

I. THE ERT INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

An Introductory Note¹

Background

Any attempt to readdress our world's increasing inequity, poverty and widening human development gaps is possible through access to relevant, equitable and effective education of our rural people who makes our world's majority of illiterate, unhealthy, malnourished, marginalized, and oppressed population. Their numbers are increasing at a skyrocketing pace and yet very little research is looking at the causes and roots of such deteriorating situations. Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)² is the only way to reduce the widening human development gaps within and between nations. The dynamics of rural transformation in the "globalized" world has created new educational imperatives that call for a re-evaluation of present educational policies and priorities, and the re-examination of the role of education and learning (formal, nonformal and informal) for rural people from rather new perspectives. Henceforth, education should be seen as a key instrument for shaping and fulfilling the goal of rural transformation. It should contribute to the wellbeing of the rural people including food security, health, employment, protection of the environment and the management of our natural resources. ERT should be inclusive and should meet effectively and equitably the basic learning needs of rural children, out-of-school youth and adults in the perspective of reducing rural poverty.

China and India: Our First Pilot Countries

Most of our rural people can be found in the two most populous (E-9) countries, namely China and India. Other E-9 countries are Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan. The so-called belief in education for development has been very obsolete for most of the rural people of these countries. Their ever-pressing needs for an education which is relevant, equitable and effective are neither subject to any discourse of human development nor given priority-concerns, be it at international, regional, national or local levels.

¹ This Introductory Note serves as background for the preparation of individual contributions to the International Symposium.

² ERT is a concept that was used and further developed in a state-of-the-art review commissioned by UNESCO and INRULED in 2001 entitled "Education for Rural Transformation – Towards a Policy Framework" (INRULED, China.)



Both China and India have been chosen as our pioneer countries for comparative research with a view to providing new insights on education for rural transformation (for further details, please refer to Section II). China and India have designed their own strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by implementing social inclusive policies and programs. All goals of the MDG can be linked to some extent to the process of rural transformation if taken from a holistic perspective for human development. The scenario in China and India is still challenging. Rural disparities in the provision and access to educational opportunities and quality of education are still serious problems among the majority of their people living in rural and remote areas.

Unfortunately, the lowest quality of education is often found in the poorest regions or communities. As it is the tendency worldwide, children from poor households, rural areas, slums and other disadvantaged groups face major obstacles in access to a good quality education (reference can be made to the 2001 ERT Report, INRULED, China – see also Section III).



The International Symposium – Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The present ERT International Symposium in Stockholm, Sweden is an integral part of a series of such similar ERT forthcoming events (2011, Beijing, China; and 2012, Bangalore, India) and it is intended, first and foremost for stocktaking of up-to-date relevant experiences and lessons learned worldwide, and in the further promoting of Research and Development (R & D) programs and activities for research, training and capacity development in this field.

The overriding objective of this ERT international symposium is to critically examine the concept, policy and practice of education for rural transformation. During this 3-day International Symposium (see Preliminary Program in Section IV), an attempt will therefore be made to assess the current situations, problems and trends in education for rural transformation in the respective participating countries, and particularly, in China and India. Likewise, contributions from the works and activities of relevant national, bilateral and multilateral agencies, from civil society organizations and from institutes of higher learning and research will form an integral part of the ERT major stocktaking exercise. Such a forum of experts is expected to raise greater awareness of the necessity of educational reform in largely populated countries in order to attend to the needs for rural transformation and improved quality of life of the rural poor. It is also a forum of experts expected to deliver some concrete action-oriented and tailor-made programs and activities that can address the roots and causes of failures of existing educational structures, contents, and methods in rural areas on the one hand, and to identify good practices of educational empowerment and practical-needs-based education for rural transformation, on the other hand. A case in point is how education is contributing towards training for rural youth through the school curriculum, civic education, revival of local craftwork and cultures and

through non-formal and informal educational organizations (for further details see Guidelines for preparing the Symposium Papers and Presentations in Section V).

One of the major expected outcomes from the present 3-day ERT International Symposium is to lay the foundations for further relevant ERT programs and R & D activities that can provide empirical evidence for informed decision-making among major stakeholders at both national and international levels (such as educational policy-makers, planners and managers; and educational practitioners - teachers, learners, parents and the civil society at large) on the extent to which genuine educational interventions (formal, non-formal and informal) can contribute to rural transformation and improved quality of life of rural children, youth and adults. More specifically, the achieved results in terms of national and international ERT experiences will serve as direct inputs to the ongoing ERT comparative educational research study in China and India (see details of the study in Section II of this Working Document). Further and as mentioned above, the present ERT International Symposium is intended to revisit and to ensure the follow-up of the earlier ERT initiative in 2001 led by UNESCO in cooperation with its International Research and Training Center for Rural Education (INRULED) based in China.



