

Comparative Analysis of Educational Policy Formulation and Implementation Strategies in Developed and Developing Countries.

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ABSTRACT

Educational policy formulation and implementation are critical components for improving educational systems worldwide, yet significant disparities exist between developed and developing countries. This paper explores these disparities and presents a comparative analysis of the strategies employed in both contexts. Drawing on key theories like the Policy Cycle and Actor-Network Theory, the comparative analysis examined how these frameworks inform the processes of policy formulation and implementation. Data were drawn from 53 peer reviewed articles gotten through a systematic search in online databases including Google Scholar, Semantic Scholars, Paperity and Ethos. The analysis reveals that both developed and developing countries emphasize evidence-based policy making, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and the integration of technology in education. Developed countries have a more robust financial resources, advanced technology, and stable political environments, enabling robust funding systems and continuous policy adaptation. In contrast, developing countries face challenges such as inadequate funding, political instability, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, focusing more on community engagement and infrastructure development. Despite these challenges, developing countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya have made significant strides in improving educational outcomes through strategic partnerships and targeted policy interventions. The study concludes with implications for practice and recommendations for policymakers in developing countries, emphasizing the need for diversified funding models, technological integration, strengthened governance, stakeholder engagement, and continuous evaluation to enhance educational policy effectiveness and sustainability. The findings highlight the importance of context-specific approaches and the potential for developing countries to learn from the experiences of developed nations in creating robust educational systems.

Keywords: Education, Policy, Policy Formulation, Policy Implementation, Developed Countries, Developing Countries

INTRODUCTION

Education is a key driver of national development, and the formulation and implementation of effective educational policies are essential to improving education systems worldwide. However, there are significant disparities in educational policy processes between developed and developing countries, leading to varied outcomes. In developing countries, such as Nigeria, there have been concerns about the standard of education due to lapses in policy formulation processes (Oyedemi, 2015). Similarly, challenges in policy implementation have been identified in Ghana, such as inadequate communication, poor curriculum and

pedagogy, and a lack of stakeholder involvement (Wadja, 2019).

Educational policy formulation is complex processes that involve creating, planning, and executing strategies and actions to achieve specific educational goals. Policy formulation is the stage in which objectives are identified and decisions are made regarding educational standards, curricula, resources, and other aspects of the education system. This phase often involves a variety of stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and community members, who work together to address identified educational needs (Jie, 2016). On the other hand, policy implementation is the process of putting formulated policies into practice and ensuring they achieve their intended outcomes. This stage is often marked by challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, resource constraints, and the need for effective communication among stakeholders (Viennet & Pont, 2017). Implementation requires careful coordination and adaptation to local contexts, which can lead to either successful outcomes or failures depending on how well policies are executed. The relationship between formulation and implementation is complex (Jacob & Samuel, 2020; Moremi, 2018; Wadja, 2019). Effective educational policy processes consider the input and participation of diverse stakeholders to create and execute policies that are equitable and responsive to the unique needs of each educational setting.

As simple as educational policy formulation and implementation may seem, there is a huge divide among scholars regarding their commonalities and differences. Jie (2016) provides insight into the policy process which include need identification and determinant factors assessment, formulation, implementation and evaluation emphasizing that there is an ongoing debate on whether policy formulation and implementation should be viewed as distinct steps or as intertwined processes. To clarify this, Garcia-Zamor (2019) observes that some scholars argue that policy is first crafted by experts and officials (formulation) and then executed by administrative entities (implementation). Despite this separation, Garcia-Zamor (2019) concludes that such a process leads to potential failures due to bureaucratic hurdles. Others suggest that policy is continuously reformulated at various administrative and school levels (Jie, 2016). Nonetheless, to understand aptly whether or not policy formulation and implementation are separate entities, there is a need to examine the strategies. Also note that policies can be formulated and abandoned without being put to use.

While many nations engage in policy formulation, effective educational policy formulation is hinged on the strategies adopted or adapted. These strategies vary, including in terms of results. Viennet and Pont (2017) point out that effective educational policy formulation involves engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, such as educators, administrators, students, parents, and community members, in the process to ensure that policies reflect various perspectives and needs (Moremi, 2018). According to Viennet and Pont (2017), using data-driven decision-making, policymakers can base their strategies on evidence and best practices. Contextualization is essential, as customising policies to suit unique cultural, social, and economic environments ensures their relevance and efficacy (Duke et al., 2016). Other key strategies include clear goal-setting, pilot testing, transparency, and accountability.

Nevertheless, successful policy formulation and implementation require comprehensive planning that includes timelines, resource allocation, and the delineation of responsibilities (Mengistie, 2019). Stakeholder engagement and effective communication are essential for ensuring understanding and support among those involved in the process (Jacob & Samuel, 2020). Capacity-building and training provide educators and administrators with the necessary skills and knowledge. Continuous monitoring and evaluation allow for adjustments as needed, while collaboration with other organisations enhances resources and support (Wadja, 2019). Flexibility and adaptability are crucial to responding to feedback and changing circumstances during implementation.

The challenges facing developing countries often stem from top-down, linear approaches to policy formulation and implementation. These methods can alienate key stakeholders, such as teachers and educational practitioners, who play a crucial role in the successful execution of policies. Wadja (2019)

suggests that the inclusion of these stakeholders in policy formulation could enhance the quality of education and learning outcomes. In contrast, developed countries often exhibit more structured and transparent processes in policy formulation and implementation. For instance, policies in these countries tend to involve a wider range of stakeholders and are more likely to be based on evidence-based research and best practices. Studies such as those by Duke et al. (2016) and Moremi (2018) highlight the need for inclusive education policies and factors shaping higher education, respectively. Their findings emphasize the importance of incorporating local contexts, voices, and unique challenges into policy creation and execution, which can lead to more effective educational outcomes. The disparities in educational policy processes between developed and developing countries point to the need for a comprehensive comparative analysis. Such an analysis can identify best practices and areas for improvement, ultimately guiding the formulation and implementation of policies that enhance educational quality and accessibility worldwide. Thus, the nexus of this article. This paper explores the comparative analysis of educational policy formulation and implementation strategies in developed and developing countries.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION: A THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

