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*The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) began in 2005. What does this term mean? What is new about ESD, and in what respects is it broader than "Education for All" and the Millennium Development Goals?*

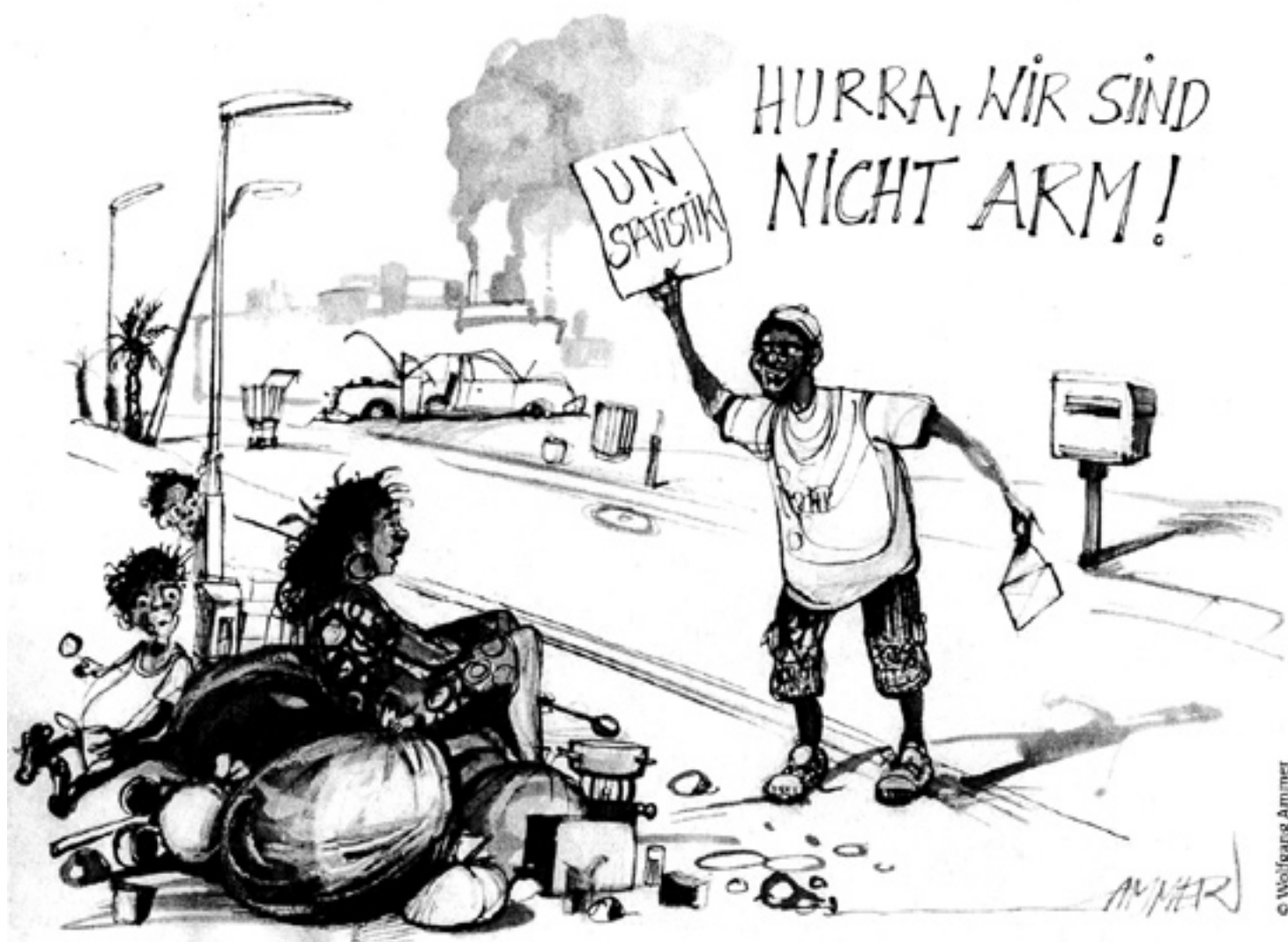
*Education for All*

*and the*

*Millennium Development Goals*

*The author first reviews the framework of ESD and then describes a case study of sustainability in Turkey, relating to help with recovery from an earthquake. Hideki Maruyama is a researcher at the Department for International Research and Cooperation of the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) of Japan.*

