# Education in Development: Choose It or Lose It

## Psyche Kennett

*Abstract*
*Why are the bi-lateral agencies abandoning their long-established programmes in Education in favour of those in Governance? Do recipient governments really know what they are letting themselves in for when they subscribe to Governance initiatives in development? Is Governance a bureaucratic trip into a politically correct wilderness of blandness and mediocrity? This paper seeks to define why Governance is superseding Education in Development in Southeast Asia. It investigates the maturity and experience of governance policy and personnel. It looks at the move away from a project approach, where education, training, transparency and deliverables are important, and the move towards globalisation, sector-wide approaches run by generalists, and the resulting loss of quality and consensus. It describes the need for recipient governments to become pro-active and focus on what they really want, and if that happens to be Education or Health, rather than Governance, then to establish their own precise stance on the issues concerned. It quotes the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training's lack of a clear language policy as an example of how, if you do not 'choose it' you'll 'lose it'.*

## The Politics of Policy Making

I t is interesting how the 'G' words have crept into our discourse – Globalisation, Governance, Good Governance, Global Governance. Where did they come from? Why are they suddenly on the agenda of every donor's budget? Policy shift in Development is not as scientific or as technical as many would believe. New policies do not necessarily come about in a linear progression from carefully targeted research, to the provision of a set of options, to the objective analysis of those options, to policy formation, to implementation.

"The whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents. It is not at all a matter of the rational implementation of the so-called decisions through selected strategies."

*Clay & Schaffer (1984)*

This statement is rather interesting, given that policy-making is central to any discussion of governance. 'Policy' in governance plays a double, and somewhat contradictory, role: firstly, as the new agenda for donor governments - the outcome of a very mixed bag of motivations - and secondly, as a core activity of Good Governance - 'policy-making' for recipient government agencies and public services to carry out.

In the conclusion to her paper on 'The Policy Process' (1999) Rebecca Sutton lists twenty-one ways that policy innovation may happen. The very fact that her research supports twenty-one is peculiarly reassuring: next time you feel frustrated by the seemingly arbitrary nature of a policy shift, you can console yourself with the thought that it very probably was an arbitrary process that brought you there. Two of the most interesting routes, in terms of the Good Governance agenda, for policy innovation are:

"A development problem is turned into a 'story' which simplifies it and sets out an agenda for action.

A dominant discourse or way of thinking becomes established which makes clear certain priorities, thereby simplifying a situation and providing guidance towards certain policy directions."

*Sutton (1999)*

Roe (1991) believes that policies based on these narratives and simplifications do not stand up to close scrutiny. They are often invalidated by the experience of implementers and practitioners in the field. Nonetheless, they persist. Governance becomes Good Governance, Good Governance (mainly in the field of public administration reform and anti-corruption legal reform) merges into a collective, simplified

version with Global or International Governance and it is a small step then from Good Governance to (multi-national) Corporate Governance. The simplified narrative is reproduced, and ambiguous motivations are sanitised. Suddenly everyone is doing it. Predictably, though disappointingly, the (English speaking) bi-laterals fall like dominoes hit by the International Organisations. DFID embraced its policy on Sector-wide Approaches (SWAPS) at a time when WHO Disaster Relief was lobbying to return to a project approach. AusAID in Vietnam, following DFID, has taken its Governance policy from The World Bank and UNDP, and has pulled funding on its Vietnam-Australia Training (VAT) project to pay for it. By the time the publicity for a new policy kicks in, the donors are on a roll, and policy consensus, about as manoeuvrable as an oil tanker, is not about to make a transatlantic U-turn. Bureaucrats and generalists who manage the aid budgets become victims of their own 'spin', and for some peculiar reason behave as if they are 'experts', often disregarding the experience of practitioners on the ground, who may question the direction.

Chomsky, in 'The Manufacture of Consent' (1987) argues that politicians couch policy in morally irrefutable terms – for the purposes of this paper, take 'anti-corruption' – so by advocating the opposite – 'corruption' – your position is considered immoral and you can therefore be usefully marginalised as a crank or an agitator[1]. This is how political correctness is born. What's important then, is to maintain a dissenting voice, not to be brow-beaten by the New Orthodoxy (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001), question the narrative of Governance, investigate the nature of the beast, and, after Roe (1991), improve it from within as well as challenge it from without. This paper is an attempt at just that.

