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HULTIN, MATS - ARTICLES and speeches (1970-1975)

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HULTIN

(prepared by MR. PRYOR)

DRAFT for Mr. Hultin
Paper for the Council of Europe's
Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

October 19, 1970
DJP:ij



The World Bank Group
and Educational Development

*Never stenciled
Mr Hultin's office
says*

The World Bank and its affiliate, the International Development Association (IDA), are expanding their activity in education at a very rapid pace. During the five-year period ending June 1973, our target is to triple the level of lending that prevailed in this field during the previous five years, and we are well on our way to that goal.

The absolute amount of Bank and IDA finance, however, will never represent even a significant fraction of the sums being invested in education by the less developed countries, nor will they compare in volume to the funds we provide for infrastructure, agriculture and industry. Why, then, are we involved at all in educational financing? Why not confine ourselves to the so-called "economic" aspects of development, as the World Bank did during its first 15 years or so?

It is not because of any shift in purpose. Our function is still limited to giving help in "raising productivity, the standard of living and conditions of labor," to quote the Bank's Articles of Agreement. Along with many others, however, we have learned that this is a much more complicated process than once appeared to be the case, and that education lies at the heart of it. To put it as simply as possible, to the extent that enough people with the right skills are available at the right time, the development process can be relatively smooth and rapid, given suitable

policies and sufficient finance on appropriate terms; to the extent that they are not, the course of development will be slow and rough. The determining factor is education.

The inseparable relationship between education and development is now generally recognized by professionals -- both economists and educators. By 1961 it had become clear that the lack of qualified manpower in developing countries was a serious obstacle to the successful implementation of World Bank projects. Since about that time, economists have taken a far less limited view than before of educational investment as a key determinant of progress in development. New research, as well as common sense and practical experience, has shown that economic growth in even the narrow sense depends at least as much on educational output as on financial and investment policies in sectors traditionally considered economically productive.

Equally important, educators have come to the view that the broad goals of education for its own sake, can be achieved only as the educational system succeeds in performing its developmental role. Otherwise, the resources essential to equal educational opportunity will simply not be available. This convergence of views made possible the World Bank's cooperative agreement with Unesco, which was concluded six years ago, and through which Unesco has made a major contribution to the identification, preparation and supervision of educational projects financed by the Bank and IDA.

During the first phase of the Bank Group's involvement in education, however, its policy has remained fairly restrictive. The basic guidelines

which have shaped the Group's activities in education over the past eight years were set out by the President of the Bank and IDA in October 1963:

"The Bank and IDA," he said, "should be prepared to consider financing a part of the capital requirements of priority education projects designed to produce, or to serve as a necessary step in producing, trained manpower of the kinds and in the numbers needed to forward economic development in the member country concerned.

"In applying this criterion," he added, "the Bank and IDA should concentrate their attention, at least at the present stage, on projects in the fields of (a) vocational and technical education and training at various levels, and (b) general secondary education. Other kinds of education projects would be considered only in exceptional cases."

The limitation to vocational, technical and general secondary education "at the present stage" took into account the Bank's own inexperience in this field and the indicated priorities for educational investment in most developing countries at that time.

The President indicated that the Bank would concentrate on high priority projects within the country's educational development plan which would fill the most crucial gaps in the system. It would not normally expect to finance any part of the current costs of an educational system but it might well consider as an integral part of the project the costs of expatriate staff employed for a limited period to launch a new program and include them within the scope of a loan or credit.

It was further stated that the financing of projects in the education sector calls, to a considerable extent, for the expenditure of local

currency rather than of foreign exchange and that if the Bank was to be an effective agent in that sector it should follow a liberal policy with respect to financing of local currency expenditures and periods of grace and amortization for education projects within the framework of its country economic analysis.

During the past eight years, however, the educational situation of developing countries has changed substantially. Furthermore, both the Bank and other agencies have gained better insight into how best to respond to the educational needs and critical problems of member countries. In the light of these developments, we have undertaken a major review of our educational financing policy, beginning with an assessment of conditions in the developing countries.