A theory, in the context of social sciences, refers to a systematic framework for understanding phenomena, offering explanations and predictions based on observations and empirical evidence. It provides a structured way of interpreting complex social, political, and economic behaviors, guiding the formulation and testing of hypotheses. Theories in policy studies are essential as they shape the analytical lens through which policy processes are examined. According to Sabatier and Weible (2020), theories such as Policy Cycles and Actor-Network Theory are instrumental in elucidating the intricate dynamics involved in policy formulation and implementation. These theories help in understanding the multifaceted interactions and influences within the policy landscape. Hence, this comparative analysis of educational policy formulation and implementation strategies in developed and developing countries is anchored on two pivotal theories: Policy Cycles (PC) and Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

Policy Cycles Theory

The Policy Cycle Theory (PCT), first conceptualized by Harold Lasswell in the 1950s and later refined by various scholars, including Jann and Wegrich (2017), offers a structured framework for understanding the stages of policy development. This model outlines the process of policy-making through distinct phases: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. Each phase serves a unique function and is crucial for the systematic and iterative nature of policy development. Jann and Wegrich (2017) emphasize that this cyclical approach allows for continuous feedback and adjustment, ensuring policies remain relevant and effective over time.

The propositions of the policy cycle have been extended and refined in subsequent research. For instance, Howlett, McConnell, and Perl (2017) integrated multiple stream and advocacy coalition frameworks into the policy cycle model, highlighting the dynamic interactions between various actors and factors influencing each stage. This integration underscores the complexity and interconnectedness of policy-making processes, where agenda setting is influenced by problem recognition, policy solutions, and political contexts, while advocacy coalitions play a significant role in shaping policy formulation and decision-making.

In contemporary policy studies, the relevance of the policy cycle is evident. Valle-Cruz et al. (2020) assessed the applicability of the policy cycle framework in the age of artificial intelligence, noting that it provides a comprehensive structure for analysing how policies are shaped, implemented, and evaluated in technologically advanced contexts. Their study demonstrated that even with the advent of AI, the fundamental stages of the policy cycle remain pertinent, offering a robust framework for understanding the

iterative nature of policy development and the importance of continuous evaluation and feedback.

The application of the policy cycle in the study of educational policy formulation and implementation is particularly valuable. Mohammed (2020) explores the alignment of the policy cycle with the policymaking approach in Ghana, revealing that while the stages provide a useful framework, contextual factors and the dynamic nature of policymaking can lead to deviations from the ideal cycle. This finding is crucial for the comparative analysis of educational policies in developed and developing countries, as it highlights the need to consider local contexts and the role of various stakeholders in shaping policy outcomes. Jagers, Matti, and Nordblom (2020) further support the application of the policy cycle by examining the evolution of public policy attitudes across its stages. Their research shows how public support for policies can vary significantly at different stages, influencing the success of policy implementation and the need for adaptive strategies. This perspective is essential for understanding the differing outcomes of educational policies in various countries, where public attitudes and support can play a critical role in determining policy effectiveness.

In all, the policy cycle theory provides a robust theoretical framework for analysing educational policy formulation and implementation strategies. By considering the stages of agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation, researchers can systematically examine the processes and factors influencing educational policies in different contexts.

Actor-Network Theory

Actor-Network Theory (ANT), first developed by Bruno Latour in the late 1980s, provides a unique framework for analysing the intricate web of relationships and interactions between human and non-human actors within a network. ANT posits that objects, ideas, processes, and institutions, as well as people, have agency and play significant roles in shaping outcomes. This perspective challenges traditional sociological theories that emphasize only human agency. Latour (2017) emphasizes that ANT allows for a deeper understanding of how various entities interact and influence each other, contributing to the creation and stabilization of networks.

ANT has been extensively discussed and expanded upon in the academic literature. Lezaun (2017) elaborates on the foundational principles of ANT, highlighting its focus on the materiality of social relations and the importance of tracing connections to understand the dynamics within a network. Czarniawska (2017) further underscores the flexibility of ANT in analysing diverse organizational processes, noting that it provides a robust framework for examining how various actors, both human and non-human, interact and shape organizational outcomes.

The relevance of ANT in contemporary policy studies is significant. Elder-Vass (2020) discusses the applicability of ANT in understanding the complexities of policy-making processes, emphasizing that policies are not merely the product of human decisions but are shaped by a network of interactions involving various actors. Fenwick and Edwards (2019) apply ANT to educational contexts, demonstrating how this theory can be used to analyse the implementation of educational technologies and the interactions between teachers, students, technologies, and institutional policies. Their work highlights the importance of considering the material and relational aspects of policy implementation. Furthermore, Dussel (2020) uses ANT to analyse educational technology reforms in Latin America, showing how policies are influenced by a network of actors, including government agencies, technology providers, educators, and students. This approach reveals the complexities and contingencies involved in policy implementation, emphasizing the need to consider the interactions and influences of various actors.

Coyle et al. (2024) provide a practical application of ANT in their study of widening participation in medical education. By tracing the interactions between policies, institutions, educators, and students in two countries, they demonstrate how ANT can be used to uncover the intricate dynamics and challenges

involved in implementing educational policies. Their findings highlight the importance of understanding the network of relationships that shape policy outcomes, providing a nuanced perspective on the factors that contribute to the success or failure of policy initiatives.

Generally, Actor-Network Theory offers a powerful framework for analysing the complexities of educational policy formulation and implementation. By focusing on the interactions between human and non-human actors, ANT provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in policy processes.

What are educational policy formulation and implementation?

Policy, as a concept, refers to a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. It is a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, organization, or individual. Blanchenay, Burns, and Köster (2014) describe policy as a set of ideas or plans that guide actions, particularly within the governance context. In addition, Ball in Elems-Ikwegbu (2023:95) refers to policy as “series of interconnected decisions made by a group of stake holders about the choice of objectives and the method of accomplishing them”. Policies are essential for setting strategic directions and ensuring consistency in decision-making processes across various sectors, including education, health, and economics. One of the key areas policy has shown great importance is education.