## Non-Formal Education for Sustainable Development in Turkey



*UN Statistics: Hooray, we are not poor*  
*Source: WELT-SICHTEN 2/3-2008, p. 54*

**The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development** started in 2005. EFA could be more important for many countries because it shows clear numerical targets, but Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is more ambiguous because "*sustainable development is a term that everyone likes, but nobody is sure of what it means.*" (Daly, 1996) When development is generally mentioned, we tend to think of economic development and human development. Sustainability is often used as the term for how to make international cooperation activities continue when external funds stop. But ESD covers wider topics and contains the complex but integrated relationships among economic, ecological, social and political systems - more than education only - needed to keep economic development sustainable or to nurture the sense of nature conservation. In addition to the new view and scope of ESD, the contents should be considered because necessary knowledge and skills are different across cultures. Islamic societies, for instance, may not "*depend*" on the global framework.

On the other hand, we should also realise that the effects of naming something change our life, even if it is an external concept. When the international organisations used the concepts of gender, it empowered women, although bringing in the new concept may have broken local cultures. Can ESD then change society for the better or make people happier? The concept is still vague, because it is hard to understand how ESD is different from environmental, development and international education which we already have.

ESD can be applied to education in both developing and developed countries, while EFA and MDGs are mainly understood in terms of education in developing countries, where our view shifts to more holistic development from economic and human development. What can a donor society learn from developing countries? What did we lose through the development process? It is the social aspect of sustainability that has to be considered in any society.

### **A Sustainable Village Starting to Recover from an Earthquake**

In 1999 an earthquake of 7.4 magnitude caused 20,000 casualties in the Istanbul area. Adapazari was one of the towns closest to the epicenter and most of the residents were victims of the earthquake. Many lost their homes, family members and friends. The scale of the earthquake was so large that the Government could not handle the situation immediately. Up to

that point, people in Turkey looked to Government agencies with a sense of dependence because Government had saved people from crises in modern Turkish history. However, as a result of the earthquake, many Turkish people decided to help each other because they were not able to wait for aid from Government. Citizens' activities flowered (Özerdem & Barakat, 2000), and voluntarism became stronger.

After the earthquake, the media reported severe damage and causes such as shoddy construction and disorganised urban planning, and this drew the attention of architects. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor Jan Wampler and his Turkish graduates developed the concept for a sustainable village as part of the recovery activities, raised funds and arranged for the recruitment of residents. It was named Beriköy. "*Beri*" means "*over here and now, near us, ours*

," and "

*köy*

" means "

*village*

". It was planned as a village where people could rebuild their lives as in the distant past, yet having a sustainability that could be passed on to the next generation. The vision was to become a village where there would be things like solar and wind generators, and facilities for gathering rainwater and recycling.

As of December 2006, it is a small village where eight households have come to live, and these kinds of facilities have not yet been built. However, once completed, Beriköy will be a village of 50 households. Plans include a handicrafts center to assist with income generation and a facility for women and children, as well as a bus route to connect the village with Adapazari. Most of the funds were donated by the private sector domestically and internationally, and the selection of the villagers began. Under the guidance of the initial steering committee which formed the YAY Foundation, a partnership evolved to include Habitat for Humanity International and the ÇEKÜL Foundation. The selection criteria were developed by the psychology department of Sakarya University, which neighbours Adapazari. Candidates had to be earthquake victims who lived in Adapazari, live in pre-fab housing and have the financial means to purchase a house in the village with a small loan (\$100 per month).