During the last decade, practically all developing countries have experienced an unprecedented growth in school enrollments at all levels. Much of this growth has reflected the educational concepts of developed societies in the late 19th century which were transferred by the colonial governments to the developing countries. This classical and academic education recognizes neither the needs nor constraints of developing countries, but is still being widely expanded in the name of educational and national development. Such replication of traditional structures of school systems, institutional forms, content, pedagogy and technology will not meet the needs of the developing countries. Most informed observers agree on the need for major reforms and innovations, and this view is slowly coming to be shared by governments as they feel the increasing pinch of resource limitations matched against unsatisfied demand. There is agreement

upon the need for change, although diversity of views frequently exists on what those changes should be.

The rapid growth of the sixties has been costly in both money and human resources and has magnified some serious shortcomings in the traditional education systems. Along with the increasing school enrollments, there has been an even steeper growth in public expenditures on education. These expenditures have grown between 13% and 18% per year in many developing countries at a time when government revenues were increasing at perhaps 4-5% per year. As a result, many developing countries are approaching the limit of the percentage of revenue they can allocate for education, despite the fact that high priority educational needs are still not being met.

The effects of this expansion on the efficiency and quality of the education systems have been equally serious. More than half of the children who enter primary schools drop out before the fourth grade and normally revert to illiteracy. Repeaters and drop-outs -- an outcome of poor quality teaching, irrelevant curricula and inadequate equipment and accommodations -- often cause waste of as much as 30% of the government's education budget. In the Ivory Coast, for example, it requires an average of 16 student years to produce one graduate from the six-year primary course. School systems tend to lead their graduates from one level into the already crowded schools at the next level. Many school graduates in rural areas find that the academic and urban orientation of their education has not prepared them for productive work. Poorly and inappropriately educated young adults -- both graduates and drop-outs -- crowd into urban areas, creating massive unemployment while government, industry, commerce and agriculture look in vain for semi-skilled and skilled manpower.

The indiscriminate transfer of technology and information from developed to developing countries is a major obstacle to the creation of relevant curricula. The content of primary and secondary courses and the questions on qualifying examinations are still drawn to a great extent from the developed world which is remote from the experience, for example, of the African student. European flora and fauna are studied in science courses. European history is given disproportionate emphasis. Masonry is learned in construction suited to northern climates and conditions. Teaching practice encourages rote learning of this extraneous information and does not encourage students to solve the problems of their own environments.

Thus, today's education systems in most developing countries are handicapped by serious structural imbalances, irrelevant curricula, outmoded teaching methods, lack of planning, inadequate management techniques and heavy financial burdens. To be more responsive to the needs and conditions of the less developed countries, educational systems in the seventies must place much greater emphasis on improvement of the quality of their output and the efficiency of their operations.

In summary, the situation in most developing countries requires intensive planning efforts, clear definition of, and adherence to, economic priorities, improved management and modernization of teaching practices, curricula and educational technology. There is also need to look in each case for lower cost solutions to educational problems.

On the basis of this review, we concluded that the World Bank and IDA, with the assistance and cooperation of other agencies, have the capability to assist their member countries in these fields. We are now prepared to move ahead on a much broader front.

The basic criterion for Bank and IDA financing of education projects will continue to be as stated in the first sentence of the policy laid down in 1963: "The Bank and IDA should be prepared to consider financing a part of the capital requirements of priority education projects designed to produce, or to serve as a necessary step in producing, trained manpower of the kinds and in the numbers needed to forward economic development in the member country concerned."

However, in applying this criterion in future we shall broaden the scope of projects considered, and we shall determine priorities and select projects on the basis of a thorough examination of the education system as a whole rather than by a priori designated areas of eligibility which may not relate to the particular country. We shall continue to emphasize projects which, like vocational training, produce trained manpower directly but we shall also consider for financing other types of projects with less direct relation to the short-run training of manpower which would have important long-term significance for economic development.