Education is the structured process of facilitating learning, acquiring knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits through various methods, such as teaching, training, research, and discussion (Ball, 2021; Pestalozzi, 2022). It aims to develop intellectual and personal growth, preparing individuals for personal and professional life. According to Pestalozzi (2022), education occurs in formal and informal settings, influencing societal advancement and individual empowerment. Hence, Educational policy specifically pertains to the principles and government policies in the educational sphere, influencing the development, planning, and implementation of educational systems. According to Viennet and Pont (2017), educational policy encompasses the rules, regulations, and guidelines set by educational authorities to shape the curriculum, teaching methods, and administrative practices in schools and universities. It aims to improve the quality of education, ensure equitable access to learning opportunities, and promote lifelong learning. Moremi (2018) emphasizes that educational policies are critical for addressing societal needs and preparing a skilled workforce to meet future challenges. However, every policy as posited in policy cycle theory starts with formulation immediately after needs are identified and goals are set.

Policy formulation is the process of developing appropriate courses of action to address specific issues. It involves identifying problems, setting objectives, exploring various options, and selecting the most suitable strategies to achieve desired outcomes. Oyediji (2015) highlights that policy formulation is a complex process that requires thorough research, stakeholder engagement, and the consideration of various factors, including political, social, and economic conditions. Mengistie (2019) adds that historical analysis of policy formulation in Ethiopia shows the importance of inclusive and participatory approaches to ensure that policies are relevant and effective. Policy formulation is the foundational stage where ideas are conceptualized and translated into actionable plans. However, Amir (2020) argued that it is enough to formulate policies, rather their implementation is the major determinant of change.

Therefore, Policy implementation is the execution of formulated policies, involving the translation of policy plans into practical actions to achieve set objectives. This stage requires effective coordination, resource allocation, and monitoring to ensure that policies are enacted as intended. Jacob and Samuel (2020) point out that in Nigeria, challenges in policy implementation often stem from inadequate funding, lack of political will, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Amir (2020) discusses the importance of proper budgeting and resource management in successful policy implementation, using the case of educational budgeting in Palopo as an example. Effective implementation ensures that the goals of educational policies are realized in

practice.

Finally, policies and educational policies are vital frameworks guiding actions and decisions in the educational sector. Policy formulation is a critical phase where ideas are developed into actionable plans, while policy implementation involves executing these plans effectively. The success of educational policies depends on overcoming challenges in formulation and implementation, ensuring that they are responsive to the needs of the society and the educational landscape.

Historical Overview of Educational Policy Formulation and Implementation

Educational policy formulation and implementation have evolved significantly over the centuries, shaped by various historical, political, and social events. This historical overview focuses on major milestones and shifts that have influenced the development and execution of educational policies globally (*figure 1*). The foundations of formal education policy can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as Greece and Rome, where education was aimed at cultivating civic responsibility and intellectual prowess among the elite (Govende, 2022). However, structured educational policies as understood today began to take shape in the 18th and 19th centuries during the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. These periods according to Regmi (2022), emphasized the need for broader public education to support economic development and democratic governance.

The 19th century marked significant progress in educational policy, particularly in Europe and North America. The Industrial Revolution created a demand for a more educated workforce, leading to the establishment of compulsory education laws. For instance, the 1870 Education Act in the United Kingdom, also known as the Forster Act, made elementary education mandatory for children, setting a precedent for public education policies globally (Blanchenay, Burns, & Köster, 2014). The aftermath of World War II saw a global push for universal education as part of broader social and economic reconstruction efforts. The establishment of the United Nations and its specialized agency, UNESCO, in 1945, played a pivotal role in promoting education for all. UNESCO's policies emphasized literacy, educational access, and the eradication of disparities in education (Viennet & Pont, 2017). In the United States, the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* was a landmark event that addressed racial segregation in schools, leading to significant policy reforms aimed at achieving educational equity (Czarniawska, 2017).

The late 20th century saw a shift in focus from mere access to education to the quality and equity of educational outcomes. The Education for All (EFA) movement, launched in 1990 by UNESCO, UNICEF, and other organizations, set ambitious goals to improve educational quality and access worldwide. This period also saw the introduction of policies aimed at inclusive education, recognizing the rights of marginalized groups, including children with disabilities (Mengistie, 2019). However, the 21st century brought about rapid technological advancements, significantly impacting educational policy formulation and implementation. The integration of digital technologies into education has led to policies that promote e-learning, digital literacy, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in classrooms. For example, the European Union's Digital Education Action Plan emphasizes the role of technology in modernizing education systems (Fenwick & Edwards, 2019).

In developing countries, educational policies have increasingly focused on addressing systemic challenges such as funding, infrastructure, and teacher training. Oyedeji (2015) highlights the lapses in policy formulation processes in Nigeria, which have implications for the standard of education. Despite these challenges, efforts continue to improve educational outcomes through targeted policy interventions. Currently, educational policy is heavily influenced by global agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. Policies now emphasize not only access and quality but also the relevance of education in preparing students for the future workforce and fostering global

citizenship (Dussel, 2020).

The history of educational policy formulation and implementation is marked by significant events and shifts that have shaped contemporary educational systems. From the compulsory education laws of the 19th century to the digital education policies of the 21st century, the evolution of educational policy reflects broader social, economic, and technological changes. Understanding this historical context is crucial for addressing current challenges and shaping future educational policies that are inclusive, equitable, and effective.

