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**EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THE POST-2015 LANDSCAPES**

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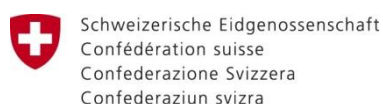
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- Dissemination of just-in-time information and knowledge
- Advocacy of critical analysis to governments, NGOs and other organizations
- Cooperation with other groups, particularly in the Global South, in order to share information, carry out joint programmes, join efforts in advocacy and strengthen networks

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- Education and training in contexts of emergency and fragility
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NORRAG News No. 49

Education and Development in the Post-2015 Landscapes

The last 18 months have witnessed an immense number of papers, reports, as well as meetings, from local, national, regional and global consultations to high level panel engagements – all on the topic of the world’s development agenda post-2015. NORRAG has sought to follow this massive analytical and lobbying activity over this period (see Working Papers no. 1 and 4, at www.norrag.org and a whole series of post-2015 blogs; see norrag.wordpress.com). With the publication of the High Level Panel (HLP) report on 31st May 2013, one major milestone was reached, but there are several other processes that are still incomplete. The UN Secretary General, in particular, worked up his own post-2015 report, *A Life of Dignity for All*, before the General Assembly convened a special event on this topic of post-2015, on 25th September 2013.

In the next two months, October-November, Robert Palmer and Kenneth King are taking stock of the evidence and research base of the many proposals that have been made surrounding post-2015. We would be keen to hear from *NORRAG News* readers about the following. Where possible, we would encourage NN readers to review the **evidence base** for the post-2015 proposals they are discussing:

- BRICS countries’ reactions to the post-2015 preoccupations
- The position of skills development or TVET in post-2015 prescriptions
- National NGO or think tank perspectives on post-2015
- Trade-offs between national education planning and post-2015 proposals
- Aid agency angles on the knowledge base of post-2015
- Implications of new post-2015 agenda for future development funding

We are paying particular attention in this issue of *NORRAG News (49)* to views of commentators based in the South. In other words, we suspect we shall find that there are many different post-2015 landscapes, - East, West, North, South.

We shall be interested to hear from those readers who have taken part in national consultations on post-2015, of which there have been over 70, many of them supported by the UNDP.

Other readers may have been involved with a different piece of this post-MDG jigsaw - the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). Like the HLP, this too produced a general report in June and an over-arching goal. Again, since some NORRAG readers have been connected to the education and skills thematic dimension of this SDSN process, we should be very keen to hear from them. The Education Thematic Report became available in September 2013.

A third modality around post-2015 are of course the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are being pursued by an Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs. This group held its fourth meeting in mid-June 2013, and there is a fifth meeting planned for late November 2013.

A fourth group of readers we should be very interested to hear from are those who presented a research-based account of some particular aspect of the post-2015 process at the biennial UKFIET Oxford Conference of 10-12 September 2013. Several of these attended or presented at the NORRAG sub-theme of ‘Futures of Development Assistance’.

Robert Palmer and I should be delighted to have contributions that will inform our next Working Paper on “Education and Skills Post-2015: The Evidence Base”. All contributions will of course be acknowledged.

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Foreword

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This issue of *NORRAG News* (NN) marks the beginning of some beginnings. It is one of the first issues where the majority of those writing are either in the Global South or are originally from the Global South. It is in fact much easier to identify contributors from the North on the politics and policies around Post-2015, as there has been a *tsunami* of interest in this topic in many of the industrialised countries of Europe and North America (see King and Palmer, 2013). This may also be the first issue of NN to be translated into Chinese, in a shorter version, as already happens with French and Spanish. If it is not this one, then it will be our 50th (anniversary number, NN50). This will be thanks to Li Jun of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

This will not so much be just a translation of a selection of the most relevant articles into Mandarin, but Li Jun, as editor of the regional edition, will do his own editorial, and may well add one or more special interest articles for the regional audience. This same pattern may be followed in other regions, such as Southern Africa. And we may explore a regional editor versioning our existing Spanish edition of NN in a similar fashion, for the benefit of Latin America and Spain. Similarly with our French edition. We are also discussing the vital importance of a version in Arabic for the Middle East, Gulf States and North Africa.

A parallel pattern is being explored with the NORRAG Blog (<http://norrag.wordpress.com/>). Since Robert Palmer launched the blog in June 2012, there have been more than 100 blog posts, all of them linked to priority NORRAG themes.

NN49 is the beginning of the end of DFID funding of *NORRAG News*, at least for the present phase. DFID has supported the publication of NN for almost 15 years, since the time when Akililu Habte of the World Bank was the NORRAG President and Myra Harrison (now in AusAID), was head of DFID Education. We owe them and their successors a good deal. But we hope we may return to DFID support once some of the other new initiatives are in place.

Another of these new beginnings is that, thanks to generous funding from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), NORRAG has been able to grow in the last few months, and has begun to have programmes of work, and not just its traditional knowledge products, such as *NORRAG News*. A full account of these will be available in a month or two, but the most advanced of these so far is a programme of work on post-2015. Already there have been two lengthy Working Papers (WP) (No. 1 and 4: www.norrag.org/en/publications/working-papers.html) on post-2015, and there will be a third WP by the end of this year; there has been a special issue of NN (49), and a whole section of the UKFIET Oxford Conference of 2013, organized by NORRAG, was dedicated to this theme.

NORRAG is also exploring new partnership relations with the South. NORRAG is well aware of the complexities of partnerships - see *The New Politics of Partnership: Peril or Promise* (NN41), but we shall carry a full account of these latest partnership developments in the next NN (50).

Traditionally, NORRAG was also responsible for some full-length publications through its collaboration with the former DSE in Bonn, as well as other bodies such as CESO (The Hague). But it is good news that we are returning to this modality, and there will be a NORRAG special issue of

Development Policy, the journal of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, in 2014. The title will be 'International education and training policies: A development challenge'.

Finally, the NORRAG team is growing. Hopefully those NORRAG members who came to the UKFIET International Education Conference in Oxford in September will have met the rest of the team. As we said, NORRAG was responsible for one of the sub-themes of the Oxford Conference – eight sessions on the 'Futures of Development Assistance'. Many NORRAG members and other participants attended these sessions, most of which were very well-attended.

We don't only have *NORRAG News* now; there is also a *Newsletter* which has already posted 11 issues this year. Make sure you get this!

Further reading

King, K. Palmer. R. 2013. 'Post-2015 agendas: Northern tsunami and Southern ripple? The case of education and skills'. Working Paper No. 4, NORRAG. See www.norrag.org

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8th October 2013.

Editorial

Post-1990, Post-2000, Post-2015 – Education and Skills – North & South

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23 years ago in April 1990, we published NN7 on the *World Conference on Education for All and World Literacy Year*; 13 years ago, in April 2000, we published *NORRAG News (NN) No. 26*, entirely dedicated to the review of the *World Education Forum in Dakar* (See: www.norrag.org/en/publications/norrag-news/full-list-of-norrag-news.html). Five months later at the Millennium Summit, we did **not** run a special issue or section of NN, nor later on when the Millennium Development Goals were declared. What's so different in 2013?

HLP Report 2013 versus Dakar 2013?

By contrast, this special issue of *NORRAG News, NN49*, pays much more attention to the High Level Panel (HLP) Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda than to the Thematic Consultation on Education held in Dakar in March 2013. It remains to be seen if there is an international groundswell of interest in the World Conference on Education for All to be held in South Korea in April 2015. But for the moment, it would appear that the continuation of the MDGs, in some form, is gaining much more traction internationally than debates about the continuation of the six Education for All (EFA) Goals from Dakar 2000. [See further reading at end]

Still Northern *Tsunami*, Southern Calm around Post-2015?

Robert Palmer and I have argued in an article published in September 2013 (*International Journal of Educational Development* 33 (2013) 409–425) that there is very much more activity around post-2015 in some of the Northern industrialised countries than in the Global South – whether in the emerging economies or in lower income countries. This still seems to be broadly the case, as public debate around the MDGs in India remains muted, and in several other countries, e.g. S. Korea, the discussions about post-2015 have been virtually 'non-existent', except at the highest level. The same would seem to be the case in South Africa, where there is a mini-*tsunami* in high policy circles, perhaps linked to South Africa and Ireland being asked to facilitate preparation for the debate on post-2015 which took place in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 25th September.

