

Tailoring Education To Changing Society Needs In Today's Environment

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Abstract	Article Info
<p>As a result of recent years, the world is now challenged like never before. Sustainability is now an essential consideration to all community, social and economic initiatives across all parts of the world. The world now appreciates more than ever that we all inhabit one “Global Village”. Geographical barriers are now not obstacles and the actions in one part of world affect the rest of the world. This globalization has created a complex environment for sustainable education. Today the factors influencing sustainable education include Language, Historical / cultural influences, Expectations, Development, Access to resources, Socio-economics, Politics and Religion. This paper will explore the effects of these factors and how skills development and education has been affected. It will also deal with the impacts on outcomes and expectations, specifically the understanding that “one solution will not suit all needs.</p>	<p>Keywords: Integration, Education, Assessment, Past Influences, Management, Scope Definition, Sustainability, Diversity</p>

INTRODUCTION

This topic has been discussed and debated for decades, even centuries.

How and Why does Education need to be tailored to meet Society's needs?

After all, we all live on the same planet, our actions affect others in other parts of the world, we live in isolated communities across the world, and all societies are the same. **RIGHT?**

Social needs things such as acceptance, appreciation, belonging and companionship. Essentially, social needs are met by forging relationships with other people. (1)

A society is a group of individuals involved in persistent social interaction, or a large social group sharing the same spatial or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Societies are characterized by patterns of relationships (social relations) between individuals who share a distinctive culture and institutions; (2)

An organized group of persons associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes / a body of individuals living as members of a community. (3)

So, are Societies the same around the world? **NO**

Due to many factors, a society can be unique even when located near to others. Today, in the global village, society is affected by:

History, Culture, Laws: The society's history, Culture and Laws have formed the DNA of the group and have (and are likely to continue) to influence the Society.

Religion: Religion has always played an important part in the development of an individual society or group of societies. The impact of religion can be significant, particularly in regard to sensitive issues such as race, gender and cultural norms.

Climate: Climatic influences have significantly impacted on the development of societies, particularly in regard to such issues as food and transport.

Societal norms: Societal norms are generally the combination of many factors and therefore can be complex and difficult for external parties to understand at times.

Expectations: Some would consider Expectations to be linked to Societal Norms, but they can be very different. The expectations of different genders, generations and individuals can be different and at times may conflict within a society. Expectations can relate to emotions, economic, spiritual, and behavioral issues.

Language: Language is often related to history and culture but can also be affected by external factors such as politics. Dialects within a language can cause misunderstandings and therefore lead to conflict. Languages affect significantly how "Education" is delivered and understood – and therefore – implemented.

Access to resources: Globally, access to resources is becoming an increasing issue. A society's access to natural resources can impact access to industry and food availability. Equally, access to energy can be a significant factor, as 940 million or 13% of the world's population have no access to electricity (5) and nearly 3 billion people or 37% of the

world's population have never used the internet (4)(6). This will particularly impact on the use and effectiveness of technology-based education and data gathering.

Politics: As mentioned earlier, Politics can influence a number of more traditional issues, particularly, central based politics as opposed to local politics. Political expectations are often not as obvious as their drivers may be varied. The term "Political Masters" can be used to reference this factor and may have a major influence in such things as financial and access to resources.

Geographical relationships: Geography can influence the development of a society due to the surrounding topography or (as often is the case in countries such as Indonesia) the remoteness caused by Island living.

Interdependency: As discussed earlier, a Society is a group and therefore influenced by “group dynamics and dependencies. The cohesiveness of a society can be influenced by the “interdependency” of the parts (the individuals).

Economy: Globally, economic influences and growth are a major impact on all levels from individuals, groups, societies, regions, countries and global. As other factors change (eg climate, generational migration, technology), the society may experience changes to its economy and its economic expectations.

Trust: Change and adoption of new education and skills development will be affected by the trust of the participants. If they don't trust the messages being delivered, they will not be accepted. It is also vital that other groups at higher levels also have trust in the education and its outcomes. It is important that measurable outcomes and acceptance are available with demonstrated results. Trust will be a two-way street and needs to be earned.

Willingness: Willingness is often referred to simply as “What's in this for me?” How willing are the participants, at all levels, to actively participate in the ongoing process.