The ERT Expert Group

An ERT Expert Group has been established since 2008 and is led by Professor Vinayagum Chinapah, Institute of International Education (IIE), Stockholm University in joint collaboration with the team leaders of the two participating pilot countries, namely Professor Zhou Nanzhao of INRULED and CNIER (China), and Dr. Pushpanadhan Karanam of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (India). This ERT Expert Group has also invited internationally renowned educators, researchers, high-level policy-makers and practitioners from different parts of the world to join them in promoting further research, training, and capacity development in this field. This International Symposium is intended for such a purpose.

Being the first one of its kind for all members of the ERT Expert Group, the success of this present International Symposium as well as its follow-up will depend largely upon the active participation of all members of the ERT group and on the quality of the papers and contributions.

We hope the present introductory note together with the enclosed reference documents will help all those who are preparing and are presenting their papers and contributions for our International ERT Symposium.

WELCOME

Vinayagum Chinapah (IIE), Stockholm University, Sweden

IV. THE ERT INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Preliminary Program of the International Symposium

(8-10 November 2010)



Monday 8 November 2010

- Registration of Participants
- Introductory Sessions
- ERT Country Thematic Paper Presentations from China and India (5 Papers)
- General Discussions and Debates

Tuesday 9 November 2010

- ERT Country Thematic Paper Presentations from China and India (5 Papers)
- General Discussions and Debates
- ERT International Thematic Paper Presentations (5 Presentations)
- Group Work Sessions

Wednesday 10 November 2010

- Group Work Sessions
- ERT Lessons Learned (Strengths and Weaknesses) - A Synthesis Symposium Draft Report
- Agenda For Further ERT Research, Training and Capacity-Building

Participants: 50 (20 International Experts and Resource Persons and 30 Swedish Scholars, Researchers, and Policy-Makers)

Symposium Venue: Scandic Sergel Plaza, Brunkebergstorg 9, Box 16411, 103 27 Stockholm, Sweden, Telefon: +46 (0)8 517 263 00, Fax: +46 (0)8 517 263 11,

E-post: sergel.plaza@scandichotels.com, Booking and Customer service: 08-517 517 00

Administrative Support and Service: Invitation Letter for Visa Arrangement, details about Airticket, Accommodation, etc. will be sent to participants upon receipt of their individual confirmation.

V. THE ERT INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Submission Guidelines for Papers

The significance of ERT in the globalizing world has been addressed in previous sections. As is explicitly stated in section I, the outcomes of the symposium are expected to contribute to a further holistic understanding of ERT and to critically revisit and examine the concept, policy and practice in this area. At the same time, the special focus is given to the cases of China and India. In light of this background, the papers can be submitted addressing, for example, the following research questions:



1. *What are the current situations and trends in ERT and what are the challenges that ERT is facing in the rapidly changing global socio-economic, cultural and political contexts?*
2. *What are the success stories of education for rural transformation ?*
3. *Is there any innovation or advancement in knowledge in terms of concepts and theories in the area of ERT?*
4. *What are good practices showing empowerment of rural people through education and learning (formal, nonformal or informal)?*
5. *What are the roles of education and learning in the process of rural transformation and sustainable rural development?*
6. *How can education and learning contribute towards training for rural youth using non-formal and informal educational organizations?*
7. *Are there discrepancies between research, policy and practices in ERT? What are the obstacles/challenges and how can they be bridged through new initiatives?*
8. *What are the specific contextual strategies for promoting skills for rural transformation ?*

These questions can serve as some elements of the guidelines for the papers as well as for roundtables, which shall eventually lead to development of an agenda for further ERT research, training and capacity-building.

Individual paper contribution can be around 15-20 pages, and should be sent in electronic version not later than October 15, 2010 to the email address: vinayagum.chinapah@interped.su.se, +46-8-161064
Please kindly send copy to IIE colleagues at the following e-mail addresses for smooth follow-up:
mikiko.cars@interped.su.se; g_khaleda@hotmail.com; vladimir.vesovic@ped.su.se;
patsy.kng@interped.su.se; jia-ying.zhang@interped.su.se; shangwu.zhao@interped.su.se

Standard presentation equipment (overhead projectors and PowerPoint-equipped PCs) will be available for all sessions. Presentation slides and electronic materials should be formatted to be PC / Microsoft Windows compatible.



Institute of International Education (IIE)
Department of Education
Stockholm University

Address: Institute of International Education (IIE)
Stockholm University, SE-106 91 Stockholm,
SWEDEN
Tel: +46 8 16 20 00; +46 8 163630; +46 8 161064
Website: www.interped.su.se