



# Human development and Education: an education perspective focused on human development

## Desarrollo humano y Educación: una perspectiva de la educación enfocada al desarrollo humano

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### Abstract

This paper seeks to answer the question: Education for what? It also addresses another issue: What kind of education is needed to help meet individual and social needs? In this regard, it explores a general answer: for human development.

The first part focuses on the role of education in the human development indicators of the UN, OECD, and UNESCO. It reviews the changes in the factors adopted to measure it, highlights the importance of formal education in these indicators, and concludes by stating that despite its recognized relevance, education as it is currently understood seems unable to meet the challenges posed by these demands.

The second part proposes an alternative educational perspective—one grounded in the experiences of individuals, present both in schools and all social organizations, that influences intellectual, behavioral, emotional, and intuitive aspects. Its content, beyond instrumental knowledge, includes everyday life.

The third part illustrates the need for this alternative form of education aligned with the principles of human development.

**Keywords:** Education, human development, formative experience

**JEL Codes:** g1, I2, I21

### Resumen

En este trabajo se intenta responder a la pregunta ¿educación para qué? Interesa también otra cuestión: ¿Qué educación se requiere para contribuir a satisfacer las necesidades individuales y sociales? En este sentido se explora una respuesta general: para el desarrollo humano.

La primera parte enfoca hacia el papel de la educación en los indicadores de desarrollo humano de la ONU, OCDE y la Unesco, se revisan los cambios de los factores adoptados para medirlo, se señala la importancia de la educación escolar en ellos y se concluye diciendo que no obstante su reconocida relevancia, la educación, tal como es asumida, parece no responder a los retos planteados por esas demandas. En la segunda parte se propone otra perspectiva educativa, una fundamentada en la experiencia de los agentes; presente en la escuela y en todas las organizaciones sociales; que incida en lo intelectual, lo conductual, y en lo emocional y lo intuitivo; cuyos contenidos, además de los





instrumentales, sean los de la vida diaria. En la tercera parte, se ejemplifica la necesidad de esa otra educación en la línea marcada por el desarrollo humano.

**Palabras clave:** Educación, desarrollo humano, experiencia formativa

**Código JEL:** 91, I2, I21

## 1. The measurement of human development and well-being

Education for what? The answer can be conventional, narrow, and simplistic: for the training of human resources necessary to meet the needs of the productive system. A more complex answer might place Human Development (HD) at its core: to contribute to it. For Amartya Sen (1998), HD involves expanding human freedoms in terms of capabilities, functionings, and agency; a person must possess resources or “goods” to carry out an activity, enabling them to exercise the capability to be or to do, with the freedom and opportunity to choose. Thus, a response to the question Educate for what? could be: for human development for the formation of free individuals who exercise their liberties and rights and create opportunities for others. Moreover, this purpose may require immediate responses and conditions, meaning that education should already operate within the conditions of human development forming free individuals who, from the outset, exercise their freedom and rights and promote opportunities for others.

Accepting this answer has profound implications, which calls for a brief review to understand what HD frameworks refer to and the role education plays in them. For this purpose, this paper will draw on a review of documents from internationally funded and high-impact organizations, given their influence in shaping public policy and the proposals that accompany international funding. Other dimensions of the relationship between education and HD such as conceptual and methodological aspects will be addressed in future works.

Throughout the 20th century, economic growth was the central objective of public policy, and progress

across countries and regions was measured in those terms. Accordingly, studies focused on the factors that stimulate it namely, physical capital (infrastructure), human capital (health, education, interpersonal relations), and technology. Education was therefore seen as a decisive element for the development of both countries and individuals, though its outcomes are influenced by structural, institutional, and personal factors. In any case, education and the human dimension are granted significant value in the study of well-being.

In this context, Sen (1985) became a pioneer of a new multidimensional approach requiring more comprehensive data to measure well-being economics. He redefined well-being not as a property of objects but as something experienced by individuals, emphasizing the real freedom people have the freedom to be and to do for well-being and distinguishing between what individuals are capable of doing (capabilities) and what they actually do (functionings).