China is a further illustration. Until very recently most of the post-2015 activity in China has been linked to various UN bodies or to international NGOs, or other development agencies. Just in August 2013 there has appeared a report on "Towards an Equitable and Sustainable Future – A Chinese Perspective on Post-2015 Development Agenda". The apparent lack of public policy debate may not mean that there has been no debate, as there is a tradition of announcing plans 'just in time' before a key meeting or conference. Indeed, China published its *Position paper on the development agenda beyond 2015* on 22nd September 2013, three days before the UNGA session.

The aid connections of the post-MDG discourse

Another reason why there is much more post-2015 activity in certain industrialised countries is that there are potentially crucial connections between any final post-2015 agenda and the 'aid industry'. If Education, HIV Aids, or Maternal Mortality, for example, were not to be featured in the next development agenda, it would have very immediate consequences for the international NGOs, think tanks, consultancies and development agencies which are concerned with those areas. This may help to explain why countries like India, South Africa and China which are not aid-dependent see the tenor of the post-MDG discourse as not being so relevant to their situations, and not least as they don't yet have major NGOs and consultancy firms that are operating internationally.

MDG impact: Much ado about nothing?

In the debates around post-2015 goals, targets and indicators, there has been much discussion about the very positive impact of the MDGs in many different developing and emerging economies over the last 13 years. Suddenly, just two months ago, Howard Friedman published a bombshell under the title: *Causal Inference and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Assessing Whether There Was an Acceleration in MDG Development Indicators Following the MDG Declaration* (August 2013). What is his conclusion? Here is the summary:

Results: The general result was that there was no trend in statistically significant accelerations in the MDG indicators after 2000. Rather the results for all four sets of reported analysis were consistent in that about half of the MDG indicators exhibited no acceleration or deceleration during the time period from 1992 to 2008 and about one-third exhibited accelerations BEFORE 2001. Contrarily, nearly all of the control indicators had no change (neither acceleration nor deceleration) during the time period. (Friedman, 2013: 4)

One concern is that there are several key countries such as China where progress on the MDG indicators had dramatically taken place **before** 2000. Thus China's 9-year compulsory education policy had been fully implemented before 2000 (see Li Jun this Issue), and yet in some quarters this national success became somehow linked to the alleged success of the MDGs.

The switch from access to quality but without reductionism

One of the most widespread conclusions around the two Education MDGs is that they emphasized access over quality, which had been one of the key elements in the six EFA Goals in Dakar 2000. However, there is quantity and quality. Dakar 2000 illustrated the dangers of loose phrasing in its use of the term 'life skills' which provided a problem for the global monitoring of skills development right up to 2012. In the same way, if quality gets translated into minimalist 'learning outcomes', then the resulting **quantification of quality** may become a new straitjacket for teaching and learning. There are many other vital outcomes of education than being able to read with understanding so many words in one minute (Williams; and Languille, this issue). In other words the narrowing of the EFA agenda of Dakar 2000 by the MDGs looked like it might be narrowed further by a crude numbers game approach to quality.

Twin-track (EFA &MDG) processes to post-2015?

Fortunately, both the Dakar 2013 thematic consultation and the HLP Report of May 2013 have emphasized that education is about far more than basic literacy and numeracy. There is a sense,

therefore, in which these two 2013 reports return, full circle, to the spirit of the EFA Goals of Dakar 2000, or even to the expanded vision of EFA in Jomtien 1990. The fact that the HLP Goal of providing quality education and lifelong learning covers, through its targets, all the original six EFA Goals except for Adult Literacy potentially weakens the case for a separate continuation of the EFA process. There will nevertheless be an EFA stocktaking with a series of national and regional reviews over the next 18 months, culminating in a Global Education Conference in South Korea in April 2015 (Tang, this issue). Maintaining the two-track EFA & MDG race towards 2015 will however require a great deal of energy on the part of the main EFA host, UNESCO.

Equity, inclusion and leaving no one behind

The other 'winner' along with education quality in the debates around post-2015 so far has been equity. But the HLP aspiration to 'leave no one behind' is challenged not only and most obviously in conflict situations but also where there are minority language populations which face 'equitable quality education' in languages which they do not speak or initially understand. Another dimension of exclusion is that hundreds of millions of the very poorest of the poor are missing from the sampling frames of international household surveys (Carr-Hill, this issue). The challenge of moving from the MDG of reducing poverty to the HLP Goal of ending poverty has major implications for school systems. It is argued, for instance, for Latin America that the school systems, so far from compensating for inequalities at birth, actually reproduce and reinforce inequality. In other words, education may be part of the problem rather than part of the solution unless it is structurally reformed. Equally, if four fifths of the world's poor live in middle income countries, then the targets of the next development agenda cannot only be the traditionally poorest developing countries.

Paying for development agendas

Much more attention has been given to arguing the case for specific goals and targets than to paying for them; so it is important to recall that the HLP argues that the bulk of the money to finance sustainable development has to come from domestic sources. Where there is continuing need for external funding for so-called developing countries, the main part of long-term finance will not be aid from industrialised countries but from private capital, according to the HLP. Instead of declaring a whole series of carefully framed, well-intentioned goals and only then realizing the importance of financing them, arguably the post-2015 agenda should learn from the Monterrey process, but not wait like Monterrey for two years, but sort out development financing in principle in 2015 itself (Janus and Klingebiel, this issue).

Skills askew?

Skills was one of the casualties of the Dakar Education Forum of 2000, and there was considerable effort to ensure that, both in the HLP and in the Dakar Thematic Consultation on Education in March 2013, vocational and technical skills were mentioned in their own right. Sadly, the HLP report still looks at education through the lens of outdated rates of return studies: 'A study of 98 countries found that each additional year of education results in, on average, a 10 per cent increase in lifetime earnings' (HLP, 2013: 36). It is very surprising that these old studies should have been used when, apart from other weaknesses, they pay absolutely no attention to the quality of schooling, the very item that the HLP judges so important in its illustrative goal of 'quality education'. It is a pity also that the HLP presents the same outdated rates of return for primary, secondary and higher education (ibid. 37), and especially when they make the point that education is about far more than

basic literacy and numeracy. Fortunately, the rates of return don't have a return for technical and vocational skills. But it is unfortunate when so very much has been learned about skills, that they end up with just a sentence or two on skills, linked to the labour market: 'Skills learned in school must also help young people to get a job' (See McGrath; Ameen; and Douse, this Issue).

The role of research evidence in post-2015 education and skills landscapes

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) which is another part of the UN's post-2015 architecture, had a series of thematic groups working on post-2015 options. One of these was on Early Childhood Development, Education and Transition to Work. It duly produced an 89 page report just before the UNGA special event on post-2015 took place towards the end of September 2013. *The Future of Our Children: Lifelong, Multi-Generational Learning for Sustainable Development* is different from the majority of the post-2015 material in being powerfully based on research. It is also different from the HLP by not omitting the vital importance of adult literacy, education and continuing education. NORRAG will be paying particular attention to the role of research in post-2015 proposals in its next Working Paper No. 6, due in November 2013.

Lobbies and landscapes

We have tried in this special issue to represent many of the different interest groups concerned with the case for education and training post-2015. They cover early childhood, adult literacy, life-long learning, rights to education, non-instrumental approaches to learning, disabilities education, skills development, good teaching, and higher education, - to mention just a few. Boiling this essential complexity of education into a goal and a handful of targets for the next fifteen years after 2015 was always going to be an impossibly ambitious exercise. It now looks virtually certain that Education and Training will be included in their own right in the next development agenda. But we should recall, from the history of the six EFA Goals, that ensuring that several different dimensions of education are covered turns out to be the easy part of the exercise. The real challenge is to secure attention and commitment to their support and implementation.