### History Repeats Itself
Governance Advisers used to be called Institutional Development Advisers when DFID was ODA, back in the Seventies. Good Governance used to be called Law and Development, the Washington - driven, ideological Trojan horse of the Eighties. Institutional Development Advisers were eventually discredited for their lack of brief, their Graham-Greenish 'our Man in the Ministry' mole-role, a throwback to the Cold War, and the leverage of well-placed 'advisers' in strategic institutions – Ministries of Finance, or Foreign Affairs,

of Planning and Investment. Law and Development was eventually discredited for attempting to transplant Western legal culture, wholesale, into developing countries, in order to orchestrate a 'liberal-democratic market-capitalist transformation' with

"...agencies trying to draft and implement concrete programmes for what is, in effect, social engineering, using law as a kind of lever"

*Lindsey (2002)*

"After a lull of 20 years or so, aspects of Law and Development theory have been revived under the post-Washington aegis of Governance...sometimes necessarily in an opaque, even covert, fashion given the taint still born by 'Law and Development' itself."

*Lindsey (2002)*

AusAID has cut its Education[2] and Health budgets for Vietnam for 2003 and re-channelled that money into Governance. It's rationale for the shift is that Governance buys more leverage per Aus Dollar. Leverage: this time honing commercial law to suit a more open market in Vietnam. The literature describes it as "trans boundary development challenges, regional co-operation and economic integration." (AusAID 2002). In the Vietnam-Australia Capacity Building for Effective Governance Facility (CEG), set up this year in a bi-lateral venture between AusAID and Vietnam's Ministry of Planning and Investment, top of the list for "Types of activities eligible" is "placement of short-term Australian experts and advisers in strategic policy or management areas of key Vietnamese ministries/agencies (on-the-job coaching is expected to be an important aspect of technical assistance activities)".

Are we really all here are again, with our Men in the Ministry and our Trojan Horses?

### Donor Arguments for Governance in Development
The main arguments (not necessarily motivations) for donors promoting governance are that if donors remain in their traditional role of 'aid provider', they prolong recipient government 'bad governance', undermine institutional capacity, and are inefficient.

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[1]  Instead, Lindsey (2002) talks about Asian 'anti-western anti anti-corruption' arguments in his section, 'Anti anti-corruption' and hostility to foreign donors
[2]  There is still Education budget for pre departure training.

When development budgets are used to provide goods and services – build schools and hospitals, train teachers and doctors – donor governments are essentially assisting recipient governments in neglecting their duties, helping them save their cash to spend on the military, or indeed themselves. It is true to say that in recent years, aid revenue to the Government of Sri Lanka has equalled the cost of their war with the Tamil Tigers; money from donors kept the Sri Lankan education and health services running while the Cabinet spent the equivalent on arms. Development aid in this form prolongs conflict.

By providing both the money and the systems for health and education, donors effectively release host governments from accountability and responsibility to the general public. This is one of the arguments that is used to support Sector-wide Approaches. In its strategy paper on 'Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance', The World Bank argues the End of Projects in development because they undermine developing countries' institutional capacity:

"Donor's payments of salary supplements to local project staff can draw skilled manpower away from core government functions. The establishment of project implementation units (PIUs) within or outside ministries and agencies can subordinate the coherence of the machinery of government to the narrower goal of project implementation and the achievement of short term gains that might not be sustainable. The availability of grants and concessional loans can weaken budget discipline and encourage line ministries to focus more on preparing a menu of initiatives to "market" to donors than on making difficult choices among competing priorities within sectors. Donors' insistence that their aid be "additional" can further distort the process of considering trade-offs. And the multiple procurement and disbursement procedures of donors can add additional administrative burdens and inhibit the development of coherent domestic systems."

*The World Bank (2000)*

Furthermore, corruption and lack of capacity render development projects under-productive and unsustainable. Recipient government agencies are often neither accountable nor transparent. They lack systems and skills. As a result, donor money and effort seep away. The donors argue that project failure in nearly every sector is high because of this.