Sen (2000) argued that education can be viewed both as a freedom and as a capability for development, as it enhances individuals' ability to improve other capabilities and is therefore essential to well-being. In his approach, Sen suggested that the relevance of education in development should be assessed both in terms of its direct contribution to economic growth and its role in expanding other capabilities. However, it's important to mention that the Human Capabilities framework does not explain the causes of the phenomena being investigated, nor does it allow for predictions. Rather, as many authors have noted, it is essentially an evaluative approach that has been used, discussed, and adapted by various disciplines and countries.

Significant changes in the global measurement of progress and well-being began in 2009, particularly in response to the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission Report (2009), which challenged the identification of well-being with material wealth. That is, social progress and well-being measurement must consider how people feel about their lives, alongside data on their objective conditions. One innovation in measuring well-being is the incorporation of individuals' subjective perspectives how they self-evaluate aspects of their lives, including their overall life satisfaction,



momentary feelings, or the sense of meaning or purpose in their lives. These measures focus on what people believe and report they feel, not just on their objective conditions (OECD, 2019).

### **1.1 Changes in the measurement of human development and well-being**

Over the past three decades, new indicators and indexes have been developed to include other dimensions that influence the development of countries and to monitor these resources. The objective has been to create tools to identify the different groups formed throughout the process of human progress and to use this information to inform policy measures that reduce gaps and expand opportunity areas.

#### *1.1.1 The Human Development index*

In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promoted the creation of the Human Development Index (HDI), with the purpose of consolidating and adding various indicators into a single index that did not rely solely on economic income, but also considered education and life expectancy. The HDI was proposed as a composite index that quantifies three basic pillars of human development: “the ability to lead a long and healthy life, measured by life expectancy at birth; the ability to acquire knowledge, measured by average years of schooling and expected years of schooling; and the ability to achieve a decent standard of living, measured by gross national income per capita” (PNUD, 2018a). This makes it possible to compare countries based on the extent to which their inhabitants have the capabilities to be or do what they wish in other words, the possibility for individuals to achieve a better quality of life.

The measurement of the HDI has evolved continuously, following the recommendations of expert groups and in response to global challenges, becoming more and more comprehensive. Since 2010, adjustments have been made to incorporate three new composite indices: the Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), which reflects the HDI in relation to the magnitude of inequality; the Gender Inequality Index, which emphasizes the empowerment of women; and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which measures components of poverty not related to income (PNUD, 2010). In

2014, an additional index was proposed: the Gender Development Index, which contrasts the HDI levels between women and men (PNUD, 2018a).

An analysis of the HDI measurement results from its inception in 1990 through the most recent report in 2017 shows that, in general, all countries, regions, and the various groups into which they can be categorized have improved over time in terms of their initial positions. If we consider the global HDI value in 2017 of 0.728, this reflects a 21.7% increase from the 1990 value of 0.598. Furthermore, we can observe a general global increase in life expectancy, years of schooling, and purchasing power. Using 1990 data as a reference, we can say that the average life expectancy has increased by seven years and that slightly more than 130 countries now have universal enrollment in primary education. On the other hand, the results observed over these three decades show that there are a variety of alternatives for achieving human development, meaning that it is not possible to replicate a single set of policies or models to reach this goal (PNUD, 2018a).

#### *1.1.2 The Millennium Development Goals*

In the year 2000, during the Millennium Summit, a commitment was signed by 189 countries called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the purpose of addressing, before 2015, the principal human rights challenges and “fighting extreme poverty in various dimensions: hunger, disease, income poverty, inadequate housing, social exclusion, educational problems, and environmental sustainability, among others” (PNUD, 2015). For the first time, a global initiative was undertaken with the definition of chronological goals and indicators that made it possible to measure progress and fulfillment of the objectives over the fifteen years of the initiative and thus monitor improvements in the quality of life of participating countries.

This initiative was composed of 8 goals, 21 targets, and 60 indicators and was the first effort at a global scale to simultaneously improve the standard of living of millions of people around the world. The MDGs represented a tool with a universal agenda of priorities that outlined a clear path for the development of countries. We are now twenty years from the launch of this initiative at the start of the new millennium, and we have still not succeeded in



eradicating poverty and hunger. However, there was evident progress during the 15 years covered by the commitment. Reported data indicate that hunger and extreme poverty decreased by nearly half, fewer children died, and more children were attending and completing primary education. This initiative assumed schooling to be an indispensable means by which people could develop their capabilities (PNUD, 2015).