From the beginning of the Bank's work in education, the identification of education projects has been based upon comprehensive reviews of the education sector, which in turn are related to the Bank's general economic studies. As a result, both the Bank and the member country can distinguish educational priorities more clearly with reference on the one hand to manpower and other economic needs and on the other to the country's resource limitations. We shall continue to strengthen our general sector studies of education and, through preinvestment and other special studies, identify those particular projects throughout the educational system which have the

greatest importance for economic development. In as many cases as possible these projects should be demonstration projects designed to encourage changes which improve the relevance, efficiency or economy of education systems.

Primary education is the vital first step in education. Its main task is to impart the rudimentary disciplines of reading, writing and calculation, through which further learning can take place. It is also the only education received by most young people of the developing countries. It has, therefore, an important role, both direct and indirect, in the training of manpower.

Primary education in the developing countries suffers today from both quantitative and qualitative deficiencies. In these countries as a whole only about half of the primary age children are in school. In Africa the proportion is one third and in some countries such as Ethiopia it is less than 15%. Even so, primary education absorbs between 50 and 60% of most education budgets and the social demand for its expansion exerts a constant upward pressure on those budgets at the expense of higher priority developments in the education sector and of the needs of other sectors.

In these circumstances, we do not regard the mere expansion of primary school enrollments in most countries as a priority objective for Bank financing. On the other hand, there is a case for well-conceived projects which point the way toward more efficient and economic use of resources for primary education -- experimental projects employing instructional television or other modern educational technology, innovations in primary curricula and teacher training, or modern types of school construction. In brief, we shall regard as suitable for Bank financing experimental or demonstration projects in primary education which would have a multiplier effect in promoting greater economy, efficiency and the relevance of instruction to the student's own environment.

In 1962, secondary education was the outstanding bottleneck in both quantity and quality. Today in some countries the supply of secondary school graduates is approaching the absorptive capacity of the employment market but the character of education at this level continues to be highly academic and ill-suited to the employment needs of the economy. Only a minority of the students completing this cycle may continue on to higher education, yet a majority of them follow a course of university preparation, more frequently in the arts than the science field. The major thrust of our educational financing during the past eight years has been directed at changing this situation. By providing laboratories, workshops and other facilities, teacher training and technical assistance for the introduction of pre-vocational and vocational secondary education, we have helped to change its orientation from the university to the employment market. We shall continue this policy, providing for expansion of enrollment where the need is demonstrated and, in other cases, assisting in the transformation of existing institutions.

The middle level technician in industry, agriculture, commerce, health services and government administration continues to be in critically short supply. An efficient personnel structure might normally have a ratio of at least three sub-professionals or technicians for every professional, but in most developing countries the actual ratio is the reverse. We shall continue to assist in the training of this type of worker.

Thus far, Bank assistance to university education has been directed principally to the training of high level personnel in agriculture, engineering and education. In addition to these fields, there is need for more university training in the physical and social sciences and in business administration and economics.

In view of the continuing shortage of qualified teachers and the heavy reliance on expensive expatriates, we shall as in the past give full support to expanding and improving teacher training of all types.

Although adult vocational training may offer quick and substantial returns, it has not thus far played a large part in Bank financing. One reason is the lack of interest and organizational capability in governments and industrial and agricultural enterprises. Another reason may be that our own identification procedures have been deficient. Adult vocational training is usually most effective when carried on as an "in-service" activity within the enterprise rather than in a formal educational institution. We are therefore focusing attention within the Projects Group on the identification of training activities in a number of sectors of Bank financing and we hope more frequently to include adult training as a component in these other projects.

We cannot expect, however, that the various types of enterprises in developing countries will rapidly develop interest and capability in adult vocational training and we intend therefore to expand our assistance through various types of centers offering short courses of training for industry, agricultural and other rural activities, and management services.