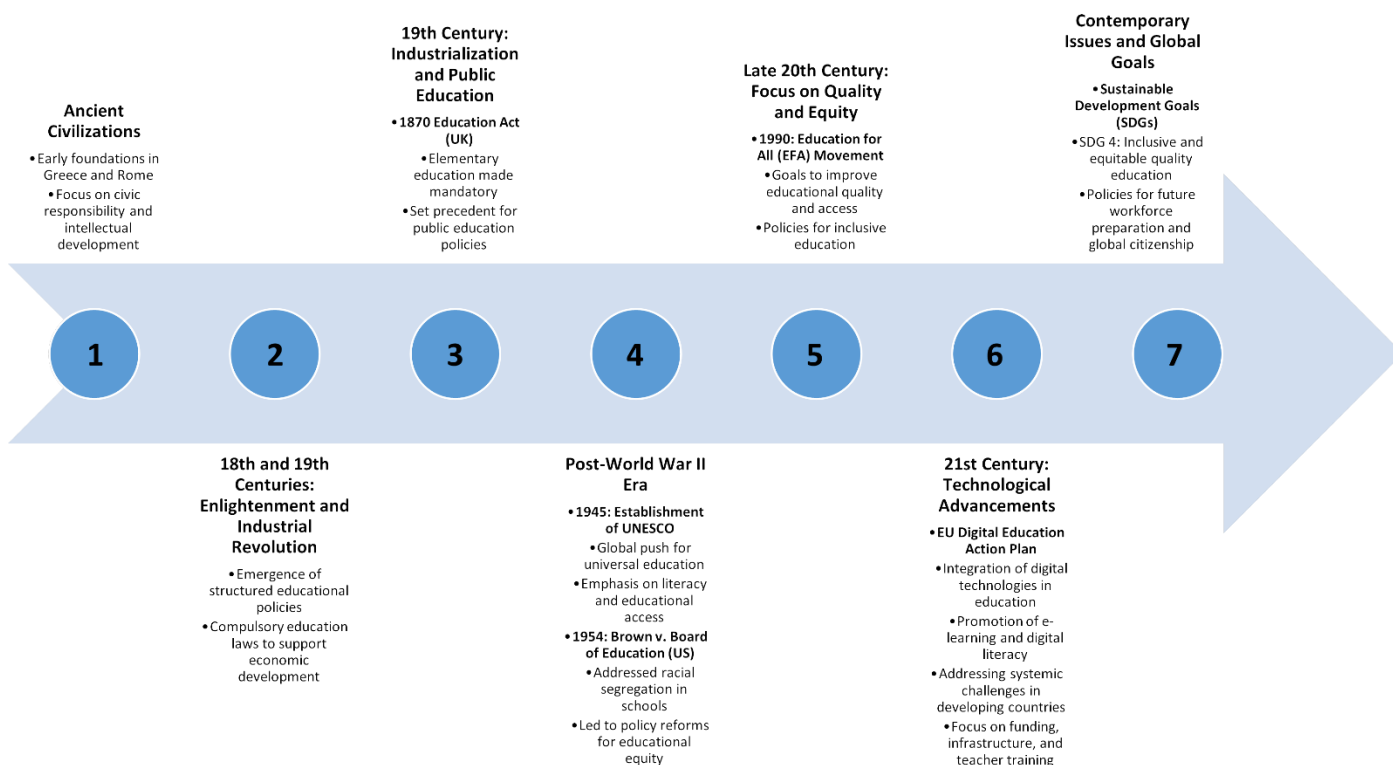


Figure 1: Major historical milestones and events in the evolution of educational Policy

Educational policy formulation and implementation strategies in developed countries

A strategy is a planned approach or set of actions designed to achieve long-term or overall aims and objectives. According to Hodgson, A., & Spours (2016), it involves setting goals, determining actions to achieve the goals, and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. In the context of education, strategies for policy formulation and implementation are essential to ensure that educational systems are responsive to societal needs and capable of fostering student development and societal progress. Educational policy formulation strategies involves the approaches taken to develop policies that guide the educational system (Regmi, 2022). Implementation strategies, on the other hand, refer to the methods and processes used to put these policies into practice, ensuring that they are effectively adopted and operationalized within educational institutions (Govender, 2022; Pestalozzi, 2022). These strategies though tend to follow similar cycle as stipulated in the policy cycle theory differ relatively by regions.

Developed countries typically adopt comprehensive and multifaceted strategies for educational policy formulation and implementation. These strategies ensure that educational systems are responsive to societal needs, capable of fostering student development, and aligned with national goals. Key strategies include

evidence-based policy making, stakeholder engagement, continuous evaluation and feedback, robust funding systems, and infrastructure development.

Evidence-Based Policy Making: Evidence-based policy making involves utilizing research and data to inform policy decisions, ensuring they are grounded in empirical evidence. De Marchi, Lucertini, and Tsoukiàs (2016) emphasize the importance of data analytics in the policy-making process, arguing that evidence-based approaches lead to more effective and efficient policies. This strategy involves rigorous collection and analysis of data to identify best practices, monitor outcomes, and make informed adjustments. The OECD highlights that using evidence helps policymakers understand what works, under what conditions, and for whom, thus improving the quality of educational outcomes (Halász & Michel, 2011). For example, in the United States, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandates that states use evidence-based interventions to improve low-performing schools, demonstrating a commitment to data-driven decision-making (Cooley, 2015). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Education Endowment Foundation provides a platform for evidence-based educational practices, supporting schools to implement strategies that have been proven effective through research (Hodgson & Spours, 2016).

Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholder engagement involves involving a wide range of stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, and community members, in the policy-making process. Normand et al. (2018) highlight the significance of stakeholder engagement in ensuring diverse perspectives and buy-in. Engaging stakeholders helps to build consensus, foster community support, and ensure that policies are relevant and responsive to the needs of those they affect. In the context of educational policy, stakeholder engagement is crucial for addressing the needs of diverse student populations. For instance, the development of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence involved extensive consultations with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders to create a curriculum that reflects the aspirations and needs of the Scottish community (Bell, 1999). Similarly, in China, the formulation of the National Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Plan involved consultations with educational experts, teachers, parents, and industry representatives to ensure that the policy addressed the diverse needs of the society (Hui & Lau, 2010).

Continuous Evaluation and Feedback: Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms are essential for refining and adjusting policies as needed. Halász and Michel (2011) argue that ongoing assessment helps to identify what works and what does not, allowing for timely interventions and adjustments. This approach ensures that policies remain relevant and effective over time. In practice, continuous evaluation involves regular monitoring of educational outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and impact assessments. For example, in Finland, the education system is characterized by continuous evaluation and feedback loops, which contribute to its high performance in international assessments like PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) (Normand et al., 2018). Regular evaluations help Finnish policymakers to make informed adjustments to curricula, teaching methods, and resource allocation.