#### 1.1.3 OECD'S better life initiative

In 2011, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched the Better Life Initiative as part of its effort to propose measures for evaluating well-being beyond merely considering Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This strategy is composed of two main elements: the How's Life? report and the Better Life Index.

The How's Life? report presented, for the first time in a single document, international indicators that allow comparison of countries and regions in terms of well-being measurement, based on the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission (2009). This publication evaluates eleven specific factors to characterize individual well-being within the domains of quality of life and material conditions. The quality-of-life group includes eight factors: health, work-life balance, education and skills, social connections, civic engagement and governance (community), environmental quality, personal security, and subjective well-being (life satisfaction). Meanwhile, material conditions are made up of three factors: income and wealth, jobs and earnings, and housing. Additionally, the initiative takes into account four types of resources that support the sustainability of future well-being in developing countries: natural, human, economic, and social capital. These forms of capital were also part of the recommendations in the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi framework (2009).

The OECD Better Life Index is an interactive tool that invites the public to assess "Subjective Well-being" through its online platform. Its philosophy is based on the need to capture people's perceptions of their living conditions and of what, in their view, is most important, thus treating individuals as subjects, not merely as objects of measurement. Unlike other indices, this initiative aims to encourage citizen

participation in the continuous process of pursuing social well-being (OCDE, 2017), inviting users to rate each of the eleven elements on the website and thereby reflect their own perspective on how to measure and compare well-being. The results are presented graphically in the shape of a flower, showing how citizens in each country understand, prioritize, and evaluate well-being (OCDE, 2019).

#### 1.1.4 The Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the United Nations committed to adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, replacing the MDGs. This new agenda includes 17 interlinked Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, drawn from the experience and outcomes of the MDGs. Its purpose is to promote the well-being of humanity and reaffirm international commitment to ending poverty and hunger by the year 2030, as well as to protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity (PNUD, 2018b).

The initiative aims to address and resolve the world's most pressing problems through a global and ambitious vision of prosperity that affects everyone. Its objective is to involve the entire world while "leaving no one behind," including everyone in the creation of a more sustainable, safe, and prosperous planet for humankind (PNUD, 2018b).

Once the SDGs and their corresponding targets were defined, a full 2030 Agenda was developed, representing a shift not only in focus but also in vision, policy, and development programming. Each participating country commits not only to monitoring its progress but also to identifying the most feasible strategies for achieving transformation based on its own needs and resource capacities. Countries are expected to define priorities according to their development stage through strategies, partnerships, and means of implementation (PNUD, 2018a).

#### 1.1.5 Comparison of the HDI, MDGs, OECD's Better Life Initiative and the SDGs

In a study conducted by the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) to measure progress on the SDGs, the researchers proposed an SDG Index (Teksoz, 2016). In the first part of the study, Graph 1 presents



a positive and significant correlation between the 2015 HDI rankings and their proposed SDG Index, indicating that these countries “are performing well in meeting basic human development needs, but perform worse in other SDG dimensions” (Teksoz, 2016).

### The MDGs and the SDGs

The main differences between the MDGs and the SDGs lie in universality and commitment. The MDGs focused only on developing countries, while the SDGs emphasize that a development agenda cannot be implemented without addressing all problems in an interconnected way, and in all countries. Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs mark the first time that all countries in the world are held accountable for these commitments (see Table 1).

### OECD’s Better Life Initiative and the SDGs

Regarding the differences between the OECD’s Better Life framework and the SDGs, it is important to consider that the former is an analytical and diagnostic tool for assessing the conditions of OECD member countries. It provides input for focusing on universally valued outcomes to evaluate the conditions of people and communities. The SDGs, by contrast, are embodied in the 2030 Agenda as a list of political commitments agreed upon by world leaders. They focus on the interrelationships among the goals and their impact on well-being. Notably, the 2030 Agenda encompasses all the dimensions addressed in the OECD’s well-being framework (2015).