Wherever possible, the Bank has sought the cooperation of other agencies in providing technical assistance directly or indirectly related to the education projects it finances. As a result, only 3% of our loans and credits to date has been allocated to this purpose. We will continue to follow this policy.

However, greater attention by governments to improving the quality and efficiency of their education will require, in the short run, larger inputs of technical assistance. The expanding volume of Bank activity has also, in some cases, exceeded the immediate funding ability of other sources of technical assistance. In such cases we have been able to provide the financing through loans, while other agencies, at the borrower's request arrange for the services.

Although provision of staff and student housing is an expensive addition to both capital and recurrent costs and, in some cases, more a convenience than a necessity, there will continue to be projects in which such housing is essential to achieving the objectives of the project since no other facilities are available. Bank policy has been to assist in the provision of such accommodation only in cases of clear necessity and then on an austere basis.

Although educational radio and television are new and in some degree still experimental, there is good evidence that, prudently used and with prior attention to programming, equipment maintenance and teacher preparation, they can be highly effective in the rapid introduction of new curricula, in the in-service training of poorly qualified teachers and in the most efficient use of the best teachers for the mass of students.

High initial costs are an important factor but where a substantial number of programs can be provided to large numbers of students, the unit costs decline rapidly. A further cost saving and benefit can be secured where the mass media are also used to provide simple programs for adult workers in agriculture, crafts, marketing information and other ways of increasing their productivity. Although such programs do not come fully

within the educational sector, given the constraints on educational growth through conventional methods as described above, they could provide a useful alternative and supplement.

We also intend to explore other useful developments in teaching technology which could increase student/teacher ratios and thus reduce recurrent costs.

In a number of other respects, the Bank's assistance to education can be made more useful to our member countries. One of the great needs in all countries is a better and cheaper supply of locally produced textbooks and simple teaching equipment and materials. We might, therefore, consider financing the necessary production facilities.

Finally, in cooperation with Unesco and its International Institute of Educational Planning, we hope to assist our member countries in the areas of planning, management and research, especially on questions of educational economics and finance. An example is the course in educational projects which is being given by our Economic Development Institute this fall. These are fields in which a relatively small input of assistance can produce substantial benefits and also in which the Bank has experience and capability.

In order to concentrate their resources more effectively on critical manpower needs, we are encouraging our borrowers at every stage of our lending operations in education to confront their problems realistically, to seek economically rational solutions to these problems and to replace outmoded and borrowed systems of education with new concepts and practices more suited to their own needs. Traditional ideas are powerful and change slowly but we are beginning to make progress. We encourage our borrowers

to be flexible, adaptive and innovating, and when they respond the Bank will be prepared to support them.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF
PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Mats Hultin
February 5, 1975



(For a Seminar in Indonesia, March 6-8, 1975)

1. Contrary to the expectations, the education gap between the poor and the rich countries widened during the last decade. The gap between the rich and poor within the societies has also often increased. It is true that enrollment ratios and financial allocations increased at all education levels in the least developed countries (LDC's) but they increased often faster in the rich countries. Furthermore, the emphasis on the modern sector development in many LDC's often lead to over-investments in capital requiring economic developments and to a production and an import of exclusive consumer goods beyond the reach of the poor. This emphasis in turn led to a support of education and training of middle-level technicians and administrators to meet the manpower demands of the modern sector and to serve an existing or developing elitist structure. Less attention was paid to the subsistence sector and to the kind of education and training which would meet the needs of the poor.
2. In many respects the emphasis on the modern sector development was successful. Many LDC's increased their GNP considerably and the expansion of the middle-level and higher education sector was often impressive. The education expansion was in fact so efficient that there are now unemployed school graduates in many countries which, of course, is socially and economically unacceptable (Ref. 1). In contrast, the poor in urban ghettos, and the peasants in rural areas and the women received often less than their share of the economic and education development. The political devotion to universal primary education was sometimes not serious and financial constraints often hampered large-scale attempts to help the masses and solve the education problems. There are, therefore, indications that the education systems in several LDC's supported an undesirable class structure and perpetrated economic and social injustices despite laudable achievements in other aspects. There was little of equal opportunity, however you define it.
3. Imbalances persist thus in many LDC's education systems. Neither the external productivity nor the internal efficiency are satisfactory. The education costs reach often unacceptable levels and take sometimes as much as 30% of the national budget (Ref. 2). It can, furthermore, be shown that the reform measures traditionally suggested in the rich countries such as smaller school classes, higher qualified teachers and more learning aids would easily increase the recurrent education costs by 75% (Ref. 3). Amended policies are often needed.