Robust Funding Systems: Ensuring adequate financial resources to support educational initiatives and infrastructure development is critical. Cooley (2015) highlights that robust funding systems are essential for sustaining educational reforms and improving educational outcomes. Funding systems in developed countries typically involve a mix of public and private sources, ensuring that schools have the resources needed to implement policies effectively. In the United States, the federal and state governments provide significant funding for K-12 education through programs like Title I, which supports schools with high numbers of low-income students (Cooley, 2015). In the United Kingdom, public funding is complemented by initiatives to attract private investment and philanthropic contributions, helping to enhance educational resources and infrastructure (Dorey, 2014). China, too, has significantly increased its investment in education, particularly in rural areas, to ensure equitable access to quality education (Hui & Lau, 2010).

Infrastructure Development: Investing in educational infrastructure is crucial for creating conducive

learning environments. Parakhina et al. (2017) emphasize that modern, well-equipped educational facilities are essential for supporting effective teaching and learning. Infrastructure development includes building and maintaining schools, providing up-to-date technology, and ensuring that learning environments are safe and conducive to learning. For instance, the United Kingdom has invested heavily in modernizing school facilities through programs like Building Schools for the Future (BSF), aimed at renewing secondary school infrastructure across the country (Bell, 1999). In the United States, initiatives like the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided substantial funds for the renovation and modernization of schools, particularly in underserved areas (Cooley, 2015). In China, the government has undertaken massive infrastructure projects to build new schools and upgrade existing ones, especially in rural regions, to reduce disparities in educational access and quality (Hui & Lau, 2010).

In summary, developed countries employ comprehensive strategies for educational policy formulation and implementation, including evidence-based policy making, stakeholder engagement, continuous evaluation and feedback, robust funding systems, and infrastructure development. These strategies ensure that educational policies are effective, inclusive, and adaptable to changing societal needs. The insights from De Marchi, Lucertini, and Tsoukiàs (2016), Normand et al. (2018), Halász and Michel (2011), Cooley (2015), and Parakhina et al. (2017) highlight the importance of these strategies in creating robust educational systems that promote student achievement and societal progress.

Table 1: Case Examples of Developed Countries Educational Policies and Implementation Strategies

Country	Policy Example	Implementation Strategy	Funding System	Infrastructure Development
United States	No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001) (Cooley, 2015)	Increased accountability, standardized testing, options for school choice. Significant federal oversight and funding.	Federal grants, state funding, tuition fees, private donations (Cooley, 2015).	Investments in educational technology and facilities (Parakhina et al., 2017).
	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (2015) (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2017)	More flexibility to states, maintaining accountability standards. Local control with customized strategies.	Federal grants, state funding, tuition fees, private donations (Cooley, 2015).	Investments in educational technology and facilities (Parakhina et al., 2017).
United Kingdom	Education Reform Act (1988) (Bell, 1999; Dorey, 2014)	Introduced National Curriculum, standardized testing, greater school autonomy. Clear guidelines and government oversight.	Public education funding from government budgets. Encourages private investment and public-private partnerships (Dorey, 2014).	Modernizing school facilities, integrating technology (Bell, 1999).
	Recent Reforms (2010s) (Hodgson & Spours, 2016)	Emphasized academization and free schools, promoting competition and innovation.	Public education funding from government budgets. Encourages private investment and public-private partnerships (Dorey, 2014).	Modernizing school facilities, integrating technology (Bell, 1999).

China	National Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) (Hui & Lau, 2010)	Focused on expanding access, improving quality, fostering innovation. Significant government investment and rigorous standards.	Central government funding, increasing local contributions, private sector involvement (Hui & Lau, 2010).	Massive investments in educational infrastructure, particularly in rural areas (Parakhina et al., 2017).
	Recent Initiatives (Parakhina et al., 2017)	Emphasis on vocational education, integration of technology in classrooms. Centralized planning with pilot programs.	Central government funding, increasing local contributions, private sector involvement (Hui & Lau, 2010).	Massive investments in educational infrastructure, particularly in rural areas (Parakhina et al., 2017).

Source: Compile by Author (2024)

Educational Policy Formulation and Implementation Strategies in Developing Countries

Formulating and implementing educational policies in developing countries involves addressing multifaceted challenges to improve educational outcomes. Effective strategies include community engagement, which ensures policies are relevant and supported by stakeholders; capacity building, which enhances the skills of educators and administrators; and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for continuous improvement (Damon et al., 2016; Elems-Ikwegbu, 2023; Mandillah, 2019; Njagi et al., 2018). Additionally, securing adequate funding and ensuring effective resource allocation are crucial for supporting educational initiatives, while infrastructure development provides the necessary facilities and learning environments. By leveraging these strategies, though there are still some lingering challenges, countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya have made significant strides in enhancing access to quality education and addressing systemic challenges. These efforts, supported by both local and international partnerships, highlight the importance of a comprehensive approach to educational policy formulation and implementation in fostering sustainable educational development.

Community Engagement: Community engagement is a cornerstone strategy for educational policy formulation and implementation in developing countries. It involves the active participation of local communities, including parents, teachers, students, and other stakeholders, in the decision-making process. This strategy ensures that policies are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the communities they serve, leading to higher levels of acceptance and support. Arop, Owan, and Akan (2018) highlight the importance of community involvement in the implementation of Nigeria’s Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy. By engaging community members, policymakers can gather valuable insights and feedback, which can inform the design and execution of educational initiatives. This approach not only fosters a sense of ownership and accountability but also helps to address cultural and socio-economic barriers that might impede the effectiveness of educational policies.

Capacity Building: Capacity building focuses on enhancing the skills, knowledge, and competencies of educators, administrators, and other stakeholders involved in the education sector. Damon et al. (2016) emphasize that effective policy implementation requires well-trained personnel who can adapt to new policies and educational reforms. Capacity building initiatives typically include professional development programs, workshops, and training sessions aimed at improving pedagogical skills, administrative capabilities, and leadership qualities. In Kenya, for instance, the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) involved extensive training for teachers to equip them with the necessary skills to deliver the new curriculum effectively (Njagi et al., 2018). By investing in capacity building, countries can ensure that their educational workforce is capable of meeting the demands of modern education systems and can effectively implement new policies and reforms.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical components of the policy implementation process, providing mechanisms for continuous assessment, feedback, and improvement. Oyedeji (2015) underscores the importance of M&E in identifying gaps and challenges in the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Effective M&E systems allow policymakers to track progress, measure outcomes, and make data-driven adjustments to improve policy effectiveness. In Ghana, the Education Strategic Plan (2018-2030) incorporates robust M&E frameworks to ensure that educational initiatives are on track and achieving their intended goals (Ado, 2019). Regular monitoring helps to identify areas where additional support or resources may be needed, while evaluation provides evidence on the impact of policies, informing future decision-making and policy adjustments.