In summary, as can be observed, the objectives, targets, and indicators used to measure human development have expanded since 1990, through the introduction of these various initiatives. This expansion has also included a broader scope in terms of country participation even beyond the OECD member states. In addition to the increase in the number of objectives, these have diversified to encompass a richer social life and a progressively broader and more complex concept of development. One clear trend is evident: it is no longer sufficient to focus solely on economic development or quantitative social indicators; it is now essential to consider the subjective dimensions of well-being, based on people’s perceptions of their own lives.

**Table 1.** Comparison of the HDI, MDGs, OECD’s Better Life Initiative and the 2030 SDGs

Initiative	Validity Period	Pillars and/or goals and countries	Indicators and/or targets
HDI	Since 1990	3 pillars 189 countries	4 indicators
MDGs	2000-2015	8 goals 193 countries	(2000) 17 targets (2002) 21 targets and 48 indicators (2008) 21 targets and 60 indicators
2030 SDGs	2015-2030	17 goals	169 targets and 232 global indicators
2030 SDG Index	Since 2015, annual	17 goals 193 countries	88 indicators (Sachs, 2018)
How’s life? OCDE	2011, 2013, 2015 y 2016	11 pillars 41 countries	34 indicators
OECD Better Life Index	Since 2011	11 pillars 184 countries	24 indicators

Source: Own elaboration based on information from UNDP (2010, 2015, 2018a and 2018b), OECD (2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019), Teksoz (2016), and Sachs et al. (2018).

### 1.2. The importance of education in the measurement of human and sustainable development

Regarding the central theme of this paper, the permanent and central presence of education is highlighted from the very first initiative. In the formulation of the Human Development Index (HDI), the ability to acquire knowledge was taken into account through expected and achieved years of schooling. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) recognized as their second objective the achievement of universal primary education. The OECD’s Better Life Initiative included school education tied to competencies as a component of individual well-being. Meanwhile, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed quality education, moving beyond a sole emphasis on coverage (see Table 2).

It is also notable though not clearly emphasized thus far that education has been mostly considered in terms of schooling, and within this focus, primarily basic education. In this section, we review more specific aspects, such as those just mentioned, of the presence of education in these initiatives.

**Table 2.** Education indicators in the HDI, the MDGs, the OECD's Better Life Initiative, and the SDGs

Initiative	Pillars, goals	General Education Goal	Education Indicators
HDI	1 pillar: 2 indicators		1. Adult literacy rate. 2. Gross enrollment ratio.
MDGs	MDG 2A 1 goal(2A): 3 indicators	Goal 2A. Achieve universal primary education by 2015	2.1 Net enrollment rate in primary education. 2.2 Proportion of students starting first grade who reach the last grade of primary education. 2.3 Literacy rate of people aged 15–24, women and men.
2030 SDGs	SDG 4: 10 goals 43 indicators	4. Ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promote lifelong learning for all	Listed in Appendix 1.
2030 SDG Index	SDG 4: 8 indicators		1. Average years of schooling. 2. Net primary enrollment rate (%). 3. Literacy rate of population aged 15–24, both sexes (%). 4. Population aged 25–64 with tertiary education (%). 5. PISA test score (0–600). 6. % of variance in performance explained by students' socioeconomic status. 7. Students performing below Level 2 in science. 8. Resilient students.
How's life? OCDE	3		1. Education levels. 2. School dropout rate. 3. Average years of schooling.
OECD Better Life Index	3		1. Years of education. 2. Student competencies in math, reading, and science. 3. Education level.

Source: Own elaboration based on information from UNDP (2010, 2015, 2018a and 2018b), OECD (2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019), Teksoz (2016), and Sachs et al. (2018).

### Measurement of Education in the SDGs

A substantive difference between MDG 2A and SDG 4 is that MDG 2A was based on a very specific and measurable set of indicators, which helped increase the capacity to monitor development in certain countries in those particular aspects, whereas the targets of SDG 4 are more complex and broad, thus including concepts that had not been previously quantified globally, which generated new challenges in developing indicators to monitor progress toward those SDG 4 targets.