Further reading

NORRAG Working Paper #1: Education and Skills in the Post-2015 Global Landscape: History, Context, Lobbies and Visions, by Kenneth King and Robert Palmer (September 2012)

NORRAG Working Paper #4: Post-2015 Agendas: Northern Tsunami, Southern Ripple? The Case of Education and Skills, by Kenneth King and Robert Palmer (April 2013); also in *International Journal of Educational Development* 33 (2013) 409–425

Education and Skills in the Post-2015 Jigsaw: Post-MDGs, SDGs and Post-EFA

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Keywords: MDGs; SDGs; EFA

Summary: This note is intended to give readers a quick round-up of where we are now with the post-2015 education and skills agenda; it reviews the post-MDG, SDGs and post-EFA processes.

As of October 2013, there remains a tripartite process of determining the position of education and skills in the post-2015 agenda:

- **The post-MDG process;**
- **The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) process;** and,
- **The post-EFA process.**

Each of the three processes has their own trajectory, but each with its final sights on a new agreement in 2015. How they will all fit together is still to be determined. Below we briefly review the state of each.

The Post-MDGs Process

The first prong of the post-2015 education trident, the post-MDG process, is represented by the UN High Level Panel Report, the UN-facilitated global consultation, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Reports and the UN Secretary-General's Report on MDGs/Post-2015.

The UN Post-2015 High Level Panel Report

The UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda was set up in mid-2012, and released their report at the end of May 2013. The report was intended as an input to the UN Secretary-General's thinking on Post-2015. It contained one illustrative stand-alone education goal: 'Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning', with four accompanying targets related to pre-primary education, primary education, lower secondary education and skills, including technical and vocational, needed for work (HLP, 2013). While generally well received by the education community, the HLP proposals are not without its critics, including related to its treatment of (or lack of) early childhood development (Shaeffer, 2013), skills (McGrath, 2013), and adult literacy (Singh, 2013; Tang, 2013).

The UN-Facilitated Global Consultation

A synthesis report of the UN-facilitated thematic and country consultations, *The Global Conversation Begins* (UNDG, 2013), was released at the end of March 2013. It highlighted how education and skills were frequently mentioned in country and thematic consultations. In fact, the importance of education/skills was mentioned in all of the 10 thematic consultation reports (in addition of course to the thematic consultation dedicated to education); this illustrates the fact that there is strong recognition of the cross-cutting nature of education and skills to the post-2015 agenda.

The May 2013 report of the “UN Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda” proposed a stand-alone education goal: ‘Equitable, quality, lifelong education and learning for all’ (UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013a) (see also Naidoo, 2013; Tang, 2013). This goal proposal was carried forward in a slightly reworded style in the updated synthesis report of September 2013 (UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013b): ‘Equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all’ (p.43).

Meanwhile, MyWorld, the UN-facilitated global survey on post-2015 (www.myworld2015.org), had clocked up votes from over 1.1 million people by the time of the UN Special Event on MDGs on 25th September, 2013 [i]. Across all country income groups (HICs, MICs, and LICs), and across almost all categories of people (except the over 55s – who placed ‘education’ as 3rd priority), “a good education” was ranked as the number 1 priority. In fact, it is interesting that education has been the number 1 priority all along; for example, back in March 2013, when there were just 70,000 votes in, education came out top (UNDG, 2013).

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

The report of the SDSN, *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*, came out in early June 2013 (SDSN, 2013a). This report, like the HLP report, also contained proposed Sustainable Development Goals. For education, this was: ‘Ensure Effective Learning for All Children and Youth for Life and Livelihood’, with targets related to early childhood development, primary, secondary and youth unemployment.

The SDSN is supported by 12 thematic groups, one of which is on ‘Early Childhood Development, Education, and Transition to Work’. The thematic report from this group, *The Future of Our Children: Lifelong, Multi-Generational Learning for Sustainable Development* (SDSN, 2013b), was published the week before UNGA on September 18th 2013. The report goes into more depth on the suggestions made with regard to education, and into the evidence used to back up these propositions (See King, Editorial).

UN Secretary-General’s (SG’s) Report on MDGs and Post-2014: A Life of Dignity for All

At the end of July 2013, the UN SG released his own report, *A Life of Dignity for All* (UN, 2013a). This has been informed by the reports of the HLP, the SDSN and the global consultation to date. It was intended for the September 2013 session of the UN General Assembly and, specifically, the special event to follow up on efforts on MDGs on 25th September, 2013 (with the event being co-hosted by Ireland and South Africa).

The UN SG outlined a number of actions ‘that apply to all countries’ (UN, 2013a; 13), including actions related to education. The first was a stand-alone education priority; highlighting that the post-2015 agenda needs to go beyond UPE, and beyond formal education to include skills training:

Provide quality education and lifelong learning. Young people should be able to receive high-quality education and learning, from early childhood development to post-primary schooling, including not only formal schooling but also life skills and vocational education and training. (p.14)

Furthermore, education and skills were flagged as relevant to the post-2015 growth and employment agenda:

Promote inclusive and sustainable growth and decent employment. This can be achieved by economic diversification, financial inclusion, efficient infrastructure, productivity gains, trade, sustainable energy, *relevant education and skills training...* (p.14, italics added)

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Process

The second prong of the post-2015 education trident, the SDGs process, is represented by the intergovernmental open working group (OWG) on SDGs.

The establishment of the OWG on SDGs has its origins in the outcome of the Rio+20 meeting in mid-2012. It was not until mid-March 2013, six months after the OWG on SDGs was meant to be set up, that they had their first meeting, with the second 17-19th April 2013, the third 22nd-24th May 2013, and the fourth 17-19th June 2013. A fifth meeting is planned for 25th-27th November 2013, and will focus on sustained and inclusive economic growth, macroeconomic policy, infrastructure development, industrialization and energy. What have been their deliberations to date regarding education and skills?

Technical Support Team Issues Brief: Education and Culture

The first point of reference for the OWG is the mid-June 2013 meeting; the first of the OWG meetings to tackle education in any substantive way. One of the background briefs for this prepared by the UN Post-2015 Technical Support Team covered the issue of education (and culture) (DESA-UNDP, 2013).

This issues-brief called for a 'single harmonized global education framework' (p.4) and endorsed the stand-alone goal of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the post-2015 Development Agenda: "Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All" [ii]. Further, it noted the following as priority areas for targets: universal access to, and completion of quality pre-primary education of an agreed period (at least 1 year); equal access to and completion of a full course of quality primary schooling, with an emphasis on learning outcomes; universal access to, and completion of, quality lower secondary/secondary education, again with an emphasis on learning outcomes; and, universal access to post-secondary learning opportunities (including technical and vocational) that are relevant to the worlds of work, life, lifelong learning and global citizenship.

June 2013 OWG Meeting Statements, Presentations and Co-Chair Summary of Meeting

The second point of reference are the actual discussions at the mid-June OWG meeting. The co-chair's summary noted that, with respect to education 'the human rights dimension, equity of access, quality, and relevance were emphasized' (OWG SDG, 2013a: 1) by meeting participants. Participants agreed that at the elementary level, education 'should be free'. There is a need to finish the job of MDG2 and to ensure UPE, but also focus on 'learning outcomes, relevance to job needs, lifelong learning, adult literacy, and non-formal education' (ibid.). Many participants provided statements on their positions; of note is that there appeared to be strong consensus on the post-2015 education agenda taking a whole education sector approach, covering early childhood interventions to vocational and tertiary education, and everything in between (mentioned by the African Group, the EU, OREALC/UNESCO and Nigeria). In addition to these statements making mention of vocational skills, others that mentioned vocational skills training (but not in the context of a sector wide approach) included the ILO, the Group of 77 and China, the Caribbean Community – CARICOM, and Ghana on behalf of ECOWAS. [iii]

Interim Report of the OWG

The third point of reference is the *Interim Report* of the OWG on SDGs that was released on 31st July 2013 and noted that 'education is absolutely central to any sustainable development agenda' (OWG SDG, 2013b: 9). Specifically, it noted that UPE must be achieved, and the quality of primary education also needs to be addressed. Further, it noted that 'to ensure productive employment in

increasingly knowledge-based economies' (p.9) secondary and tertiary education need more emphasis, as do 'skills development linked to labour market needs' (p.8) and lifelong learning. Interestingly, pre-primary education, or early childhood care and development were not mentioned. However, this interim report was issued by the OWG co-chairs and was not a negotiated document between participating member states.