**Donor Policy for Governance in Development**
The generally understood 4 pillars of good governance

are: Accountability (Responsibility), Transparency, Predictability ('playing by the rules') and Participation. Accountability ensures public service agencies are responsible to the general public through parliament and line management. Transparency ensures performance is monitored and money is spent according to plan. Predictability ensures a clear, regulatory framework to prevent corruption: if you do "x", then "y" will happen. Participation ensures consensus in decision-making right down to the general public.

Thus, development assistance is provided to help governments help themselves through good governance. This may include reforming tax systems that will provide revenue to pay for education and health systems themselves. It may include public administration reform to make institutions function more predictably and transparently and in so doing reduce the 'Assumptions' (read 'Risks') column in the Log Frame of future projects. And through capacity-building in risk management and change management, governance inputs seek to reduce throwing 'good money after bad'. This may include advising on judiciary reform, encouraging decentralisation, providing financial training and creating channels for public 'voice' to combat corruption.

**Unravelling the Spin Doctors' Spin: Double Standards and Hidden Agendas**
In principal, good governance is all 'good' stuff, because development is not just about specific institutions, but about the whole environment. Indeed, governance is at its best when it is not implemented as an activity or a project in itself, but is integrated in rural development, micro finance, health, and education projects, as DFID do in Vietnam. To their credit, DFID do recognise the potential contradictions in their own arguments in the strategy paper, 'Making Government Work for the Poor – Building State Capability' (DFID 2001). On the one hand, aid given to developing country governments reduces that government's need to be accountable to its citizens; if it had raised the money itself through direct taxation, citizens would have a greater say in how it was spent. On the other hand, Sector-wide approaches, without good governance, exacerbate rather than reduce this problem.

The question that still has to be asked though, is how much of the governance agenda is really directed at social services governance (health and education), and how much of it is directed at corporate governance (opening up developing country markets for trade with rich countries)? From the outside, public administration reform, legal reform, domestic governance and

international governance all get mixed up together – possibly on purpose, and certainly to the benefit of those who promote the less attractive corporate governance agenda – so that you think you are supporting better civil liberties when you are in fact supporting better trade laws for big business. And when it comes to trade and big business, is anyone playing by the rules of good governance?

Another 'mixed up' area is the conflict between those who see governance as economic liberalisation and those who see it as 'the provision of regulatory frameworks in previously deregulated sectors of the economy' (Jayasuriya, 2002). The new call for re-regulation is also a call for a stronger state – essentially a call for greater integration of political and economic institutions, albeit restructured ones. This sits oddly with the World Bank and an international set-up that has separated the UN from the Bank and the IMF, that has separated economics from politics. Can the World Bank make loans conditional to something it is not prepared to encompass in its own organisation?

"...economic reform is not merely a technical exercise to implement the 'right' policies, but a political project undertaken by the putative winners of the reform process. For this reason, market transformation is likely to be a deeply contested and prolonged process....
It is a curious kind of politics and anti-politics that attempts to quarantine economic institutions from the politics of bargaining and conflict. This economic constitutionalism drives much of the Governance programmes of the World Bank, and, furthermore, provides the normative rationale for the increasingly influential jurisprudence of the law and economics movement, so often in the ideological driving seat of legal and institutional reform programmes."

*Jayasuriya (2002)*

On closer inspection, this is not the only instance of double standards. The four pillars of good governance, Accountability, Transparency, Predictability and Participation, can all be toppled within the very institutions that so strongly advocate them.

"... the levers of economic power have been captured by institutions like the IMF, World Bank and WTO which are dominated by the narrow economic vision of rich countries. Recent research from the New Economics Foundation suggests that these powerful bodies are also among the least democratic and inclusive... The study argues that democratic reform of institutions like the World Bank, IMF and WTO is

crucial. Furthermore, there is already a shelf-full of proposals on how such reforms should be made. These include...a new constitutional settlement for global governance – this should emerge from an open, democratic and inclusive process with citizens, and not civil servants in control".

*Simms, Bigg & Robins (2002)*

Bang goes Accountability. Bang goes Participation.