As seen, in the 2030 Agenda education occupies a central place since it is included as a goal in itself

(SDG 4), broken down into 7 targets and 3 means of implementation (Table 3).

It is also noticeable that the emphasis on primary school education placed by the HDI and the MDGs begins to fade in the SDGs, where lifelong learning is proposed. Thus, SDG 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” has a broader vision than MDG 2A “achieve universal primary education.” This is especially evident by including as an indicator the percentage of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education. Below is Table 3, which shows the targets corresponding to Goal 4.



**Table 3.** Target to fulfill  the SDG agenda

4.1	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
4.2	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.
4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university.
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.
4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations.
4.6	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
4.a	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.
4.b	By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, particularly least developed countries, small island developing states, and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering, and scientific programs, in developed countries and other developing countries.
4.c	By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.

Source: UNESCO-UIS (2016)

We return to the comments. For the purposes of this work, it is especially important to highlight aspects that lead us to think about the responsiveness of the school system and schools in relation to the development goals, targets, and indicators established by the initiatives, in this case those of the 2030 Education Agenda of the SDGs.

The 10 targets of SDG 4 cover different aspects of education. Seven of the targets are expected outcomes, and three are means or mechanisms of implementation focusing on how to achieve the seven outcomes.

A first aspect relates to “Target 4.2 Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education.” Besides proposing the universalization of so-called pre-primary education (which takes place in a school), it aims to ensure that girls and boys receive care in early childhood to achieve their development. In the “Means of Implementation of SDG 4,” it is established that to fulfill this target, appropriate educational facilities must be built and safe learning environments created, as well as having qualified teachers. Regarding this, in the “SDG 4 Indicators,” preparation indicators include the proportion of children under 5 years old who are on track in their health, learning, and psychosocial well-being development, and the percentage of these children who “experience positive and stimulating learning environments at home.” However, when specifically looking at the respective “Means of Implementation,” no references are found to indicators related to these stimulating and positive home learning environments.

A second aspect relates to Target “4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship,” which states that it must be ensured that “all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, among other things through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development, among other means.” For this, the “Means of Implementation of SDG 4” propose the same statements for all the targets of the 2030 Agenda: adequate school facilities for children and persons with disabilities regarding gender issues, with “safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all,”



increasing scholarships in developing countries, and a substantial increase in qualified teachers.

The “SDG 4 Indicators” primarily consider as indicators: the degree of educational provision expressed in the incorporation of global citizenship, education for sustainable development, gender equality, and human rights in education policies, curricula, teacher training, and student assessment; in knowledge, the percentage of students adequately understanding global citizenship and sustainability, as well as environmental and earth sciences knowledge; and in provision, the percentage of establishments educating about HIV and sexuality, and the degree of implementation of the global human rights education program.

The 2030 Agenda includes education-related targets within other goals, meaning that education is an important component for achieving other goals, specifically those related to health (3), gender equality (5), economic growth (8), decent work (12), responsible consumption and production (13), and climate action (16) (see fig. 7). On the other hand, education results and progress can also be linked to achieving other SDGs, for example, through better living conditions, healthier behaviors, increased environmental awareness, and civic participation, as well as positive social outcomes such as economic growth (fig. 8). In this sense, the 2030 Agenda addresses, from a multidimensional approach, the connections between measurements and the drivers of economic, social, and environmental transformation, which define public policies starting from one SDG and having synergies with other goals, triggering a multidimensional effect that accelerates sustainable development.

Regarding the general classification of the 43 education-related indicators of SDG 4 concerning the following key concepts: learning, completion, participation, provision, readiness to learn, competencies, equity, policies, knowledge, resources, environment, scholarships, qualified and certified teachers, motivation, and support, these proposed indicators are described in Annex 1.

It is understood that many development goals, targets, and indicators could be achieved if schools were improved not only as innovative schools like those described by Alfredo Hernando Calvo (2016) in his book “Journey to 21st Century Schools,” but all schools and even the entire school system. However, there are educational aspects and

processes that cannot be resolved solely by schools’ efforts; it is necessary to think of an educational society as a whole. In this regard, proposals have existed for some time, such as social pedagogy or social education, though still linked to the school. Generally, these proposals consider broadening the school’s perspective to connect it more to social problems and simultaneously make society more participative in school issues.

