study that provides insight into the failures and

success of imposed schooling and highlights the importance of localized context

based curriculum development. The development of education and school

systems in Cuba present a strong case for moving away from a global curriculum

and instead making contextual schools a global priority.

The History

Since the early 1900's Cuba's education system has been ruled by three

distinct powers. The first formal educational institutions were established under

Spanish colonial rule, this was taken over by American rule after the Spanish-

American war, and finally Cubans controlled their own system post-revolution.

Each of these systems built off of former models but were distinct to the cultural beliefs, institutions, and models of their place of origin. Under Spanish rule the educational system was surprisingly liberal for its time but the "social and economic conditions of colonialism precluded any significant educational impact on the island" (Epstein, 2015). However the legacy of Spanish rule would continue to permeate educational reform adoption and perception so it is crucial to note the key aspects of this regime. Firstly, in 1880 a law was passed providing "free instruction for all children in elementary grades whose parents were unable to pay tuition fees". Even with compulsory free schooling there was a large lack of access for rural populations and the funding was only provided for primary grades, meaning that the "education did not go far enough to eliminate social inequities"(Epstein, 2015) Spanish schools also placed a strong emphasis on Christian doctrine. The schools, which were segregated by sex, all had the church "represented by at least one priest in the membership of every school council from the lowest to the highest administrative level" (Epstein, 2015). Education in Cuba under Spanish rule was a host of "enacted laws and avowed democratization" but the social and economic effects of the colonial state kept much of the more liberal laws and agendas from being enacted in their entirety (Epstein, 2015).

American rule in contrast represented high impact gains in educational access and attendance, but for all its immediate success quickly lost steam and faltered into corruption. After the Spanish American war, in which "over a tenth of

the population perished", the United States gained control of Cuba and placed General Leonard Wood in charge of educational reform (Epstein, 2015) Wood's view on education was twofold. First that education was a way to "disabuse the islanders of their Spanish ways and prepare them for assuming the burdens of enlightened citizenship" (Epstein, 2015). Secondly that "once educated [Cubans] would recognize the superiority of American over Spanish values and patterns of behavior and would perform as sober and responsible people" (Epstein, 2015). With this colonial mindset General Wood implemented a public school system that followed a system based off a model in Ohio and in the first year school enrollment quintupled (Epstein, 2015). These early gains however quickly became stagnant and in some cases even declined. Woods reforms were backed by Cuban theorists like Jose Marti, and the newly elected President Estrada Palma but the main issue that would come to unravel the good work it had accomplished was in failing to recognize the historical context of the populations' exposure to education. Instead schools emulated a system working in Ohio and presupposed the model could be easily transplanted. This caused a multitude of fissures in the system as "every practice the Americans had initiated to make Cuban education more democratic and responsive to the needs of an industrial, materialistic, competitive society was reshaped to conform to the old Spanish mold" (Epstein, 2015). Lincoln de Zayas, the secretary of public instruction released a report that sums up the great issue of the American modeled educational reform,

" for some reason or other, the system does not appear to work as well in the transplanted region as in the State from which it originally came, and making light of all the premonitory symptoms which announce an impending crisis, they point to the fine results obtained elsewhere with that same system,
 and continue to cry 'Eureka'…"(Zayas, 1907)

While these sentiments may be from 1907 they could just as easily have been stated today as the push for a global curriculum continues to emphasize Western approaches without making allowances to meet nations and students within their own cultural context. Multiple factors—rampant nepotism, urban rural divisions, integrated sex classrooms, over emphasis on early childhood education—made what seemed like a 'no-fail system' fall far short of its goals. The basic assumption that there was one correct way to school a population was undermined.

The Cuban revolution once again radically changed the face of education in Cuban society. If the face of American reform was General Wood, the face of post-revolutionary Cuban reform was Armando Hart who organized schools under a new non capitalist formal five point plan:

"(1) Quantitative and qualitative development of educational services;
(2) decentralization of administrative and technical functions;
(3) establishment of a modern system of educational planning to synchronize all plans and services;
(4) technical improvement of all branches of education; and
(5) general educational reform."
(Roucek, 2015)

In a decade, issues of access, attendance and literacy had been all but eradicated from the new Cuban Education system. A large aspect of Hart's restructuring

focused on teacher training. New Integral Training colleges required teachers to be trained "in an integrated program, including general culture, special projects, and methodological principles" (Roucek, 2015). The revolution ended in 1959 and by 1961 "Cuba declared itself free of illiteracy" and began the "*seguimiento* stage, the post literacy education" (Brady, 2015). While the new regime largely ignored those over 25 in its initial educational revolution, the second wave focused on continued learning and implemented alternative classroom programs to ensure education was being distributed to all.

On the global stage the success of the Cuban Education system was largely dismissed as a model of success because of the Marxist/Leninist school programming. The concept of 'revolution' and the Marxist/Leninist framework is an integral part of the Cuban school system. It must also be noted that this has been largely successful because, "Castro, in fact, strives to be neutral between the U.S.S.R. and China, and claims that each country must work out its own Marxist-Leninist system to suit local conditions". The programs implemented fiscally, politically and socially in educational reform of post-revolutionary Cuba all were implemented with a clear understanding and integration of the historical institutions and lingering social norms and as a result created a wildly successful education program.

Analysis

      Despite initial success of foreign programs the failure to account for the historical and cultural context of the students ultimately made the program a failure. There are a multitude of factors that made the Cuban Educational system so successful—investment and status for teachers, the "continuity in its education strategies, sustained high levels of investments in education, and a comprehensive and carefully structured system" that was localized were key to its continued success (Gasperini, 2000). Another key take away from the Cuba case study is that "high quality education is not simply a function of national income but of how that income is mobilized", which contradicts many of developments underlying assumptions and overemphasis on economic growth indicators (Gasperini, 2000). The changes that post-revolutionary Cuba undertook so drastically, changed the face of education in their society by emphasizing quality, low cost, education and placing social and political importance on life-long learning.

