

Remarks at the 80th birthday celebration of Hans Weiler

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13 September 2014, Berlin

- Hans, Frauke, Stephan and Oliver
- Friends and colleagues of Hans

It is a great honour and my deep personal pleasure to be with you today, to celebrate the 80th birthday of my Professor and to share with you a few reflections on the life and times of Hans Weiler during two periods of his professional life:

- at Stanford University School of Education and
- at the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, otherwise known as IIEP.

I was a PhD student at Stanford University, from 1983-1988 and I am the new Director of IIEP, following in the footsteps of the Institute's youngest Director who served 1974-1977.

Stanford University, 1965 - present

Hans joined the faculty of Stanford as an Associate Professor of Education and Political Science. This was in 1965, the same year that the Stanford International Development Education Center (SIDECE) was established with funding from the US Department of Education and the Ford Foundation.

SIDECE was a very special graduate program and Hans played a very influential role in shaping SIDECE. Hans built a strong disciplinary foundation in the program, ensuring that political, economic, social and cultural analyses of education form the core curriculum of SIDECE. He stressed that the relationships among educational research, educational policy, and educational planning are important in the program's intellectual agenda. But he also supported critical practice and his students were better practitioners and policy makers because he trained them not in the mechanics and techniques but in the critique of policy and practice and to be brave in pushing for and bringing about change.

Hans experienced several difficult periods at Stanford and there are many stories of how he supported students who took unwelcomed stands against the School and University administration, be it against the Vietnam War, or investment in South Africa. Richard Sack tells the story of Hans defending him to the SIDECE Director Paul Hanna who wanted to suspend Richard after he signed a public petition against the draft.

But his legacy in building SIDECE lives on today. The renamed International and Comparative Education (ICE) program continues the commitment to multidisciplinary, international, cross-cultural

graduate training that places educational problems into an international and comparative framework. It continues its important role of training critical thinkers to advance the role education plays in national and international development.

But Hans's legacy lives importantly on in the hundreds of former students who serve as critical thought leaders and change agents throughout the world. And we see this in the response to his 2013 Commencement Address to the Stanford Graduate School of Education, a speech that in essence celebrated the good work of alumni throughout the world. He urged the graduates to apply their "smarts and guts" to help transform education in the service of children, youth and adults. His speech went viral and generated dozens of comments from alumni and in the process reinvigorated many personal and professional connections.

When one looks at the many roles Hans has played at Stanford, it is clear that he is not a scholar content with the occasional stint as head of department or reluctantly serving a term as Dean. He informed his scholarship on higher education and the state, the politics of knowledge production by his own practice.

He served as the SIDECE Director for numerous periods until he moved to Professor Emeritus status in 1994. Not long after returning from IIEP, in 1979, Hans became a full Professor. Stanford University clearly recognized his leadership, tapping his leadership skills to serve the University in many leadership positions, as the School of Education's Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (1984-86) and Director of Stanford's Center for European Studies (1991-93) and University Fellow. He supported Stanford's growing international presence, directing Stanford Study Programs in Berlin and Paris.

The latest of these recognitions is his appointment this July as Stanford University's Academic Secretary, a role in which he is the parliamentarian to the Faculty Senate and Academic Council.

I had the pleasure of serving as Hans's graduate assistant in the preparation for Stanford hosting the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society or CIES in 1985. Murray Thomas was the CIES President that year and Gail Kelly was the Vice-President. Hans was serving on the CIES Board and volunteered to host the annual conference because SIDECE was celebrating its 25th Anniversary and Hans knew that aligning the CIES meeting with a SIDECE anniversary conference would allow more alumni to join the anniversary celebrations. And they came in large numbers! The

double event was a great success, bringing SIDEC alumni from all over the world. It was there that I first met Frans Lenglet.

Being a former Director of UNESCO's top education institute, Hans also secured the participation of the Director-General of UNESCO, Amadou Mahtar M'Bow at the conference. This was quite a diplomatic enterprise as the United States had withdrawn from UNESCO in 1984 out of frustration over the politicization and poor management. Hans organized a Symposium on UNESCO and six scholars and policy makers analysed UNESCO and the US decision. The papers were published soon after in the *Comparative Education Review*, helping to inform and engage many more people regarding the important role of UNESCO, its potential and the US decision.

As his graduate assistant for the conference, I was invited to dinner with the DG at the Stanford Faculty Club—my first time at the Club and my first time interacting with the head of a United Nations organization. It was quite a heady experience! But I also note his generosity. I was surprised to find recently that Hans listed my name on his CV as his co-organizer of the 1985 CIES conference. I was a 29 year old graduate student at the time.

I am struck by Hans's commitment to bringing people together for the exchange of ideas and the building of knowledge. This finds its expression in many forms, of course in joint publications, edited volumes and special issues of journals. But Hans has organized more international conferences and related fora (20 just on his "selected" list) than seems reasonable for someone with such academically demanding positions. Many of us understand how thankless and onerous a task organizing conferences can be. But Hans believes in building and nurturing networks of people and he has dedicated considerable energy to do so and had considerable success in these endeavours. And many of us here today are the beneficiaries of those academic and policy exchanges.

Let me close with a few words regarding Hans's time at IIEP. Hans took leave from Stanford for four years, 1974-1977, to take the leadership role at IIEP. Hans became the youngest person to serve as Director, just 9 years after the founding of the Institute. As you know, I was not there but I took the opportunity to review some old documents including the first newsletter written under Hans's leadership. It is quite striking how so many of the issues then remain with us such as decentralization of education and educational planning for rural development,

Hans brought to the Institute his experience and conviction gained in many years of study and work and his engagement with the "Freiburger Schule". Under Hans, IIEP opened its mind to broader concepts of educational planning. It began to look at ways other countries, beyond France, were planning the development and modernization of their education systems. IIEP's planning concept and

training programs became more “international” and attracted growing attention from major international education funders such as the World Bank and UNDP. During Hans’ years, IIEP became the leading international focus point for education planning. Hans’s efforts strongly influenced the Institute’s development ever since.

Last December Hans participated in IIEP’s 50th anniversary seminar, an event that brought together five former and current directors. In his comments, Hans gave an imaginative and inspired vision of IIEP into the future, stimulating my own thinking and continuing to inspire me in my work.

Over the last two years, Hans has been very generous as I have turned to him several times for advice in navigating the difficult terrain of a large, political UN organization and our exchanges have been frank and very valuable. I look forward to continuing to receive such wise counsel for many years ahead.

Happy Birthday, Hans, and many happy returns!