The Post-EFA Process

The third prong of the post-2015 education trident, the post-EFA process, is represented by UNESCO-UNICEF involvement in the global education thematic consultation (see above), and the EFA assessment process 2013-2015.

UNESCO only recent appears to have taken up an emerging position on education post-2015, but there is clearly a long way to go. On the one hand, while 'UNESCO believes that... education should be an explicit stand-alone goal as well as a cross-cutting theme across the broader development agenda' (Tang, 2013), there is still no agreement on whether there should be two sets of education goals post-2105 (post-EFA goals and post-MDG education goals) or one. It is expected that this issue, as well as focal areas will be better defined during the EFA assessment process.

Many readers will recall that, in the lead up to the Dakar World Forum in 2000, UNESCO organised an EFA assessment exercise (starting in mid-1998) to take stock of EFA progress since Jomtien (1990) [iv]. In the lead up to 2015, starting mid-2013 UNESCO will again run a process of EFA review, this time looking back to 2000. It will start with a detailed EFA national assessment process (UNESCO, 2013) which runs to June 2014. This will be followed by EFA Regional conferences between June and September 2014 to review the EFA national reports and draw on an EFA regional agenda. The Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO insists that 'this exercise will be aligned with the on-going process of the global debate and development on the post 2015 development agenda' (Tang, 2013). In May 2015, the Global Education Conference will be organised, hosted by the Government of Republic of Korea (Chung, 2013).

Convergence...

With three main strands of the post-2015 education process, when will we see convergence? There are several milestones to point to here.

The most immediate opportunity for some kind of initial convergence in thinking (if not yet in process) was the September 25th 2013 Special Event on the MDGs during the UNGA week in New York. The outcome document for this meeting (UN, 2013b) highlights the need to accelerate efforts towards achieving the MDGs, including those for education (but with more emphasis on equity and learning even before 2015):

'We resolve to particularly target the most-off track MDGs and those where progress has stalled: including... universal access to primary education' (p.1).

'Across all our [MDG] acceleration efforts, we will emphasis inclusivity and accessibility for all' (p.2). This includes 'improv[ing] educational opportunity and learning outcomes for the most vulnerable children' (p.2)

On the post-2015 development agenda, the outcome document notes that there should be a 'single framework and set of Goals – universal in nature and applicable to all countries, while taking account of differing national circumstances' (p.3). The outcome document calls for the launch of a 'process of intergovernmental negotiations... which will lead to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda' (p.3). The document makes no specific mention of any sectoral issues, including education.

It is expected that the final agreed outcome document will outline the roadmap for the process through the end of 2015.

The UNGA in September 2014 will be a milestone in the convergence of process. The final report of the OWG will be negotiated and drafted between February and September 2014, so will be ready by the UNGA that year [v]. By September 2014 the national EFA assessments and regional EFA conferences will have been held, so input from those to UNGA 2014 is expected; but the final outcome of the EFA assessment exercise will not be until May 2015.

The intergovernmental deliberations on post-2015 will culminate in a Summit in September 2015 where the post-2015 agenda will be adopted.

Footnotes

[i] However, both Nigeria and India have over 170,000 votes, so the 1.1m global total is somewhat misleading.

[ii] The wording of this goal is of course slightly different from the May 2013 report of the thematic consultation on education, noted above (and see UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013), but is the same as the earlier drafting of the goal from March 2013.

[iii] The statements and presentations made at the 4th meeting of the OWG can be viewed here: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=12&nr=481&menu=1636&event=444>

[iv] It will also be recalled that this exercise in the run up to Dakar was regarded as being very education-centric and was unable to synthesise much data beyond ministries of education.

[v] The program of work for the OWG 2013-14 can be seen here:

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1778Pow2805.pdf>

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**THE BIGGER PICTURE:
POST-2015 AND
INTERNATIONAL
CONTEXTS**

Education and the UN High Level Panel on Post-2015: Reflections from David Cameron's Envoy

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Keywords: MDGs, Education, Post-2015, High Level Panel

Summary: The UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda published its report in May, marking the culmination of months of discussion, deliberation and consultation. The Panel sought to learn the lessons from the MDGs and present a compelling, coherent vision of what a single post-2015 framework might look like. In this article, Michael Anderson, David Cameron's Envoy during the High-Level Panel, reflects on the Panel's work both in terms of discussions around education and the context of the wider post-2015 framework, including the need for a 'data revolution' and the importance of effective institutions and good governance.

The members of the UN High Level Panel came together last year with a great sense of opportunity and optimism as they embarked on their task to propose a new development framework that would finish the job on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), build on their strengths, and go beyond in order to eradicate extreme poverty through sustainable development. It was a personal privilege for me to have been involved in this work as Special Envoy to the Prime Minister, David Cameron, who co-chaired the Panel in his personal capacity. With the Panel's report having been published in May, I wanted to reflect on the work and discussions of the Panel, including on the subject of education.

The MDGs formed an invaluable foundation to the Panel's discussions and provided lessons learned for us all as we sought to outline what a post-2015 framework might look like. Our conversations around education, so central to the MDGs, encapsulated this sense of building on and going beyond the MDGs. From the very first meeting in London, the Panel recognised that education was a vital investment for the future of our youth and that there was a need to shift from a focus on access only to access plus quality learning. Meeting minimum learning standards in literacy and numeracy was central to realising education's transformative potential.

Many of the Panel members focused on skills; some in the form of foundational skills, such as reading and writing, some spoke of transferable skills including critical thinking and team working, and many spoke of developing the necessary skills for employment. Through the Panel's extensive outreach, education was increasingly seen as one of the most important considerations for young people in the developing world. It became clear to the Panel members that young people were asking for good quality basic education and not just formal learning but life skills and vocational training to prepare them for employment. The result of these deliberations included an illustrative goal on providing quality education and lifelong learning, and I would urge readers to see what the Panel's report has to say on education and to feed in their reactions and reflections.

Integral to the Panel's efforts was the desire to ensure that they reflected the views of people living in poverty. For nine months, the Panel members heard directly from hundreds of thousands of

people from all over the world, in face-to-face meetings, through surveys, community interviews, and polling over mobiles and the internet. These interactions confirmed that people, and not only the young and not only those in poverty, saw education as critical. Indeed, the latest MY World results identify “a good education” as the most frequently voted for priority by people from all around the world.

The need to build upon and go beyond the MDGs expanded beyond education alone. The Panel recognised that one of the lessons learned has been the risk of a perverse incentive created by a focus on averages. The Panel have therefore called for a transformative shift to leave no one behind, with an integral part of this being a ‘data revolution’ and the disaggregation of data across relevant economic and social groups, with no targets considered achieved unless they have been met across all these groups. This is particularly relevant to education where current capacity to monitor and track learning outcomes globally is patchy at best. Work is underway, through the [Learning Metrics Taskforce](#) and related initiatives ([PISA for Development](#)), to address this with the provision of disaggregated data that is central to the Report’s recommendations and, if implemented, would represent a step-change in delivering education outcomes. I am sure Panel members will continue to promote this need to leave no one behind and to foment a data revolution over the next two years of negotiations in the UN.

The Panel, reflecting the consultations they had, also discussed and presented suggestions on the need to broaden out the scope of the existing goals to take into account critical development issues such as peace, effective institutions and the rule of law, that together form an enabling environment in which we can eradicate poverty within a generation. These are both means and ends in themselves, and something the global community must recognise as essential to addressing the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty and vulnerability. They are also clearly relevant to achieving education outcomes. Peace and stability are fundamental to providing the conditions for young people to attend and finish school, while good governance, transparency and the absence of corruption must be pre-requisites for fair and effective education systems.

We are now just over one hundred days on from the publication of the Panel report. It is a useful opportunity to take stock of what the Panel have said and to brace ourselves for two years of tough negotiations ahead. The whole global community has a tremendous opportunity, and indeed responsibility, to forge together a new framework that leaves no one behind and builds upon the MDGs to eradicate extreme poverty. The education community has a great deal to add to this debate, both in terms of their own lessons from the MDGs and in guiding new constituencies through the complex web of UN processes that lie ahead of us. The Panel’s work was to provide a compelling input into these processes; it is now incumbent upon us all to make our aspirations a reality.