Funding and Resource Allocation: Adequate funding and effective resource allocation are fundamental to the successful implementation of educational policies. Cooley (2015) and Jacob & Samuel (2020) highlight that insufficient funding is a major barrier to achieving educational goals in developing countries. Ensuring that financial resources are available and distributed efficiently is essential for supporting various educational initiatives, including infrastructure development, teacher training, and provision of learning materials. In Nigeria, funding for the UBE program has been critical in building new schools, providing textbooks, and training teachers. However, challenges remain in ensuring consistent and adequate funding, particularly in the face of economic constraints and competing national priorities (Atelhe & Akande, 2018; Dike et al., 2020). Effective resource allocation strategies involve prioritizing investments that yield the highest impact on educational outcomes and ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of funds.

Infrastructure Development: Infrastructure development is another key strategy for improving educational outcomes in developing countries. This involves constructing and maintaining school buildings, providing essential equipment, and ensuring that learning environments are safe and conducive to education. Arop, Owan, and Akan (2018) and Njagi, Muathe, and Muchemi (2018) emphasize the importance of infrastructure in supporting educational policies. In Kenya, the Free Primary Education (FPE) initiative required significant investment in infrastructure to accommodate the increased number of students. This included building new classrooms, improving existing facilities, and ensuring that schools had adequate resources such as desks, books, and teaching aids. Similarly, in Ghana, investments in educational infrastructure have been crucial for implementing policies aimed at increasing access to quality education. Nevertheless, developing countries often face significant challenges in infrastructure development due to limited financial resources, but strategic partnerships with international organizations and private sector stakeholders can help bridge these gaps. For example, collaborations with organizations like UNICEF and the World Bank have provided much-needed funding and technical support for infrastructure projects in various countries.

The successful formulation and implementation of educational policies in developing countries require a multifaceted approach that includes community engagement, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, adequate funding, and infrastructure development. Each of these strategies plays a crucial role in addressing the unique challenges faced by these countries and ensuring that educational policies are effective and sustainable. By leveraging these strategies, developing countries can improve educational outcomes, enhance access to quality education, and ultimately contribute to broader social and economic development.

Table 2: Case Examples of Developing Countries Educational Policies and Implementation Strategies

Country	Policy/Initiative	Year	Objectives	Implementation Strategies	Sources
Nigeria	Universal Basic Education (UBE)	1999	Provide free and compulsory primary and junior secondary education	Federal funding, community participation, establishment of implementation agencies	Arop, Owan, & Akan (2018)

	National Policy on Education	2004	Emphasize vocational and technical education to meet labor market demands	Partnerships with private sector organizations for practical training and resources	Jacob & Samuel (2020)
	Recent Reforms	2000s	Integrate technology into education	Initiatives like “One Laptop per Child,” focus on digital literacy and ICT in teaching	Dike, Ngwuchukwu, & Anyim (2020)
Ghana	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)	1995	Provide universal access to basic education	Community involvement, decentralization of educational management, government investment in infrastructure	Donkoh, Wing-On, & Donkor (2020)
	Education Strategic Plan	2018-2030	Improve quality of education through teacher training, curriculum reforms, and technology integration	Continuous professional development for teachers, integration of ICT in schools	Addo (2019)
	Recent Initiatives	2010s	Inclusive education for children with disabilities	Supported by international partnerships, funding from organizations like UNICEF	Wadja (2019)
Kenya	Free Primary Education (FPE)	2003	Provide free primary education for all children	Government funding, donor support, community participation	Njagi, Muathe, & Muchemi (2018)
	Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)	2017	Focus on skills and competencies rather than rote learning	Extensive teacher training, stakeholder engagement, phased roll-out	Mandillah (2019)
	ICT Integration in Education	2010s	Incorporate ICT into teaching and learning processes	Providing ICT infrastructure, training teachers in digital skills, developing e-learning resources	Mutwiri, Kafwa, & Mwaka-Kyalo

Similarities in Educational policy formulation and implementation strategies developed and developing countries

Educational policy formulation and implementation strategies in both developed and developing countries share several similarities, despite differences in resources, governance, and contexts. These similarities reflect common goals of improving educational access, quality, and outcomes through effective policy-making and implementation processes. Key similarities include a focus on evidence-based policy-making,

stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and the integration of technology in education. Both developed and developing countries emphasize evidence-based policy-making to ensure that educational policies are grounded in empirical research and data (De Marchi, Lucertini, & Tsoukiàs, 2016; Damon et al., 2016). Stakeholder engagement is another common strategy, involving educators, parents, students, and community members in the policy-making process to ensure policies are relevant and supported (Normand et al., 2018; Arop, Owan, & Akan, 2018). Capacity building is crucial in both contexts, focusing on enhancing the skills and competencies of educators and administrators to implement policies effectively (Parakhina et al., 2017; Mandillah, 2019). Additionally, the integration of technology in education is a shared goal, with both developed and developing countries recognizing the importance of digital literacy and ICT in modern education (Halász & Michel, 2011; Dike, Ngwuchukwu, & Anyim, 2020). These similarities (*table 3*) highlight a global commitment to improving educational outcomes through strategic policy formulation and implementation.