      The "preparation of a productive working class is a primary objective of the education system" in Cuba, and it is perceived as a key function of schools in the United States as well (Gasperini, 2000). It is easy to presuppose that because there is little room for social mobility in Cuban society there is little motivation for education. In the United States education is viewed as a means to an end, and the faltering job market and high dropout rates are indicative of a whole generation of

students who feel that schools are no longer meeting their needs or setting them up for 'success'. In contrast "from the time they are very young Cuban children not only know that there will be a place for them to contribute when they are adults", but they "live in a culture where everyone is constantly engaged in educational activity", and "grow up in a community of highly educated people." And understand multiple ways of succeeding (Brady, 1990). A great success of the Cuban style of schooling is this recognition of diversity and of multiple ways of judging success and contribution to society. This is not to overly romanticize the Cuban education system, the large influx of refugees from Cuba in the early and mid-sixties shows that this lack of social mobility was not happily adopted by all, but it does show an alternative way for schools to better meet the needs of their citizens and place higher importance on education for self-evolution. It also demonstrates that large scale successful educational reform is not reliant on big money but is a social movement.

When we take all of this history and apply it to an analysis of a 'global curriculum' it is essential to note how Cuba made allowances for the historical context of Cuban culture. In Judy Brady's article, '*Why do Cuban Children Learn?*' she shares an anecdote from her first visit to Cuba in 1973. When criticizing the lack of sex and health education in schools she is told by a local reporter that Cuba is not ready for that yet because it comes from a long line of Catholic institutional beliefs, but when people are ready it will be implemented. When she

returns in 1987 a National Institute for Sex Education had been created, and sex education is being promoted in the schools (Brady, 2000). It is impossible yet to predict how crucial Cuba's isolation was to achieving this level of educational excellence or how the education system will alter in light of new relations with the West. Regardless there is a lesson to be learned here in our larger discussion of a global curriculum and Education for All.

Global Education: What Education can be moving Forward

What becomes evident when looking through different histories, trends, and examples of schooling systems across the globe is that the current trajectory, while perhaps leading to an overall more literate global population and temporary gains in education, will only serve to further economic and social global and intracountry inequities.

As such moving forward with the Sustainable Development Goals push for education and the implementation of the global curriculum there are several essential ideals that need to be examined

1) Are 'schools' as a physical space and societal institution still relevant?

2) What purpose does formal education intend to serve- employability, life skills, citizenship, production of knowledge- and is it currently serving all of those needs?

3) How can local contexts be incorporated into global knowledge production?

4) How might experience and non-formal education be validated as knowledge and given equal status as a qualification?

5) What about the current system of education is reproducing structural inequalities?

None of these are easy questions to approach or have a single answer. The barriers between nations are quickly dissolving and the imposition of a global curriculum that creates an educational standard for all may be inevitable. If this is the case it is more important than ever to look at institutional outliers like Cuba and assess and compare their practices against the mainstream Western agenda to ensure that we are not simply repeating past mistakes but remaining innovative and open. The failure of the American system in Cuba exemplifies how there is no one correct way for schools to be run or programmed and that while we may have a global standard there may not be one global action that will bring all nations to that goal. What we want the role of education to be and how we 'advertise' it needs to be reassessed. New voices, that recognize and understand place specific cultures and practices, need to be added into the global discussion. Cuba may be simply an outlier in the grand scheme of education but it presents strong evidence that local programming is more effective than global reforms.

Globalization itself offers a unique opportunity to utilize new technologies to create new networks of knowledge. In Deschooling Society, Ivan Illich proposed a society without schools in which learning is a lifelong pursuit that is nurtured by the

society but ultimately pursued individually. These networks of knowledge focus on self-evolution, shared experiences, and education as way of knowing and move away from the institution of school as essential to learning. His dreams of knowledge networks are naturally evolving as technology and telecommunications make access to information more widely available. The pushback to these free and open networks of knowledge is seen in the commodifying of how we learn and the continued reliance on degrees as indicators of expertise. A new form of global education can never be achieved when private interest and economic gain are the main drivers, creators, and purveyors of knowledge. Insistence on maintaining the institution of school and the trends toward commodifying knowledge merely reproduce hierarchical knowledge structures and create unintentional divides. The success of global education will be dependent on creating a new educational model that does not favor private interest or discredit non-Western knowledge but distinguishes between education and school and allows individuals to consider their education outside the scope of their employability.

Conclusion

The creation of a global curriculum is a small part of a larger movement that began in the late 1940's and has continued to evolve with each new phase of Western Development. Over time there have been great increases in access and literacy but the next step of development must move beyond the simple institution of school and reform to meet the needs of our quickly changing global markets.

By reviewing the history of the Education for All movement and global educational initiatives alongside the trends of schools in the global North and global South one can begin to see the repetitive nature and lack of true development in the education sector. This historical insight then allows us to delve deeper into a case study like Cuba where we can begin to see what other education models might look like. The Cuba case study shows how essential contextualized education is to developing an effective, sustainable educational model. The success of Cuba's school system was not a result of capitalist modeled markets or alternative methodologies but of ascribing education a value outside of employability and creating curriculums that met the needs of the people given their historical and cultural context.

The next phase of educational development needs to move beyond a prescriptive global curriculum. Technology has opened opportunities for new ways of accessing knowledge that do not need to prescribe to the traditional schooling model. The information is there but it will require a shift in thought and power to separate the capitalist agenda from the education model and allow the purpose of education to be redefined and become truly accessible for all.

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