The challenge is enormous, and to advance in this direction, broad social participation is required. Next, to contribute to the dialogue, we propose some reflections to consider education as formation rooted not only in the school but, as a social institution, present in all social organizations, which must be structured and guided in terms of human development.

## **2. What is understood by education**

From our perspective, education is the formation of individuals based on their lived experiences.

A broader definition: education is a process of forming individuals, primarily of meanings (about being and the importance of things, the world, society, and oneself), of purposes (the individual and social life project), and of identities (the formation of personal, communal, and social self), arising from their lived experiences, constituted by their practices, other individuals, content, their interactions and social relationships, their spheres, organizations and institutions, and broad social contexts. Formation is usually spontaneous. Intentionally, it is desirable to guide it from a human development perspective.

Initially, two concepts help ground this perspective: institution and organization. The first refers to “a social regularity, which (alludes) to norms and laws representing social values and guiding the behavior of individuals and groups by setting their limits” (Fernández, 1998, p. 13); the second names the social forms that express and promote that social regularity collective structures created to enact the institution. According to this line of thought, social life is regulated through the set of different institutions and organizations, such as family, production, military, economy, religion, education,





and many others. Each institution and its respective organizations regulate a “part” of social life; for example, family regulates the reproduction of individuals within social groups; the economy regulates the production and consumption of material satisfiers of those group members.

Among the social institutions and organizations, here we are interested in educational ones. We propose, initially, to consider, as said before, the educational institution as the process of forming individuals, their meanings about life content, the world, society; their identities of self and others; their purposes for their own life and communal and social existence. It is a formation generated in and among individuals as part of their lived experiences, constituted by their practices, by the life content of those experiences, by their individual and social interactions and relationships, all within specific spheres of organizations and institutions and broad social contexts. This formation is usually guided spontaneously according to prevailing and dominant cultural perspectives; when guided intentionally, it could be conducted under a human development perspective. Although this process takes place mainly in the school organization, it encompasses experiences constructed in all spheres of social organizations and institutions.

The life of the individual is constituted by an infinite set of lived experiences. Part of those lived experiences are what we call experiences. A lived experience is what happens to the individual at a given moment and immediate context. It is a situation, a sensation fully and completely felt, but at the same time diffuse, since emotions, perceptions, and conscious and unconscious records of that situation and context combine in the individual, though without major disruptions or notable events, like a kind of constant and ongoing flow. From the lived experience, the experiences arise.

Experiences refer to the specific construction, by the individual, of a particular situation within the framework of their lived experiences. Although it is something specific, it is also complete, as it is constructed with the participation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects, carried out under concrete conditions and settings. Other individuals, certain types of relationships and

interactions, practices and actions, and the content upon which these activities are exercised, all play a role in those experiences.

Within and because of this experiential framework, individuals construct meanings about things, about other individuals, about the processes that surround them, and about themselves, which are expressed in knowledge, feelings, and behaviors. In experience, meanings are assigned to the natural and social world, including the individual themselves. Therefore, individuals acquire a certain representation of natural things, their objective properties, and their subjective attributions. Other individuals also acquire certain meaning; they are such and such, have a certain value, are loved, ignored, or despised. To educate and to educate oneself based on meanings in favor of human development would imply forming meanings related to freedom, rights, equality, and diversity.

In experience, meanings are also constructed, that is, a certain direction is given to one’s life; certain goals and orientations are assigned to what one does, says, and feels. One attributes to oneself and one’s actions, within one’s spheres of existence, a certain direction and purpose, which are woven with the past and current life conditions. Of course, this meaning can be expressed weakly, diffusely, and uncertainly, as if the individual were an object of circumstances, or clearly, persistently, and precisely, as if the individual were capable, to a good extent, of navigating those circumstances. On this continuum between being a bystander, actor, or author of the experience lies the sense and orientation, or lack thereof, toward human development; that is, constructing goals and conscious purposes to form and develop oneself as a fully realized human being.