Similarities in Educational Policy Formulation and Implementation

Aspect	Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Evidence-Based Policy Making	Utilizes research and data to inform policy decisions (De Marchi, Lucertini, & Tsoukiàs, 2016)	Emphasizes empirical research and data to guide policies (Damon et al., 2016)
Stakeholder Engagement	Involves a wide range of stakeholders in policy-making (Normand et al., 2018)	Engages local communities and stakeholders for relevance and support (Arop, Owan, & Akan, 2018)
Capacity Building	Focuses on continuous professional development for educators (Parakhina et al., 2017)	Strengthens skills of educators and administrators through training programs (Mandillah, 2019)
Technology Integration	High emphasis on integrating ICT and digital tools in education (Halász & Michel, 2011)	Recognizes the importance of ICT and aims to incorporate technology in education (Dike, Ngwuchukwu, & Anyim, 2020)
Inclusive Education	Policies aim to ensure education for all, including marginalized groups (Bell, 1999)	Efforts to provide inclusive education for all children, including those with disabilities (Wadja, 2019)
Global Educational Goals	Commitment to international educational goals like SDG 4 (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2017)	Aligns with global educational initiatives and goals like SDG 4 (Donkoh, Wing-On, & Donkor, 2020)

Differences in Educational Policy Formulation and Implementation Strategies in Developed and Developing Countries

Educational policy formulation and implementation vary significantly between developed and developing countries due to differences in resources, governance, and contextual challenges. Developed countries benefit from substantial resources, advanced technology, and stable political environments that support consistent policy implementation (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2017). These countries typically have greater financial resources and better infrastructure to support educational policies, enabling significant investments in technology and advanced learning methods (Halász & Michel, 2011). Stable governance structures in developed countries allow for continuous policy adaptation and refinement, ensuring that educational strategies remain effective and responsive to changing needs (De Marchi, Lucertini, & Tsoukiàs, 2016).

In contrast, developing countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya prioritize strategies that involve community engagement, capacity building, and infrastructure development to address their unique

educational challenges (Arop, Owan, & Akan, 2018; Donkoh, Wing-On, & Donkor, 2020). These countries often rely on international partnerships and donor support to supplement their initiatives, reflecting a need to overcome constraints such as inadequate funding and political instability (Jacob & Samuel, 2020; Mandillah, 2019). Despite these efforts, challenges like bureaucratic inefficiencies and inconsistent funding can disrupt policy implementation, underscoring the importance of context-specific approaches to effectively address educational needs and promote sustainable development (Oyedeki, 2015).

Table 4: Differences in Educational Policy Formulation and Implementation

Aspect	Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Resource Allocation	Substantial financial resources and advanced infrastructure (Bell, 1999; Dorey, 2014)	Inadequate funding and infrastructure challenges (Arop, Owan, & Akan, 2018; Jacob & Samuel, 2020)
Technological Integration	High integration of advanced technology in education (Halász & Michel, 2011)	Limited by infrastructure and funding (Dike, Ngwuchukwu, & Anyim, 2020)
Policy Stability and Governance	Stable political environments and consistent policy implementation (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2017)	Political instability and bureaucratic inefficiencies (Oyedeki, 2015; Elems-Ikwegbu, 2023)
Community Engagement	Less emphasis on local participation	High emphasis on community involvement (Donkoh, Wing-On, & Donkor, 2020)
Capacity Building	Advanced training within established systems (Parakhina et al., 2017)	Focus on enhancing skills of educators and administrators (Mandillah, 2019)
Infrastructure Development	Established infrastructure, focus on innovation	Critical focus on building and maintaining facilities (Addo, 2019)
Policy Adaptability	Continuous feedback and adaptable policies (De Marchi, Lucertini, & Tsoukiàs, 2016)	Less adaptable policies due to limited M&E resources (Oyedeki, 2015)
Global Partnerships	Primarily internal funding and policy processes	Reliance on international partnerships and donor support (Saeed et al., 2020)

Lessons Developing Countries Can Learn from Developed Countries in Educational Policy Formulation and Implementation

One critical lesson for developing countries is the importance of robust funding systems to support educational initiatives. Developed countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, have demonstrated the impact of substantial financial investment in education. These investments ensure adequate resources for teacher training, infrastructure development, and the integration of technology (Bell, 1999; Dorey, 2014). Developing countries can benefit from creating more sustainable funding models, including public-private partnerships and exploring innovative funding sources to reduce reliance on donor funding and improve resource allocation efficiency (Cooley, 2015; Jacob & Samuel, 2020).

The high integration of advanced technology in education seen in developed countries highlights the importance of digital literacy and ICT in modern learning environments (Halász & Michel, 2011). Developing countries should prioritize investment in educational technology infrastructure and training programs to enhance digital skills among educators and students (Dike, Ngwuchukwu, & Anyim, 2020).

This includes leveraging affordable technology solutions and forming partnerships with tech companies to provide necessary resources and support.

Developed countries benefit from stable political environments that support consistent policy implementation and adaptation (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2017). Developing countries can learn from this by working towards political stability and strengthening governance structures. This includes enhancing transparency, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, and fostering political will to support long-term educational reforms (Oyedeji, 2015; Elems-Ikwegbu, 2023).

While community engagement is already a strength in many developing countries, developed countries also emphasize stakeholder involvement to ensure policies are relevant and supported (Normand et al., 2018). Developing countries should continue to foster strong community involvement but also adopt structured mechanisms to incorporate feedback into policy adjustments, thereby ensuring policies are responsive to local needs and conditions (Arop, Owan, & Akan, 2018; Donkoh, Wing-On, & Donkor, 2020).

The practice of continuous evaluation and feedback seen in countries like Finland ensures that educational policies remain effective and responsive to changing needs (Halász & Michel, 2011). Developing countries should establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track policy implementation, assess outcomes, and make necessary adjustments (Oyedeji, 2015). This involves regular data collection, stakeholder surveys, and impact assessments to inform policy refinement (De Marchi, Lucertini, & Tsoukiàs, 2016).

Investing in educational infrastructure is crucial for creating conducive learning environments. Developed countries have shown that modern, well-equipped facilities significantly impact student learning and teacher effectiveness (Parakhina et al., 2017). Developing countries should prioritize infrastructure projects, including building and maintaining schools, providing up-to-date technology, and ensuring safe learning environments. Partnerships with international organizations and private sector stakeholders can help bridge funding gaps and support these initiatives (Hui & Lau, 2010; Addo, 2019).