Mosley, Harrigan and Toe (1995) criticise The Bank as 'an evangelist' out to convert developing country governments through policy-based lending. This is in direct conflict to The Bank's role as a bank, whose main aim is to channel money from rich countries to poor countries. In DFID's education aid to Rwanda, the sector-wide approach has 'de-projectised' technical assistance. This means there is no logical framework and there are no performance targets to work to, or be monitored by (other than those set by the implementers, who, by so-doing, necessarily re-projectise the inputs). On two very different counts then, bang goes Transparency. From an Asian perspective, "The common local critique ... is that anti-corruption is Western in origin and values, and moreover the product of double standards whereby lobbying and campaign financing in Washington is acceptable, but it is corrupt when practised in Pakistan or Indonesia."

*Lindsey (2002)*

Bang goes Predictability.

Perhaps the strongest example of double standards is expressed in Oxfam's critique of the EU (2002), who, in the name of fair trade, force developing countries to open up markets on behalf of big business, flood developing countries' markets with subsidised, cheap food, destabilise small farmers, threaten food security, and marginalise imports from some of the poorest countries in the world by not removing protectionist tariffs or giving tax breaks as promised.

"If the EU is serious about development and less driven by short-term commercial interests, its trade policy should be the exact opposite of what it is at present: it would allow developing-country products into its markets, and it would allow developing country governments to help their national industries and farmers by offering more protection against competition from the advanced economies."

*Oxfam (2002)*

Indeed, following one of the common arguments for governance in development, that is, helping poor countries implement tax reform to raise revenue to pay for their own social services, governance for international trade should be helping poor countries protect their home markets while opening up international markets to them. If the EU markets were open to Vietnam's agricultural products, and there was no EU food dumping in Asia, Vietnam wouldn't need any aid money at all.

Finally, some argue (Lindsey 2002, Jayasuriya 2002) that donor involvement in governance is a way of combating criticism for previous development aid spent on, and economic models based on, oppressive regimes, such as Soeharto's Indonesia or SLORC's Myanmar. The Asian economic crisis of 1997 actually accelerated legal and political reform within some authoritarian governments that donors had assumed were un-reformable. It also helped question the, till-then, 'orthodox economic analysis of the East Asian 'miracle' which 'was vital in legitimising the Washington consensus in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America' (Jayasuriya 2002). After years of tacit support for 'malevolent governmentû, it was time to change tack, and, attack being the best form of defence, get on the governance reform bandwagon.

### Implementing Governance as Capacity Building

Perhaps the strongest argument against governance, from a practitioner's - rather than a policy maker's - point of view, is its lack of methodology. DFID's Governance Department's working paper on capacity development (DFID 2002) makes a case for the 'History of Technical Assistance for Capacity Development' (DFID 2002 p.11) and it would be nice to think such a progression were based on lessons learnt. The progression describes a shifting focus of technical assistance from the individual, to the organisation, to the institutional (or 'whole') environment. With this comes a shift in inputs (which is the closest anyone comes to describing a methodology for governance) from counterparts and study tours (individual), to organisational counter-parting, restructuring, long and short term consultants (organisation), to sector-wide approaches and public administration reform (institution). The problem here is that the focus may have changed but the inputs really have not. It all boils down to consultants, counter-parting, training courses, and study tours. In practice, bureaucrats not educationalists design most training, especially in the field

of public administration, and the reality is short courses conducted by short term consultants. How much behavioural change can be effected in this way?

Education in development has been going long enough to acknowledge that development is just as much about change in developed countries as it is about change in developing countries. It is a two-way process which establishes practice that is neither East nor West in origin, neither private nor public sector, but the best of both. As such, the education training models developed in Vietnam by the DFID/CfBT English Language Teacher Training Project, for example, have relevance for adult literacy and ESOL teacher training programmes in Britain – possibly more so than the other way round because the absence of entrenched models in the Vietnamese system allows for more innovative and cross-institutional activities than would be possible in Britain. But does the same expertise and dialogue, the same ability to hone country-specific programmes, the same 'best of both' exist in governance? Have governance advisers learnt the lessons of the failed Law and Development movement, the dead end of legal transplants? Do governance advisers have enough in-country experience of institutions as culturally diverse as the legal system, the banking system, the tax collection system? Lindsey (2002), as we have seen, suggests not.