International (External Factors): Recently, many of the factors that have been discussed herein have been raised to inclusion in the

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Sustainable Principles. Through the use of SDG's, the link and dependencies between factors becomes easily visible. Like our existence on this planet (this Global Village), everything that is done is dependent upon and linked to almost everything else. It is from these links and dependencies that the solutions become unique. To achieve benefits, therefore, education must recognize the links and dependencies, and undertake skills / knowledge development to enhance existing links, create new links and demonstrate dependency achievements. No one issue can occur independently.



To illustrate the differences and influences, let's consider some examples:

Indonesian Islands-

Indonesia consists of over 17,000 islands and is the world's largest archipelagic state and the 14th-largest country by area. The creation of these islands has allowed for the creation of diverse, often unique, societies to exist. Whilst many islands share similar economies, such as fishing, they also are exposed to diverse impacts ranging from resource availability to loss of generations through migration of the younger to larger centers. These diversities provide environments for the need for unique solutions to be required to meet society's needs.



Solomon Islands –

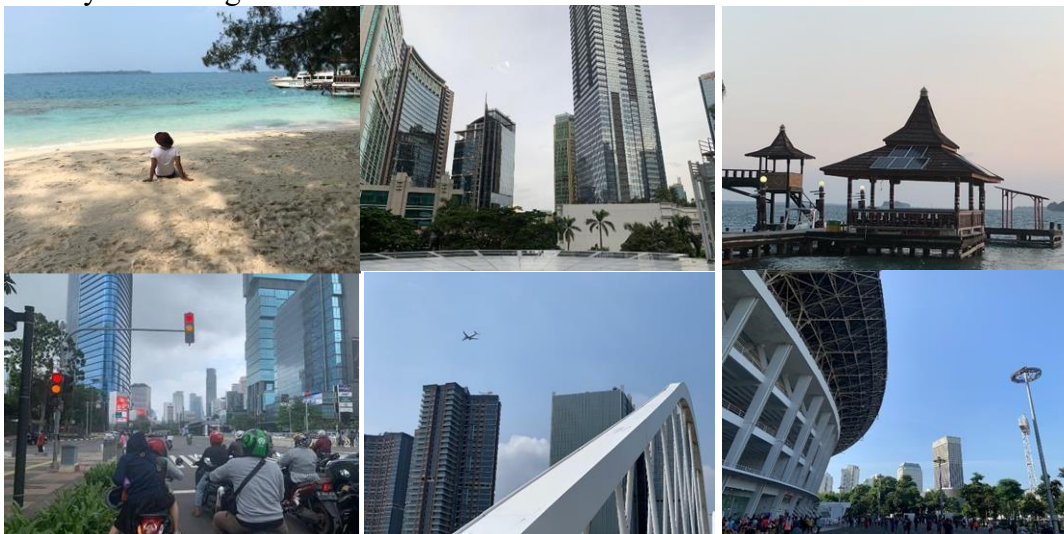
This group of islands is located in the Pacific Ocean and is home to a number of racial groups. The islands were a key part of the Pacific theatre of war during World War 2.

Like many islands, it is dependent on natural resources and tourism. Its traditional culture includes the ownership of all tribal lands by the “women” of the tribe but managed by the men. This is in recognition of the concept of “Mother Earth”.



Jakarta and its off-shore islands –

The capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta is located on the island of Java. It is the national capital of world's fourth-most populous country and the most populous Muslim-majority country. It is therefore a city of diversity, and its size brings challenges. The city is also recognized globally as a city affected by rising sea levels. Jakarta is also home to a group of offshore islands which involve tourism and marine industries. The diversity provides environments for multi-level societies and therefore multi-level needs. The existence of multi-level considerations provides the environment for the creation of interdependencies and links to meet the needs of the city and its region.



Java rural communities –

Whilst being located on the same island as Jakarta, the rural areas offer completely different environments. There is a modern saying “No Farmers – No Food” which seeks to recognize the value of farmers within our lives. These societies are often the product of centuries of evolution and demonstrate a connection to nature and the land. They are generally strongly connected communities but can also reflect distinctive different from one community to a neighboring community. Rural societies are also strongly linked to larger city communities for processing and sale of products grown.



Australian Capital Cities –

Like all countries, Australia has its cities, but being an island nation, they are largely coastal communities. All cities are societies they are a collection of communities and demonstrate diverse cultures. Whilst the cities are similar to other world cities, they also demonstrate the differences and diversities. Solutions to their issues would be different to solutions to similar issues in other countries.