By adopting these lessons from developed countries, developing nations can enhance their educational policy formulation and implementation strategies, leading to improved educational outcomes and sustainable development. These efforts require comprehensive, context-specific approaches that leverage local strengths and address existing challenges.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

The result of this comparative analysis have significant implications for the practice of educational policy formulation and implementation in developing nations. These implications emphasize the need for a holistic and context-specific approach to educational reforms and include:

- Enhanced Funding Models:** Developing countries need to adopt diversified funding models, combining public and private investments to ensure consistent financial support for educational initiatives. This can include leveraging international aid and fostering partnerships with private sector stakeholders to bridge funding gaps (Cooley, 2015; Jacob & Samuel, 2020).
- Technology Integration:** Investing in ICT infrastructure and digital literacy programs is essential. This integration not only modernizes educational systems but also prepares students for the global digital economy. Emphasis should be placed on affordable technology solutions and teacher training programs to maximize the impact (Halász & Michel, 2011; Dike, Ngwuchukwu, & Anyim, 2020).
- Governance and Stability:** Strengthening governance structures and promoting political stability are crucial for the sustainable implementation of educational policies. Reducing bureaucratic

inefficiencies and enhancing transparency will support long-term educational reforms (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2017; Oyedeji, 2015).

4. **Community Engagement:** Effective educational policies must involve local communities and stakeholders. Structured mechanisms for continuous feedback and stakeholder involvement ensure that policies are relevant and widely supported, addressing the specific needs of local contexts (Normand et al., 2018; Arop, Owan, & Akan, 2018).
5. **Continuous Evaluation:** Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems is vital for assessing policy effectiveness and making necessary adjustments. Regular data collection and impact assessments help refine policies to ensure they remain effective and responsive to changing educational needs (Halász & Michel, 2011; De Marchi, Lucertini, & Tsoukiàs, 2016).

Recommendations for Policymakers

In line with the implications, the following are recommended:

1. **Adopt Diverse Funding Strategies:** Policymakers should explore innovative funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, to ensure sustainable financial support for educational initiatives. Practically, in Uganda, the government has engaged in public-private partnerships (PPPs) to fund and manage school infrastructure, leveraging private sector efficiencies and resources to improve educational facilities without overly straining public finances. This approach has helped expand access to quality education in underserved regions.
2. **Invest in Technology and Training:** Prioritize the integration of ICT in education by investing in infrastructure and comprehensive training programs for educators to enhance digital literacy and modern teaching methods. This approach has been successfully implemented in some other developing countries. For instance, the government of India launched the National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), which provides online courses and resources to enhance the digital skills of students and educators. The program focuses on training teachers to use technology effectively in the classroom, thereby improving educational outcomes and digital literacy across the country.
3. **Strengthen Governance:** Improve governance structures to promote stability and transparency, reducing bureaucratic hurdles that impede policy implementation. This approach has been witnessed in Rwanda. In 2018, Rwanda implemented a comprehensive educational reform that included restructuring the Ministry of Education to improve decision-making processes and policy implementation. This reform also involved setting up a transparent system for the allocation and use of educational resources, significantly reducing corruption and inefficiencies.
4. **Engage Stakeholders:** Develop structured frameworks for stakeholder engagement to ensure that educational policies reflect the needs and perspectives of the communities they serve. Effective stakeholder engagement have been instrumental in educational policy development in some developing countries including Brazil. In Brazil, the government initiated community involvement programs in the education sector by setting up School Management Councils. These councils include parents, teachers, students, and community leaders who work together to tailor educational policies to the specific needs of their schools. This approach has fostered greater community involvement and improved educational outcomes by ensuring that policies are relevant and broadly supported. Expanding the involvement of various stakeholders in the educational sector, similar to Brazil's School Management Councils, can significantly enhance educational policies and outcomes. Besides parents, teachers, students, and community leaders, other crucial stakeholders could include local businesses, alumni, non-profit organizations, and local government officials. Engaging local businesses, for instance, can provide practical insights into the skills needed in the local job market and might lead to funding and support for school programs that align with industry needs. Alumni can contribute through mentorships, internships, and career guidance, enriching the educational

experience with real-world perspectives. Non-profit organizations can offer resources and expertise in specialized areas such as technology integration, arts, or environmental education, promoting a more holistic educational approach. Finally, involving local government officials can ensure that educational initiatives are synchronized with broader community plans and regulations, securing necessary approvals and support more efficiently. This comprehensive engagement creates a robust framework where educational policies are not only reflective of but also actively supported by the community they serve, leading to sustainable and impactful educational development.

5. **Implement Continuous Evaluation:** Establish and maintain robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track policy outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven adjustments. Kenya in 2017 introduced a national school monitoring system that utilizes data collection and analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of educational policies and practices. This system allows for regular assessment of student performance across regions, helping policymakers to identify successful initiatives and areas needing improvement. It provides a robust framework for making data-driven decisions to enhance educational quality.

CONCLUSION

This comparative analysis of educational policy formulation and implementation highlights the disparities and commonalities between developed and developing countries. Developed nations like the United States, the United Kingdom, and China benefit from substantial financial resources, stable political environments, and advanced technology, enabling them to adopt comprehensive strategies for educational improvement. These strategies include evidence-based policy making, stakeholder engagement, continuous evaluation and feedback, robust funding systems, and extensive infrastructure development. In contrast, developing countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya face challenges like inadequate funding, political instability, and infrastructural deficits. However, they have made significant progress by emphasizing community engagement, capacity building, and partnerships with international organizations.

Despite the differences, both developed and developing countries share common strategies such as evidence-based policy making, stakeholder engagement, and the integration of technology in education. Continuous evaluation and adaptation are crucial to ensuring that educational policies remain relevant and effective. Developing countries can learn from the comprehensive and structured approaches of developed nations to enhance their educational systems and better meet the needs of their populations.

To improve educational outcomes, developing countries should adopt holistic and context-specific approaches. Diversifying funding sources, prioritizing investment in ICT infrastructure and digital literacy programs, and strengthening governance structures are essential steps. Additionally, involving local communities and stakeholders in policy-making processes and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems will ensure policies are relevant and widely supported. By implementing these strategies, developing countries can enhance their educational frameworks, contribute to broader social and economic development, and create sustainable educational systems that cater to the needs of their citizens.

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