The danger of having a plan to effect good governance (governance training?) designed by bureaucrats for bureaucrats – Hollywood on Hollywood – is that it comes without sound educational principles or expertise, without attention to the amount of time and intensity required to actually change the way people do their jobs. The World Bank (2000) openly criticises 'technocrats' (Oxford Dictionary definition: "a scientist or other technical expert with a high position in industry or government") but who then will provide appropriate models of change in governance? The vagueness of, and lack of strategies for, the actual implementation of good governance points towards a bureaucratic wilderness of bland 'presence' and the mediocre value of 'study tours'.

Study tours do not activate skills or empower participants. They do, however, influence friends; they are a kind of educational tourism that is used as a reward in a crony system – not really a prime objective for good governance. When 'bad' practice is entrenched, behavioural change is no mean task. If extensive training does not change people's behaviour in life-threatening situations such as HIV awareness or Mines awareness training (Durham, 2002),

how much less so is a study tour going to impact on a corrupt government official?

The experience of in-service, job-based training in education in Asia has taught us that behavioural change will only happen through long-term, intensive, context-specific, experiential, task-based, cross-institutional training that is conducted for a large enough number of practitioners to form a 'critical mass' or 'ground swell' of change champions. Until this model is applied to public service administrators or senior government officials in the target agency, good governance simply would not happen.

## Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Governance: Governance and Education

This paper criticises the top-down approaches to governance, in terms of unlearnt lessons, contradictory motivations, double standards, lemming-like policy followers, and a serious lack of methodology. For governance initiatives to become worthy of development budgets, these issues must be tidied up from the top-down. At the same time, governance in terms of 'rights based' development (rather than international trade) must be approached from the bottom up. In terms of culture, context and choice, a purely top-down model of governance in development, imposed by rich country donors, can only be seen as neo-colonialism.

At this conference, we have listened to examples of bottom-up 'consensus building processes' - giving people a voice in the policy-making processes which impact on their livelihoods (Haylor and Savage 2002). Meaningful participation at community level starts with people's involvement at the conceptual stage of programme development, not participation as end users (Durham 2002). The ultimate bottom-up approach to governance, then, is changing the state education system.

"Public and quasi-public sector organisations all recruit from the market. They make up part of the demand for labour. It is the educational system that, in broad terms, provides the supply. In some cases, the education sector has contributed to the problem of skills shortage (a much narrower yet important aspect of capacity deficit) by producing graduates with non-marketable skills, or too few graduates with the right skills."

*DFID (2001)*

In Vietnam, 90% of new graduates remain unemployed and 3% work in the field in which they were trained (Financial Times Information 2002). Governance in education for this context means changing school and university entrance exams to create an 'ethos of meritocracy', changing the secondary and tertiary curriculum to respond better to the demands of the workplace, better teaching and learning strategies that promote the belief that 'voice' and participation begin in the classroom.

The interesting thing is the general absence of mechanisms that bring policy (from above) and grass roots movements (from below) together. DFID (2001) acknowledge that it is the formal secondary and tertiary education sectors which are the main workforce suppliers of future public administration and government officials. Yet, in Vietnam, they have redirected their education development budget into primary and basic education, perhaps a too long-term bottom-up plan for good governance supply. Perhaps DFID's single-minded dedication to Primary Education is one of those policies born of an over-simplified narrative. The fact remains: a practical middle ground where top-down and bottom-up approaches to good governance may eventually meet is in secondary education reform.