4. There is need among many LDC's for a different and more poverty-oriented education development strategy leading to an increased overall productivity. This strategy should:

- (a) relate skill training to the labor market at all education levels;
- (b) ensure mass participation in basic education;
- (c) improve equity;
- (d) increase internal efficiency;
- (e) improve education planning.

I shall address my comments to the above five issues. They are all important tasks for education planning and strategies.

5. In the modern sector of the LDC's societies, a rationing, however unpopular, of secondary and higher education might often be needed. The rationing may include an increase in the price of education and a reduction of government subsidies. (Government subsidies to secondary and higher education, particularly student loans, tend to serve those social groups which could pay higher education themselves (Ref. 4). The measures would also imply a limiting of the access to certain types of education. It is of course necessary to avoid discrimination against underprivileged groups in executing the measures. On the contrary, those groups should be provided with financial support and often compensatory education to facilitate successful secondary and higher education studies.

6. Secondary and higher education should possibly be better related to labor market requirements through a closer cooperation between secondary and higher education and the enterprises (as in Sweden, Romania, Tanzania, etc.). The institutions might in reality be more and not less vocationally oriented also at the secondary level.

7. The recruitment and reward system system of the LDC's labor market might be changed and the role of education certificates for employment be reduced.

8. In the rural areas nonformal skill training schemes must be developed as alternative or parallel programs to formal schools. The schemes might include functional literacy programs. The nonformal programs must be tied to other socio-economic activities of the rural community such as land reforms, farmer credit systems, etc. (Ref. 5).

9. A financially viable mass participation in education is another major issue for the education planner and strategist in the LDC's. A first task would be to define the "minimum learning package" which is an education's "poverty line." The package might include literacy and enumeracy and it should

include basic skills necessary for socio-economic development. This leads to a basic education concept which is broader than traditional primary education. It assumes flexibility in target groups and delivery methods. It would function without defined entry ages, with diversified programs, with teachers of many types and with mass media. The system would often use the vernaculars as instruction language. Despite the fact that basic education would cater to the total population and all age groups including adults, it might not always be popular with parents, teachers and employers as they are used to hierarchical systems aiming solely at diplomas and higher education. Basic education as described would require operationally well-defined objectives and target groups, and it would be linked to the skill training programs in rural areas as described in para. 8.

10. Mass participation in education is one aspect of an education strategist's attempt to achieve equity. But other equity issues would remain and they are as important in the LDC's as they are in the developed countries. Policies must thus be directed, to reach the neglected target groups, to equalize the chances for school entrance and achievement and to increase social mobility. The strategist should, therefore, study the influence of the students' home background, plan pre-school and adult education activities and suggest feasible school nutrition programs. Equal opportunity is more than equal access. Many define it nowadays as equal participation and equal outcome of the education process. It must, furthermore, be emphasized that education is a necessary but, of course, not sufficient means to achieve full employment and equity in a society. The rest of the socio-economic infrastructure must be there.