In experience, individuals construct their identity. They construct themselves, recognizing themselves and recognizing others. The subject, the self, builds in that interaction an idea of their person, develops a self-image, a self-concept, and attributes a certain self-esteem.

The processes of constructing meanings, senses, and identities are formative processes. The individual moves through the world in a continuous flow of lived experiences. In this torrent, certain relevant



events occur to them, or they cause some important events to happen, from which experiences arise, in a complex mixture of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional processes. These experiences shape them, as mentioned, regarding what the world is, what they are, and their present and future life; about what things mean, about who they are, and about what their life is and will be in other words, the meaning of their life.

In personal experience, other individuals both individual and collective and the interaction with them are always present: experience always occurs within a context or sphere where certain practices or activities take place regarding some content or object on which those activities are exercised, in a permanent flow or trajectory.

Individuals are the actors or authors participating in an experience. This involves the experiential subject and other participants, actors, and co-authors of it. The spheres and contexts constitute the social, architectural, economic, and historical means both immediate and mediated of the experience.

Practices or actions refer to culturally significant human activities that individuals carry out with an object. Contents refer to what human action is directed at, whether things themselves or patterns of behavior, knowledge, feelings, values, about oneself or others. These are culturally significant and, as such, considered valuable and essential for the constitution of the social and the individual, according to certain contexts. Social relationships refer to the bonds individuals establish with their social group and society as a whole. These are relationships that individuals establish with others as part of a social category; they are broad and medium-range relationships that influence interactions.

Interactions refer to close, face-to-face relationships that individuals establish with others in their daily lives. And just as social life is not merely the sum of its members, interaction is not just two or more individuals in the same sphere, nor simply an exchange between them. The formative trajectory, transit, or journey of individuals refers to the continuous process of their formation from birth to death, not only in school and related to their

academic performance records but in all spheres of their life and according to their experiences and how these shape them to change.

Could a perspective on education as outlined here contribute to achieving the development goals, targets, and indicators established by the development initiatives presented here? Our idea is that it could. As a conclusion, we will show some examples in this regard.

## **Conclusion. Education for human development: some elements**

Schools, as they currently exist, might not have the capacity to respond to development goals. At least in Mexico, only small advances are achieved regarding the traditional mandate of school education to improve performance in instrumental subjects. Thus, we are pessimistic about achieving development goals in education if new problems are added to that mandate, such as those mentioned in Goal 4.7: theoretical and practical knowledge about sustainable development, “the adoption of sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.” Incorporating these into the tasks of schools and the system implies not only a broad curricular reform that accommodates them without displacing other content but a reform of the entire school system and a change in the agents of education. Even so, we believe that would be insufficient.

A shift in perspective is necessary, as noted in the previous section, because the goal is no longer merely social integration and the training of human resources within schools, but also the formation of human beings for freedom and happiness—for well-being.

Moreover, the perspective presented here considers the individual's experience as the foundation of education, which aligns, to some extent, with the OECD's approach of evaluating education based on individuals' perceptions of their living conditions that is, based on what people themselves consider important. This implies recognizing them as subjects, not merely as objects of measurement.

Similarly, the concept of lifelong learning for all does not align with the idea of granting schools exclusive responsibility for educational processes. Schools only cover certain life stages. Conceiving education as formation based on experience allows for a more fitting vision of lifelong education. This approach could also shift the focus from solely acquiring structured content knowledge to forming meanings, senses, and identities, thereby promoting a more holistic education. And if the formation of these core aspects is accepted, then education should make room not only for the development of knowledge, but also for the cultivation of feelings and intuitions.

Finally, envisioning education as formation based on individuals' life experiences allows us to place it not only within schools but also across other social settings meaning it is also grounded in other organizations such as the home, the workplace, the community, and the city itself. These spaces should be recognized as having an educational purpose, and we should begin to think and act within them as intentional agents of human development. This could make it possible to effectively realize "Target 4.2: Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education," which implies the involvement of other educational spaces such as the home. In relation to the initiatives reviewed here, this would mean introducing new objectives, targets, and indicators to evaluate their contribution to human development.

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