Bali –



An Indonesian Island which demonstrates the diversity of the Indonesian Archipelago. Bali has an economy, which is based on local products but also tourism, which is drawn by its culture and nature. Many would say its issues are a result of its popularity.



These examples demonstrate just some of the diversity of society around the world. Each has its own uniqueness and requires integration with the unique solutions to its issues. Education and development programs must be tailored to this unique characteristic whilst recognizing the overall integration within wider societies.

The Pathway Moving forward:

As discussed earlier, Researching & Developing Solutions must suit societies multi-level needs :

Relevance to all levels:

Solutions must demonstrate its connection / relevance to the stakeholders (often at multiple levels). Stakeholders will connect with solutions if relevance to them is demonstrated – as per the old phrase “What’s in it for me?”

Flexibility:

Solutions need to demonstrate flexibility to meet both current diverse needs as well as potential future needs. The flexibility must also reflect the degree of impact that the education and solutions may have on the society and therefore be responsible for a level of change.

Inclusiveness:

Like as in flexibility, stakeholders will connect with solutions, if they feel that their views and expectations have been included and have been “listened to”. Demonstrated “inclusivity” is a major factor in achieving benefits from education.

Understandable:

The solutions and packages offered to a society need to be able to be understood on multiple levels. “Understanding” will generally demonstrate “flexibility”, “relevance” and “inclusivity”.

Considers lifecycle:

All solutions and packages will have a “life cycle”. Their impact of societies will usually lead to change and therefore the original basis or issue will “change”. Societies evolve and change due to the environment that they occupy, so therefore “tailored solutions” should allow for its own evolution / lifecycle.

Ongoing review:

As part of a Tailored Solution, allowance should be included for periodic reviews, to not only test the outcomes but to also revisit the criteria used initially for continued appropriateness.

Contains measurable outputs:

Tailored solutions should also include regular “measurable outcomes” as part of the ongoing review process. Measurable outputs provide real data to demonstrate effectiveness and appropriateness.

Considers generational retentions:

Whilst tailored solutions need to recognise generational factors (eg tech savvy, terminology), it must also reflect the issue of generational migration. Many societies are being impacted by the migration of younger residents to other locations such as larger cities or other countries. The drain of these generations is a loss of valuable resource

Integrates with others:

As discussed earlier, tailored solutions do not exist in isolation. Whilst they may demonstrate a unique solution to a society issue, it will integrate and impact on other societies and regions. The integration activities are often seen as the strength of the initiative and can demonstrate its inbuilt SWOT analysis.

Needs to be Manageable, Demonstrates / meets local needs, unique, deliverable, renewable:

As discussed earlier, a tailored solution needs to reflect its ability to be Manageable, Demonstrates / meets local needs, unique, deliverable, and renewable. If a solution is not seen the demonstrate these factors, it will not be deliverable and will not provide real benefits to stakeholders.

Economically viable:

All tailored solutions must ensure a key ingredient is met. The solutions must be economic to deliver. This often means dealing with funding sources and commercial factors.

Support services:

To deliver real benefits, it is often essential to ensure that relevant “Support Services” are available or can be provided to ensure effective delivery processes. The provision of support services is often through the use of technology, but as discussed previously this may often be in appropriate or not readily available. At times, the provision of support services may include the establishment of an associated development program to establish suitable services.

Milestones to celebrate:

It is essential that societies are able to celebrate relevant milestones, as it reinforces the connection to the solution. At times, celebrations are at multiple levels from individuals to communities to countries.

Demonstrate respect:

All societies involve individuals and as such success is achieved when all levels involved feel that they are being “respected”. Throughout the implementation of the solution, respect may need to be “earned”. Even those with negative feelings towards the solutions, Respect can often allow them to migrate from negative to either neutral or supportive.

CONCLUSION

Today, there are challenges that will only be solved by the combined efforts of multidisciplinary resources linked with:

- local knowledge,
- understanding,
- Respect
- Guidance
- resources
- acceptance



“Tailoring Education to Society Need” would generally be considered to be a normal effort that is always done, but in fact, it is a complex process that needs to be fully considered to assist in delivering real sustainable benefits that provides cost effective, relevant education / skills development. The delivery of quality tailored education can be essential to creating a sustainable beneficial development process for a society.

It is essential to remember that **“One solution will NOT suit multiple needs. The Most reasonable solutions are often the MOST UNIQUE”**.

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