11. The internal efficiency of education in the LDC's is low and drop-out and repetition rates continue to be high particularly in rural areas (median dropout rates in primary education are over 50% in the 52 poorest countries, and rural schools are often five times as inefficient as urban schools; Ref. 6). The findings of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and other research confirm that many traditional ideas to improve the efficiency would not only be costly as mentioned (para. 3) but also educationally irrelevant. It appears, therefore, more important to define education and training objectives more operationally, to prepare teachers better for their role in a developing community, to adapt the school calendar to the local seasonal cycle, to use the local language in teaching, to restructure the system so that the duration of each cycle meets the local and societal needs rather than the requirements of the higher education institutions, etc. Much has been said about the "vocational school fallacy" but recent research indicates that there might have been an undue bias in favor of in-plant training programs (Ref. 7). The latter are often expensive and the formal vocational school can do a good job if well planned.

12. The planners and strategists own method of work is also important for education development. There are some approaches which might be more often applied. The total age cohort should be studied rather than the education pyramid only. A cohort analysis considers also those outside the

education system which is necessary. A tracer study is another important analytical tool. There has previously been a tendency to consider national aggregates only but the education analysis should be disaggregated by regions, economic sectors and social groups. More attention should be paid to the country's political, sociological and anthropological readiness for education reforms. The financial constraints should be considered at an early stage of the planning process. Earmarked taxes and self-help might be considered to improve the education financing. Independent evaluation machineries should be created; they are few in the developed countries and they are almost nonexistent in the LDC's.

13. I have with the preceding paragraphs showed that the education developments of the LDC's during the last decade have provided experience to allow for a better education planning and strategy for the 1970's and the 1980's. We know better how to assess education targets, political and social constraints, education structures, volumes, contents, technologies, staffing, management, physical needs, costs and financing if we want to increase employments and opportunities. We also know better how to work with alternatives and present to the policymakers the possible outcomes of the plans and strategies on employment and opportunity, the reaction of peer groups, and the implications in manpower and costs.

14. We do feel that we know enough about the issues to suggest some directions for the education planning and strategies towards fuller employment and increased opportunities. Basic education should often be supported rather than middle-level and higher education. Skill training which is closely related to socio-economic activities is another priority. Major target groups are the 40% poor in rural areas and town ghettos. Operational planning with well-defined goals should be conducted. The goals should be flexible, but the flexibility would primarily be caused by possible financial and manpower constraints.

15. We feel that the suggested education strategy towards better employment and equal opportunity could provide good education systems operating at reasonably low costs. Low education costs would be a necessity for the resource poor LDC's hit by the higher energy costs. The dilemma for the education planner and strategist of those countries would be the priority which his government would give to education when already serious financial problems worsen.

16. In Indonesia, manpower constraints may be more serious than financial constraints. The country would need planners and strategists with a good understanding of the necessary interaction between industry, commerce, agriculture and education. It would, furthermore, need educators who would be prepared to open their institutions for advice from the enterprises and the labor market to admit adults and young people to their institutions who may have more incentives than credentials, to "vocalize" courses which by tradition might be very academic, etc. In other words, the education must be prepared to go "extramural". The financiers of education must be prepared to make education and training a career which should require efficiency of

its producers (the teachers) but also provide financial remuneration and social status. Needless to say, those manpower constraints should be solved through the training and employment of nationals rather than through the hiring of expatriates.

17. For poor and rich countries alike, there are risks involved in the new policies and strategies. We do not always know the best ways to reach the underprivileged groups with education and training. We do not know the optimum combination of training in vocational schools and in enterprises. We do not know how open the universities should be to those without formal qualifications, etc. But we feel that those risks should be taken and the possible negative consequences diminished through appropriate experimentations.

18. Will the governments be willing to take the risks and is there a political preparedness to implement an education policy towards employment and equal opportunity? These policies would eventually lead to more than employment and increased educational opportunity. They will lead to an increased power sharing by those who share little power today. Beyond political democracy, they will lead to economic democracy. There are influential population strata in most societies which oppose the sharing of power and wealth. The strategies will, therefore, require dedicated governments prepared to fight vested interests to achieve a socio-economic development embracing all population groups of a nation.

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(The World Bank Staff Working Papers are available upon request.)