

Preface

The purpose of this book is to give voice to scholars from developing countries and regions around the world by inviting them to explore how the international educational policy, invariably linked to international aid, influences education policy formation and implementation in their country or region and how this influence does or does not meet the local cultural, social, economic, and political needs.

A relatively recent and small body of research and commentary supports a discourse that questions how well international education policy mandates such as *Education for All* serve the needs of developing countries. Noel McGinn argues that policy mandates should not be tied to funding assistance. He advocates for a separation between “material assistance” and “technical assistance” in education and recommends that donor technical assistance make a shift away from providing international “best practices” to enabling local researchers and policymakers to generate relevant policy alternatives. However, others argue that while donor countries advocate for local government control of development, these countries are inextricably linked to the donor for funding, the result being that donor money continues to drive policy formation. Kenneth King from a 2011 contribution to the Norrag website claims that “It would be easy to show that they have been valuable for the politics of the Northern international development community...but very much harder to prove that they are genuinely and widely owned by the South” (para 4).

In addition, while international education scholars have developed illustrious careers and vast knowledge in the field of education in developing countries, their perspective, however expert, does not always reflect the perspectives of the local scholars. As more and more developing countries—through government grants and nongovernmental organization funding—are providing advanced education for the best and brightest, it seems time to give these scholars a voice in the discourse on educational policy formation.

The intent of this book is to provide these local scholars with a platform to advance this discourse. Historically, these scholars, who observe and study the donor process, have had little influence over the decisions. Decisions are largely negotiated between international donors and local government officials to fund educational programs, with government officials having policy agendas that may be

intertwined with donor requirements. It is hoped that this book will give established scholars, emerging scholars, and graduate students in international and comparative education studies an alternative perspective for the study of international educational policy.

The book is divided into two sections, with a concluding chapter: The first section sets the stage for the discussions by providing the background for the genesis of the book along with a historical context for international education policy and the current state of international donor policy for education. The second section consists of chapters written by scholars from around the developing world—Latin America, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe. Many, but not all, of the authors were educated in the West, but all have roots in the countries about which they are writing. The book poses these questions to the scholars: Do these policies work for your country? How has the international policy influenced the formation of the local education policy in your country or region? What would you propose for your country or region? The concluding chapter draws together the ideas and perspectives posed by the contributing scholars and attempts to form generalizations about policy but also a theory for framing the development of education policy.

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Carolyn A. Brown

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