Conflict-Affected and Fragile States: Perspective on Post-2015

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Keywords: conflict affected and fragile states; post-2015

Summary: This piece looks at the post-2015 development agenda from conflict-affected and fragile states' point of view.

It is a fact that many of the conflict-affected and fragile states will not achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and that the well-being of their people depends upon the achievement of outcomes that were not adequately reflected in the MDGs, most notably in the areas of peace and state building.

The reality for conflict-affected and fragile states in meeting any of the development goals is profound – parents will not send their children to school if they are not safe, teachers will not turn up to school if they are going to be attacked. To have quality learning outcomes for children, the education ministry has to have the resources and capacity to make this happen. The states have to be able to deliver the services to the people, to manage their own resources, to build and strengthen the institutions and as a result enhance citizen/state confidence.

Some of the conflict-affected and fragile states are rich in natural resources and yet face serious challenges in receiving fair and sustainable returns from their resources, which would help them finance the provision of basic social services to their people.

The greatest area for improvement in the international development relationships is to ensure the use of country systems and support in building their own capacity. There has been a lot of talk about capacity building, but the reality is that there are not many good examples of this working in practice. Whilst the MDGs gave the world a framework of indicators to aim for, fragile states cannot achieve these targets if their states do not have the tools to do so. When aid donors attempt to do it for them, it weakens any ability to establish sustainable systems of governance so that one day they can do it alone.

Another important issue is the corresponding improvements in the policies and practices of many of the developed countries with whom conflict-affected and fragile states interact, including in the areas of trade, the regulation of the activities of multinational corporations and the management of aid. Development partnerships between these countries and developed world have to be based on mutual trust rather than conditionality. Many fragile states consider themselves overburdened by a multiplicity of international agreements, policy commitments, and related implementation and reporting requirements, and see a need for rationalising and integrating the many parallel processes that collectively set the global agenda.

With these things in place, and conducive policy and regulatory environments, trade and investment rather than aid should increasingly drive conflict affected and fragile states' development.

The twelve illustrative goals in the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda seek to finish the job and build on the MDGs. Ensure Good Governance and Effective Institutions (Goal 10) and Ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies (Goal 11) specifically highlight the importance of peace and state-building in the development agenda. We must, however, recognise that these alone do not safeguard peace or development, so complementary goals on empowering woman, quality education, job creation, and the management of natural resources are equally important for sustainable development.

Going beyond 2015, business as usual is no longer an option. We are no longer on the same development journey that we began at the start of the new millennium. We must build a framework for the next era of global development that is legitimate and relevant, and that truly reflects the development aspirations and challenges of people everywhere. We need to ensure the new development framework does not leave people who live in the conflict affected and fragile states behind again!

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Japan's Priorities for African Development and TICADV: Echoing Japanese and African Voices in the Post-2015 Agenda

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Keywords: TICAD, Yokohama Declaration 2013, African Common Position on the post-2015, Economic Transformation, Inclusive Growth, Human Security

Summary: TICADV has successfully echoed Japanese and African voices in the post-2015 agenda. The Yokohama Declaration 2013 and the African Common Position for post-2015 raised Economic Transformation and Inclusive growth as the priorities for the post-2015 agenda. Japan also raised Human Security as the key guiding principle of the post-2015 with a growing consensus among TICAD partners. High-level representatives of Japan, African governments, United Nations and international institutions have heard these voices in TICADV.

The fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICADV) took place in Yokohama on June 1-3, 2013, co-organized by Japan, the African Union Commission (AUC), UN, UNDP and World Bank. TICAD has been providing an open forum to African governments, donor countries and agencies, civil societies, private sector, academia, media etc., and creating momentum to build

international development agenda such as Millennium Development Goals since its inception in 1993.

TICADV was also expected to deliver important inputs to the post-2015 agenda since it was scheduled just after the submission of the High-Level Panel (HLP) Report on May 31, 2013, to the UNSG who was present in Yokohama among the representatives of TICAD co-organizers. Against this background, the Yokohama Declaration 2013[i], adopted in TICADV, announced "Building a New International Development Framework: Making the African Voice Heard in the Post-2015 Development Agenda", as one of the principal actions to be taken by TICAD partners.

The Yokohama Declaration 2013 identifies the current priorities of African Development; private sector-led growth, infrastructure, agriculture, climate-resilient development, achieving MDGs, peace and stability. In parallel with the TICADV preparatory process, the African Common Position on the post-2015 development agenda was being developed through the post-2015 regional consultation in Africa led by UNECA, AUC, AfDB and UNDP. The document [ii] of the regional consultation identifies the four priorities of the African Common Position; 1) Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth 2) Innovation and technology transfer 3) Human development, and 4) Financing and partnership.

As the Yokohama Declaration 2013 suggests that the African Common Position, as well as the outcome of TICADV, will be of relevance as inputs to our future work on the post-2015 agenda, Japan will provide the TICADV outcomes as the inputs to be fully reflected in the post-2015 agenda. TICADV outcomes also could be a driving force to formulate the post-2015 agenda as the HLP Report concludes that the post-2015 agenda needs to be driven by five big transformative shifts including an economic transformation for job and inclusive growth, which is one of the main topics of TICADV and the African Common Position.

Japan has been promoting Human Security as the guiding principle of the global development agenda and the TICAD process since early 2000s. The Yokohama Declaration 2013 identifies Human Security as one of the overarching principles to be given greater attention in all aspects of the development agendas of TICADV. In the post-2015 agenda, Japan will also continue to promote Human Security as the key guiding principle, as Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, concluded in his closing remarks of TICADV high-level symposium on Human Security[iii]. African governments and TICAD co-organizers are expected to be a supporting group of Human Security in the post-2015 process, where Japan will need more efforts for broader international support and understanding on the Human Security.

TICADVI will take place in 2018, as TICAD summit-level meetings have been held every five year since 1993. It will be an important occasion for Japan and international community to materialize the post-2015 agenda in a five-year action plan for African development to be adopted in TICADVI.

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Squaring the Circle: Relevance of Post-2015 EFA and Development Agenda at the Country Level

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Keywords: Education; post-2015; High Level Panel; global goals and national contexts.

Summary: EFA and MDG education goals narrowed the educational canvas for developing countries by limiting themselves to primary education and gender parity. To what extent, and how, are the pitfalls of a restrictive view being addressed in the new agenda? The High Level Panel report suggests the targets related to the global goals be adapted at the national level. The related indicators also need to be varied and calibrated to national circumstances. Can the circle indeed be squared? A better job has to be done this time both by governments and their development partners on this score.

It is clear that the MDG education goals narrowed the educational canvas for developing countries by concentrating on universal primary education and gender parity in terms of targets and indicators.

MDGs in education are important but modest objectives, which could not be the totality of educational progress that Bangladesh and other developing countries would pursue. Nor did these objectives capture the multiple ways education could contribute to fighting poverty and achieving other national development priorities (including other MDGs). The six EFA goals embraced a broader range, but were still limited to basic education. The education MDGs and EFA goals had to be regarded as proxies and minimal conditions for educational development in a country.

The paradox is that even these minimal goals will not be achieved by 2015; so what would have been the point of broadening the goals and targets? More importantly, in the context of the discourse on the post-2015 agenda for education and development, what does the experience and record of progress suggest for goals and the agenda beyond 2015? (Ahmed, 2013a, 2013b).

The Dakar EFA consultation on the post-2015 education agenda (March 2013) noted that progress has stagnated since 2010. The emphasis of developing countries on expanding access, aided and abetted by the narrow focus of MDG 2, has left at least 250 million children unable to read or write even after reaching grade four of primary school (Dakar Outcome document). Equity in educational participation, both in access and learning outcomes, has been a casualty of the strategies and programmes followed by countries and a lack of due attention to this aspect by their external partners (GMR, 2013). The result is a deepening and widening of the gap between educational attainment and skills and competencies needed for life and work for the majority of children and youth in the developing world.