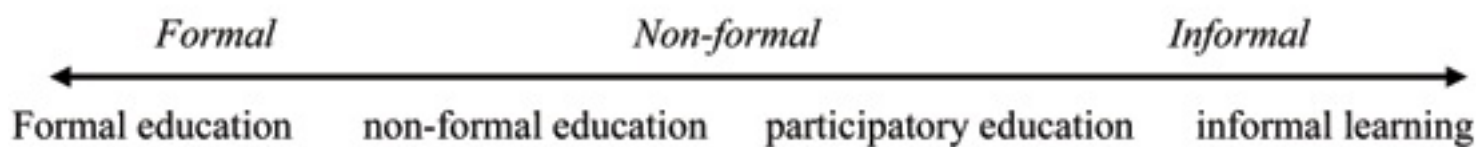
The organising committee and secretariat were at the YAY office in Istanbul. YAY knew that villagers would hesitate if YAY publicised the selection process through the Government, so it chose to do so by local public networking. As a result of publicising these conditions, the number of applicants exceeded 900. After a paper-based selection round and interview, 69 families were ultimately selected, of which 50 to live and 19 on a waiting list. Also, although it was not mentioned publicly, a selection criterion given special attention was a balance among factors such as age and gender in order to create a village of ample diversity.

While much time has passed since the 1999 earthquake took place, in the project that continues even now, there is likely something to learn about sustainability. Relatively few citizens' activities for recovery continued for long, many Turkish people returned to giving priority to their ordinary lives, especially after economic crisis in 2001. While so many activities were coming to a close, the village has been sustained, and is a rare project case.

### **Non-Formal Education to Construct Social Connectedness** **Non-Formal Education for Tacit Knowledge**

Children in Turkey are generally cared for like treasures, and Turkish people who are raised receiving this kind of love keep their respect for older people as they grow. Even in Turkey, nuclearisation of the family is progressing in the cities, but connections between people remain strong. Informal learning is formed in the process of communication between different generations in the Turkish community.

Communication includes the transfer of tacit knowledge. As we know more than we can tell (Polanyi, 1983), knowledge and skills are acquired by unintended learning. Tacit knowledge is the knowledge that people possess in their minds while being unaware of how valuable it is for others. Children are taught not only by school but also by the family and community they belong to. Some knowledge and skills in local cultures and norms are transferred through dense social interaction, especially in small communities.



*Fig. 1: Continuum of education and learning between formal and non-formal style*

Rogers (2004) describes both formal and non-formal education (NFE) as imprecise and explains that the formal education system today accepts non-formal pedagogical methods, and meanwhile, non-formal and informal education are more structured by the increase of participating actors. He draws the axis between the two to summarise that the participatory

approach should be understood as a part of NFE, which is not based on the traditional category but includes the area of informal learning (Fig. 1).

### **Social Capital: Traditional Tie and Cultural Bridge**

What supports rich human relationships is a frame of mind among the Turkish people to help others based on the necessity of working collaboratively. Even if it is someone they don't know, they help a person in trouble, and if it is someone they do know, they sacrifice themselves to help. The concept of social capital can be used to explain this. Social capital is more implicit than human capital (education received) and economic capital (property and cash) but shows the relationships among people at the various levels in society. It is categorised as bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is a tie that knits people within an in-group and support the group members based on the group's rules, values, norms and etc. Bridging social capital is the bridge between different groups which do or do not share common goals at a wider level of relationships than the bond. Some people's bonding social capital can have negative consequences for others because it sometimes excludes out-group members by the rules or norms of the in-group. (Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000) Where strong bonding social capital exists, bridging social capital may be weak, and thus, a weak tie is advantageous. (Granovetter, 1973)

The key contributor to the sustainability in the present case is the tradition of helping one another through *imece* shared among Turkish people. *Imece* means a collaborative work in which all group members help each other so that the work of each member is completed in order. This word is not in small dictionaries, but even Turkish children know it by learning from family or neighbours in the process of living rather than as written knowledge. The term "*imece*

" is commonly used with action in farming areas. During farming activities, villagers have cultural and traditional norms and expectations of enquiring about each other and requesting this co-operative assistance. For the residents, imece is the same as obligation/expectations and norms. Social bonds are built in the community and taken over generation to generation. As Coleman (1988) states, there is a strong influence of social capital in family and community.