## Subverting Policy: Playing the Donors at their own Game

'Making the best of the blueprint development' advocates change, not by rejecting policies but by engaging with them (Roe, 1991). This can be done by trying to improve the simplified narrative on which the policy is based, or by creating counter narratives. Change the system from without, change the system from within. Another way of bridging the top-down-bottom up gap is to work, if you have the energy, from within the governance agenda. Mosse (2002) believes that it is more useful to discuss how practice bolsters policy rather than how policy shapes practice. Activities and outputs happen first and then project implementers use policy to legitimise what they have done. In the same way, re-funding of projects is sought by making the rationale of the project extension fit the policies of the time. There was a strong belief that the English Language Teacher Training Project Vietnam would not get a recommended extension financed by DFID simply because it was 'English Language Teaching' and it was 'Secondary School'. DFID were known to 'do' Primary, just as they were known to no longer 'do' English. The Extension rationale was therefore argued in terms of teacher training, educational management reform and the fact that it was lower secondary - essentially an extension

of Primary, for its soon-to-be included status as part of the basic (compulsory) education system.

For the idealistic, this way of playing the game perpetuates the success and continuation of bad policies.

"For policy to succeed it is necessary it seems that it is not implemented, but that enough people firmly believe that it is."

*Mosse (2002)*

For the pragmatic, and those who believe policy-making will continue to be an arbitrary process, Mosse's reaching 'upwards' for face validity from the authorities rather than the assumed handing 'downwards' of content validity to the implementers is a workable framework. Indeed, this way of playing the game may subvert bad policies. It is true to say that the English Language Teacher Training Project Vietnam is both the thing it said it was for the purposes of re-funding and the thing it did not mention: there is no denying that it has created an in-service training system that cuts across both curriculum and education sectors, and has impact in terms of education, management, and training. Similarly, there is no denying that it retrains *lower* secondary *English language* teachers and trainers. Most importantly, in the face of all odds, it got its extension, and has greater value for Vietnam because of that extension.

This meeting of top-down and bottom-up from within is important because of the reality of funding. It may in itself not be a function of good governance because of a lack of transparency in its motivation, but that is not the point, or perhaps, that is the point.

### A Plan for Vietnam
If you put all these issues together and applied it to Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) you might get the following synopsis. The reality that grants aid to education is about to cease (from AusAID for the Vietnamese Australian Training Project, and from DFID for the English Language Teacher Training Project) is just surfacing. The fact that both these projects are MOET's premier projects in terms of out-there-in-the–provinces, delivering-the-goods is much more important to them than it is to the donors. The fact that both projects focus on English language teaching is much more important to MOET than it is to the donors. The fact that the ELTTP, already operating at a sub-national level, should be re-funded so that it can go national is much more important to

MOET than it is to the donors (The fact that the project cost GBP 3.5m for one third of the country means 'go national' comes with a relatively cheap price tag).

At the same time, MOET do not have the capacity to reach 'upwards' to the policy makers and validate what they want in donor policy terms – but if they did, they would get it. MOET would get their extension if they:

- formed their own policy on the need for second language (English) in schools to make globalisation, public administration capacity building and good governance work for the poor;
- argued that this could not be a primary education input because of other curriculum demands and lack of human and material resources at primary level;
- institutional reform for training mechanisms; and
- made some attempt at finding other sources of partial funding.

MOET could even get AusAID's Capacity Building for Effective Governance (CEG) Facility to help them write the bid, under the CEG priority focus areas: 'Building institutional capacities to support civil service skills development' and 'Planning and resource allocation'.

Governance on governance: in short, if MOET learnt how to play the game, simplified the narrative to fit the donors' budget objectives, learnt how to exemplify good governance in their own formation and implementation of a language policy, then they could use that funding to extend a training model that has worked in 22 provinces to all 61 provinces, and who would tell them no? However, if MOET do not put forward their 'counter narrative', or change the one the donors want them to have, then they are going to have to accept what they are given: choose it or lose it.

The governance narrative at a public service level is an attractive, albeit an illusory, one for donors. By fixing the administration, you supposedly fix the institutions; and by fixing the institutions you supposedly fix the system (Leftwich, 1994); only there is no proven methodology or experience in how you fix it, and not a lot of honesty in who you fix it for. With the bilateral aid agencies buying into governance at a surprising rate, the choice for recipient governments is narrowed, preventing them from addressing their own development priorities, which are frequently more focussed on education and health. As educationalists and specialists in development, it is our job to keep the choices open for recipients, both at the grass-roots level and at the government-agency level and not allow policy-making to become 'a mystique of elites' (Clay and Schaffer, 1984).

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