The discussion on the post-2015 agenda has highlighted that the MDGs, contradicting to a degree the spirit and core principle of the UN Millennium Declaration of 2000, took an economic view of development. It underscored poverty reduction, emphasizing income poverty, as the first, and presumably, the most important MDG, to the achievement of which other goals would contribute. To what extent and how are the pitfalls of this restrictive view being addressed in the new agenda?

Is it enough to add the mention of planetary limits to development, strongly pushed by the Rio+20 community, to the poverty goal? (Ahmed 2013a).

The experience of the MDGs poses a few other dilemmas which are liable to be glossed over in a global agenda. The global goals, targets and indicators are justifiable on the grounds of the need to proclaim a common purpose, to express human solidarity and to have common rallying points. At the same time the circumstances and needs are diverse among and within countries and population groups, which require the goals, targets and indicators to be adapted and adjusted. All are not necessarily pertinent everywhere; specific deviations are called for in diverse situations.

The final recommendations to the Secretary General submitted at the end of May by the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP) do not quite allay the concerns arising from MDG experience. In fact, a legitimate question now is whether there is a mixing up of ends and means in the HLP conceptualisation and formulation of the new agenda. It is titled “Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development”. Should this not be the other way round? Should sustainable development or, more appropriately, sustainable human development, not be the end? This end would be realised through eradicating poverty and transforming economies, i.e., changing the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

Relative priorities and foci need to vary within and among countries and populations. Can the global formulations of goals, targets and indicators recognise the need and guide and serve as the basis for local adaptations? Can there be common minimum global targets and additional desirable targets for countries, regions within countries, and population groups?

The HLP report does suggest that the targets related to the global goals should be adapted and re-formulated at the national level. The related indicators also need to be varied and calibrated to national circumstances. These principles and methodology need to be encouraged and diligently followed in guiding and designing implementation of the new development agenda. The methodological issues deserve collective and deliberate effort. A better job has to be done this time both by governments and their development partners on this score.

Further Reading

This piece is based on a longer paper for the 2013 UKFIET Conference: “Squaring the Circle: EFA in the Post-2015 Global Agenda”.

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The Post-2015 Agenda for Educational Development: Reflections on China's Experiences of International Cooperation for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

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Keywords: post-2015 development agenda; China; international cooperation; MDGs

Summary: China's secret of economic success relies heavily on its educational achievements with international aid. China's experiences are invaluable for international cooperation for the post-2015 development agenda.

Five years earlier than the 1990 Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), China had adopted a 9-year compulsory education policy. One year later in 1986 the Compulsory Law was enacted. Fifteen years later, by 2000, the national initiative had been fully implemented, and China became the first country that achieved its scheduled EFA goals, among the nine highly populated countries, including India, Egypt and Mexico. By 2012, the net enrolment rate of primary schools and gross enrolment rate of junior secondary schools had reached 99.9% and 102.1%, from 99.1% and 88.6% in 2000 and 96.3% and 66.7% in 1990, respectively. A bigger picture may be imagined if we look at some more statistics in China's recent development in education and economy. The record-breaking performance of Shanghai students in all domains of the 2009 OECD PISA results has astonished the globe. On the other hand, since 2003 China has become a country with the largest higher education system in the world, with nearly 33.3 million students studying on university campuses in 2012. With these great achievements in educational development, China has become the world's second largest economy since 2010, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace forecasts that China's economy will eventually surpass that of the U.S. by 2035. In the so-called knowledge society under the context of globalization, China is reaping the economic harvest of its investment in education since the 1980s.

At least three lessons can be learned from China's experiences of educational development: the enforcement of educational law, the strong government for resources mobility with decentralized, realistic strategies of implementation, and the self-development with international aid and cooperation. The last one is crucial in China, especially for international development. China's experiences have illustrated that a balance between the aided country and international development agencies is key to the success of MDGs, and such experiences are applicable to the ongoing post-2015 agenda for educational development. China succeeded in always tailoring the international aid to its own models of development, and has never counted solely on international aid. This may partly explain why there are relatively fewer Chinese people who participated in the recent discourse of the post-2015 development agenda, as shown in the UN's My World Online Survey.

China is now in a new, better-off position as an international donor, thanks to its economic growth and accumulated international experiences. Its conventional model of receiving international aid is obviously being re-balanced, and indeed being revamped, to more dynamic roles in working with international communities for development, as recently found in our research project on China's

new approach of international cooperation through university partnerships with African countries. The wide and rapid spread of Confucius Institutes and Classrooms is seen as a new dimension of its international cooperation and development in Africa. The outcomes of such an approach, however, are to be further observed in the future.

Toward Universal Learning: Filling the Data Gap and Building National Capacity for the Post-2015 Agenda

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Keywords: Learning; Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF); post-2015; metrics; national capacity

Summary: This article reviews the catalyst behind the shift from the Millennium Development Goal of access to primary education to a focus on access plus learning in the post-2015 agenda. The article focuses on the work on the Learning Metrics Task Force to define learning and identify indicators for global tracking of learning that can inform the post-2015 debate as well as the necessary capacity, technical and financial resources for improving learning measurement and outcomes at national level.

Over the past fifteen years, thanks in large part to the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education, major advances have been made in enrolling millions of children in school worldwide. However, those gains have been uneven and learning levels remain unacceptably low. According to the 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report, at least 250 million primary-school-age children around the world are not able to read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards, including girls and boys who have spent at least four years in school.

With a new set of global development goals on the post-2015 horizon, the education community has been catalyzing a shift in global focus and investment from universal access to ensuring access plus improving learning opportunities and outcomes. A key component of this process has been the work of the Learning Metrics Task Force, which has identified a common vision for measuring learning opportunities and outcomes for children and youth worldwide. As the post-2015 discussions on education begin to focus in on targets and indicators for tracking opportunities and outcomes, the work that the task force has done to define learning and identify indicators for global tracking of learning can inform the debate. Moreover, as the task force's work to support countries in diagnosing and improving the quality of their assessment systems moves forward, the lessons learned from this work should be valuable to government officials preparing to make the paradigm shift to access plus learning within their own education systems.

Learning Metrics Task Force

Convened by UNESCO, through its Institute for Statistics, and the Centre for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, the Learning Metrics Task Force is comprised of representatives of national and regional governments, Education for All convening agencies, regional political bodies, civil society organizations, and donor agencies. It has engaged in a consultative process to build consensus around three essential questions:

- What learning is important globally?
- How should learning be measured?
- How can measurement of learning improve education quality and learning outcomes?

Through a group of high-level task force members, technical working groups, and an open global consultation process, the task force has developed the following answers based on the expertise of more than 1,600 individuals in over 100 countries. Approximately 50 percent of the task force and working group members and nearly 75 percent of participants in the public consultations are from organizations and agencies in the Global South.

Domains of Learning and Areas of Measurement

The task force first set forth a broad, holistic definition of learning that encompasses seven domains as important for all children and youth to develop:

1. Physical well-being
2. Social and emotional
3. Culture and the arts
4. Literacy and communication
5. Learning approaches and cognition
6. Numeracy and mathematics
7. Science and technology

While all seven domains of learning are important, the task force recognized the need to have a small set of measurable indicators to be tracked at the global level. The task force identified six areas of measurement that are feasible and desirable to fill the global data gap on learning:

- Access to and completion of learning opportunities through enrollment and completion indicators.
- Early childhood experiences that result in readiness for primary school through a school readiness indicator.
- The ability to read and understand a variety of texts through: (1) a set of “learning to read” indicators at the early primary level; and (2) a set of “reading to learn” indicators at the end of primary and lower secondary levels.
- The ability to use numbers and apply this knowledge to real-life situations through numeracy indicators at the primary and secondary level.
- An adaptable, flexible skill set to meet the demands of the 21st century through an indicator still to be developed (values and skills for citizens of the world).
- Exposure to a breadth of learning opportunities across the seven domains through an indicator still to be developed.

The task force is currently working to refine indicators and instruments for these areas of measurement, including the creation of a “Learning for All” indicator that combines access, completion, and learning into one statistic.