Like the micro social bond within a community, *vakif* across various groups has also become endowed with social capital at the macro level.

*Vakif*

is an Islamic system based on the Muslim's religious duty of charity and a spirit of reciprocity, which functions as a channel for the formation of social capital and income distribution. It is originally the Islamic practice of donation, such as giving land, rugs or other assets to the mosque based on Sharia (Islamic law). It makes "

*bridges*

" between groups to achieve the public good and help groups with and without the expectation

of immediate return. Intermediary organisations such as YAY serve this bridging function.

After the earthquake, *imece* and *vakif* were the foundation of the citizens' activities. *Imece* is a spirit of helping one another within groups or regions and

*vakif*

is a connection bridging groups. Much as Putnam (1993) describes balanced and generalised reciprocity, *imece* is the balanced as a simultaneous exchange of items of equivalent value and *vakif* is a continuing relationship of exchange that may at any given time be imbalanced but involves mutual expectations.

### Revaluing Indigenous Culture and Effect of Naming

Islamic or Turkish traditional cultures are sometimes regarded as inferior to Western cultures in modern Turkey. For example, Göle (1997) describes *alaturka* (the Turkish way) as having a negative connotation; *alafranka* (the European way) is deemed proper and valuable. Çýnar (2005) points to the balance between excessive Westernism and stagnant Islamism in Turkish modernity, and Berkes (1964) explains that the basic conflict of secularism in Turkey is often between the forces of tradition, which promote the domination of religion and sacred law, and the forces of change. This sentiment is understandable when developing countries are achieving economic development.

The effects of naming can be considered here because we find the values of indigenous knowledge and wisdoms. In a sustainable society, ESD concepts make the local people recognise the importance of cultural and religious sources for social capital because these sources may work better than direct reform by external forces. Turkish people could revalue their traditions and cultures to accumulate social capital in the process of modernisation, and there is nothing backward about this in comparison with developed countries. YAY utilized *imece* for residents' collaborative work building their own houses and tried to keep the village open for "*bridging*" with other communities. Tsurumi (1989) emphasises the importance of endogenous development in which the locals self-reliantly create a society based on culture/ tradition and the indigenous natural ecosystem suitable to their local unique conditions, while matching external knowledge, skills and systems.

### Balanced Development for a Sustainable Society

In village life in Turkey, economic and human capital are generally meager, but social capital is relatively large. Beriköy was established as part of earthquake recovery, but is an example of the realisation of balanced sustainable development. Turkey is one of the most rapidly

developing countries and defines sustainable development as making economic development sustainable. This lays too much emphasis on the accumulation of economic capital. Amidst the rising concern with education issues, human capital is understood as necessary for economic development. This is an unbalanced development because

*"economic growth alone does not lead to health improvement".*

(Baum, 1999)

Sustainable development has to have economic (material), human (individual) and social (relationships) capital in good balance. The first two are emphasised in a globalised and knowledge-based society. The fulfillment of the social aspect should be given more importance through ESD. All societies must originally have some accumulation of social capital, and there are many local wisdoms we must remember. ESD brings an opportunity to integrate local indigenous wisdom with modern education, formal with informal, for children and a society looking towards the next generation. Co-operation within a group is rather common, and when social aspects are paid attention to in sustainable development, co-operation between groups should be more emphasised.

EFA and MDGs are very important in 2008 because of the deadline of 2015. The Decade of ESD also continues up to 2015 and we can combine the two for more impact on governments and societies. Some people in donor countries believe international aid activities have no relationships with their life and think domestic social problems should be solved first. ESD, if it focuses more on social aspects in addition to ecology, has a huge potential for both recipient and donor societies to learn from each other.

### **Acknowledgement**

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