Building National Capacity and Linking Global Resources

The task force is working to develop guidance notes to help countries assess their education measurement systems and a mechanism to improve these systems through a country-driven process to convene stakeholders and connect the necessary technical and financial resources for improving learning measurement and outcomes.

While the work of the Learning Metrics Task Force is only one piece of the larger quality puzzle, it is an important one. The task force's work provides recommendations for countries at various levels of capacity so that governments can not only track how they are doing, but also target policy to address areas of need and develop strategies for improving learning.

Further information

>>Learning Metrics Task Force

<http://www.brookings.edu/about/centers/universal-education/learning-metrics-task-force>

Broadening the Discourse on Education Quality within the Context of the Post-2015 Landscape

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Keywords: education quality; teaching and learning processes; education inputs; learning outcomes

Summary: Global education development processes are increasingly focused on promoting education quality. However, discussions on 'education quality' have mainly translated into discussions on 'learning outcomes' and/or underscored the importance of promoting literacy and numeracy. In order to truly achieve quality education for all of the world's children, the global goals process must focus on inputs, process and outcomes.

During the current Global Development Goals' (GDG) process there have been strong calls for a more holistic and sustainable framework to guide global development. The Post-2015 reports submitted to the Secretary General to date have highlighted the need to respond to and address conflict, violence, marginalization and environmental disaster [i]. The focus on these issues underscores the strong desire and perhaps growing consensus for social, economic and political change across the globe – change that would enable all people to more fully realize their human rights. Despite this overarching narrative in the GDG process generally, there has been very little critical examination of the role of education in bringing about these changes in society at the local, national, regional and global levels.

The shift from focusing on education access toward a focus on education quality (UNESCO, 2004) provides space to explore the means through which education can achieve these transformative outcomes. However, discussions on quality in the GDG process have mainly translated into discussions on 'learning outcomes' and/or underscored the importance of promoting literacy and numeracy. The illustrative education goal proposed in the [report of the High Level Panel](#) on May 30, 2013 underscores this narrow formulation of education quality (see Annex II, Goal 3). The slow progress toward achieving literacy and numeracy since the reaffirmed commitment to EFA in 2000 makes the continued focus on these issues appear rational. However, there is a risk that the education goals shaped through the GDG process and the EFA2 process will propose little more than basic literacy and numeracy as the targets to be achieved. While numeracy and literacy are important, they are not sufficient for developing capabilities necessary for other crucial educational outcomes, including creativity, curiosity, civic-mindedness, solidarity, self-discipline, self-confidence, compassion, empathy, courage, self-awareness, resilience, leadership, humility, and peace (see [Education International](#), 2012).

A broadened view of education quality necessitates a focus on more than learning outcomes. Equal, if not greater, attention must be paid to the teaching and learning processes that yield these outcomes if progress is to be assured. These processes comprise the proverbial 'black box' that sits between education 'inputs' (e.g. school infrastructure and text books) and education 'outputs' e.g. student learning outcomes. This means, among other things, that the role and nature of teacher preparation and teacher professional development must be radically re-imagined and policy must create spaces and supports for teacher learning in order to effect changes at the level of the school or classroom. In short, it is impossible to address quality in education without attending to classroom practice. When this crucial attention is paid to teaching and learning processes we move beyond rote memorization and testing of basic skills of literacy and numeracy to encouraging the development of critical and creative thinking skills, application of learning to real world situations as well as improving the well-being, personal development and social engagement of students.

Further, the pursuit of education quality cannot overlook the need for continued focus on quality inputs. Leon Tikly and Angeline Barrett (2011) call for a view of quality education that includes concern for learners' access to quality inputs that facilitate the development of capabilities that they and their communities have reason to value. In many contexts, this dimension includes attention to basic infrastructure that facilitates learning. Recently, I paid a visit to two teachers colleges and a small basic semi-rural school in the Copper Belt in the town of Kitwe 350 km outside of Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. As I visited with the principal and vice principal of a small basic school in the nearby community I asked the principal to describe her school's greatest challenges. Her main needs were infrastructural. She explained: "We need toilet facilities for students and staff. We have one pit latrine that is shared by staff and two separate ones for boys and girls." When it rains these facilities overflow, causing unsanitary conditions for students. The roof above us in the dimly lit office had recently been refurbished but the repairs were poorly done and there were large gaps between the edges of the sloping roof through which rain would pour in. As I toured the small structure that serves 500 students from grades 1 – 9 in a shift system, the real and immediate challenges to facilitating learning – the *raison d'être* of education – were very apparent. This access to quality infrastructure is an inextricable part of the right to education fought for by organizations like [Equal Education](#) in South Africa.

The global community stands to make a retrograde step if in our quest for quality education we forget the importance of learners' access to quality inputs and/or fail to focus on the teaching and learning processes that yield educational outcomes beyond numeracy and literacy. As we ramp up the post-2015 process, we must keep in mind the importance of inputs AND process AND outputs to truly achieving quality education for all – not just some – of the world's children.

Footnote

[i] The reports include: [High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda \(Post-2015 HLP\)](#), [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#), [UN Global Compact \(UNGC\)](#), and [UN Development Group \(UNDG\): The Global Conversation Begins](#)

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A Radical Post-2015 Agenda

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Keywords: EFA and MDGs; aid architecture; market system; U.N. High Level Panel.

Summary: EFA and the MDGs have made very limited progress. Not surprisingly, since they are embedded in a world system where poverty and inequality are not system failures but represent successful system functioning. In order for post-2015 directions to challenge this, a radical agenda is needed that develops a new aid architecture, a Global Fund for Education, a critical approach to our market system, and a new ethos towards government.

Most observers seem to point out the great progress that has been made towards the EFA targets and the MDGs, especially towards UPE. I don't get it. The international community has been promising UPE since the 1960s, long before Jomtien and Dakar, and is still so far from achieving it that we will have to promise it once more in the post-2015 era, this time not until 2030! Moreover, the post-EFA progress that has been made in "access" is mostly in name only as 200 million or more children enrolled in primary schools are not learning anything. One could argue that there are now many fewer children getting a real primary education than there were in 1990. Add to that, when UPE was promised in the 1960s it had a payoff for employment and further schooling. Fifty years later the payoff to completing primary schooling is generally minimal. Taking 50+ years to fulfil this promise has rendered it empty. Students in the 1960s who were marginalized by not having real access to primary schools are now replaced by children who are even more marginalized by not having access to secondary education. Where's the improvement?

Perhaps improvement was not really on the cards. One could make a strong case that EFA and the MDGs are what Hans Weiler called 'compensatory legitimation'. In a world rife with economic and social injustice, it is essential to legitimate an unfair system. Social goals like EFA and the MDGs are there to compensate for rampant injustice. Intentions may be good but that does not mean that there is a serious effort to change things. For example, the major decades-long shortfall of resources for UPE, other EFA targets, and MDGs implies that our efforts have not been serious. Moreover, a serious effort would have to confront the fact that situations like lack of educational access, and, more broadly, poverty and inequality, are not simply-corrected system failures but instead are the result of the successful functioning of an inequitable world system.

If this is true, a simplistic, more-of-the-same, approach to a new set of post-2015 goals will not yield significant social change - by 2030 or later. As long as world system structures remain the same, educational and social inequality will remain. To be serious about post-2015 educational and social change, we need a much more radical agenda.

We need a new aid architecture. Bilaterals, pursuing their own self-interested agendas, despite the Paris Declaration, and multilaterals ideologically wedded to neoliberal approaches, have offered, and will continue to offer, minimal support for an effective post-2015 agenda. Much of the direction being offered is completely opposite to what is needed.

We need a Global Fund for Education (GFE). We need new, more cooperative ways to finance education that replaces some of the roles of the World Bank, bilaterals, and other multilaterals. The modifications of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) into the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) illustrate some of what was needed. The FTI, the GPEs predecessor, was a technocratic undertaking, run by the World Bank, and with relatively few resources. Critique and struggle led to the GPE which has broader representation on its Board from CSOs and the Global South. However, the GPE is still a technocratic organization with insufficient participation by those most affected, and with insufficient funding. A progressive education agenda needs a large Global Fund to channel resources to education in developing countries with substantial participation by those countries and relevant CSOs. Grants need to be based, not on rates of return or other indirect measure of effects, but on whether those grants contribute to the right to education and whether those grants will be guided by significant participation of those directly affected.

We need a much more critical approach to a market system. Along with significant changes in bilaterals and multilaterals, embodied in a GFE, we need to end the 30+ year neoliberal obsession with the market. As one example, while the High Level Panel (2013) report offered an interesting and comprehensive approach to possible post-2015 goals and targets, the development context it offered was more of the same. The report acknowledges that the eradication of poverty has been "promised time and again." But there is no recognition of the causes of the repeated failure to achieve this goal - causes that, as mentioned above, are built into the structure of our economic system.

At one point, the report does recognize the need for "structural changes in the world economy", yet, throughout, the HLP report takes a positive view of the market system and has a pro-business ethos. It calls for an "enabling business environment". It argues that "business wants, above all, a level playing field", and is willing to pay "fair taxes" and "promote labour rights". Surely not! No business wants a level playing field. Profit-maximizing businesses naturally want any advantage they can get. If they can get away with it, and many do, they want to pay no taxes. And they certainly do not champion labour rights. The history of capitalism is one where business has been dragged kicking and screaming to give concessions to workers. This is simply the natural state of a market system. Our market system has been eulogized and subsidized for a long time, most especially for the past

30 years, yet inequality, poverty, and unemployment remain rampant. Why would we expect the market system to perform any better between now and 2030?

We need a new ethos with which to approach government. For the past 30 years, the whole idea of government has been maligned. This issue is simply ignored in the HLP report and elsewhere; what has continued are the attacks that have left governments paralyzed, incapacitated, barely able to function. What needs to be front and centre in our post-2015 efforts is the call for a large, vibrant public sector that puts limits on the market, that promotes and creates decent employment, that provides for the production of public goods, that develops an adequate and fair system of taxation, that redistributes wealth, not just income, and that is run as a very participatory democracy. If we were to do that, we would not have to wait until 2030 to realize our 2015 and post-2015 aspirations.

To conclude, a radical and progressive education agenda must confront the structural inequalities that plague education and societies around the world. The agenda above will be difficult, but without this, the post-2015 agenda will become another example of compensatory legitimation for an unfair world system. And confrontation is not sufficient. More is needed. A human rights and right-to-education framework is talked about but rarely implemented. And a critical and participatory approach to education and development is also talked about but little practised. I have been appalled by what I see as the almost complete absence of attention to grassroots beneficiary and stakeholder voices in the post-2015 discussions. I have no blueprint for what is needed. If we abandon the current architecture and think about what might be done, many possibilities open up. But to decide which way to go needs dialogue and to figure out how to get there needs struggle.

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Education Aid and the “Transformative Shifts” Called for by the Post-2015 Agenda

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Keywords: Effective aid allocation; building basic human capital; global public goods.

Summary: The High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda calls for five big, transformative shifts including achieving more inclusive and sustainable growth and building more effective, open and accountable institutions and global partnerships. For education aid to help facilitate such shifts will require equally transformative shifts in its use to help countries build basic human capital; national institutions for leadership, accountability and innovation; and global institutions and networks producing global public good in the education sector.

The report of the High-level Panel (HLP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda concludes that this agenda needs to be driven by five big, transformative shifts: (i) Leave no one behind; (ii) Put sustainable development at the core; (iii) Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; (iv) Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and (v) Forge new global partnerships. These shifts would indeed be welcome.

For education aid to help facilitate these “shifts” (or changes) will require at least two other transformative shifts: First, education systems must radically improve their ability to play their unique and indispensable catalytic role in facilitating the transformations called for. Second, to effectively support such transformation of education systems, education aid must itself be transformed into a more strategic instrument, allocated to areas and for purposes where evidence suggests it can have the greatest impact. This means supporting cost-effective interventions that are catalytic in generating additional domestic and/or external resources. Because the volume of education aid is unlikely to increase much over the next decade, the ability of aid to play a significant role will increasingly depend on its more strategic use in this regard. To achieve this, the following three broad inter-related areas deserve particular attention.

1. **Building basic human capital.** However this term is defined, achieving the four education sub-goals proposed by the HLP would be essential to building the basic human capital required to achieve the transformative shifts called for. In fact, these four sub-goals just refocus the world’s attention on achieving the three neglected EFA goals. “Early childhood care and education” (Goal 1), “Meeting learning needs of youth and adults” (Goal 3) and “Improving adult literacy” (Goal 4) are a necessary basic development stage that cannot be leapfrogged by any country. These goals must be achieved even as countries struggle to build the higher-level skills needed to compete in the global knowledge economy.

Unfortunately, such a reminder is needed, especially for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) which is falling further behind other regions on the four sub-goals proposed by the Panel and where progress on these goals would especially serve the overwhelming share of the labour force which is not involved in the modern sector. For example, even if everybody were to enter primary education, as long as only two in three pupils reach the final grade of the cycle (which has been the case since the 1970s), and second-chance programs are not provided for those who miss out on primary education (over

40% illiteracy among adult women in 2010), one-third of the labour force risk being illiterate in the 2030s and 2040s. And more than one in three children may be born to illiterate mothers (the UN “median variant” population projection estimates that, by 2050, 38% of births worldwide will be in SSA). These developments are hardly conducive to “leaving nobody behind” or “achieving inclusive growth”.

There are heaps of evidence about the multiple benefits of reaching EFA Goals 1, 3 and 4: So why was so little aid and domestic resources allocated to these goals over the last decade? To change this will really require transformative change in both the principles and processes guiding aid allocation and in the political economy of domestic resource allocation to ensure that population groups with little political clout get their fair share of education resources.

2. **Building institutions for leadership, accountability and innovation.** It is a paradox that education systems (save Singapore and a few other countries) have such a low capacity to learn and innovate, be it to improve management and accountability, pilot and innovate to develop policies and programs adapted to local conditions, or apply new technologies to improve learning. Their ability to address future challenges will more than ever depend on their ability to learn and embrace, rather than resist, change, to be more inclusive and less characterized by “silo” thinking and to make evidence-based trade-offs in resource allocation.

Over the past decades, aid has given considerable priority to capacity building. While progress has been elusive, the single most important constraint in most countries is now not severe shortage of technical expertise in planning and management (except in some fragile states) but low institutional capacity to mobilize, utilize and retain existing expertise; to monitor performance; and to hold managers and teachers accountable for outcomes. Allocation of aid needs to learn from past failures, and help support national processes to build such institutions.

3. **Strengthening the global society’s capacity to provide high-quality global public goods (GPG).** As countries develop and globalization grows, the balance between financial and technical aid shifts in favour of the latter. Countries demand “technical aid” to help use more effectively their own resources. Such aid includes a wide range of GPG -- knowledge generation and dissemination, technical support, support for south-south and south-south-north cooperation – largely facilitated by regional and global institutions and networks. Even the effectiveness of country-specific financial aid often depends on high-quality technical and knowledge support.

To respond to this transformation in the demand for aid requires capable institutions, including knowledge generation and exchange networks, to identify, synthesize, and disseminate good practice experience and provide high-quality technical support. While such services are supplied by a variety of private companies and universities, these are very fragmented and complement rather than replace the need for strong global institutions and networks with adequate core funding. Unfortunately, the ability of especially poor countries to benefit from such GPGs is hampered by the chronic underfunding and resulting weak capacity of global technical agencies (especially UNESCO), and the decreasing technical expertise of funding agencies.

To address this challenge will really require transformative change in the current (often benign) neglect by member states of their global institutions, including reforms of their governance structure to make them more accountable for effective delivery of GPG. But this alone will not be enough: GPG functions are severely underfunded because the “classic” factors limiting funding of national public goods are even more severe when it comes to GPGs.

Humanity's success in revitalizing the ability for countries to work effectively together – including in the education sector -- could prove to be the defining story of the century.

Follow-up resources:

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Global Development Goals: The Need for a “Monterrey 2.0”

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Keywords: Development finance; financing conference; post-2015

Summary: Whatever the post-2015 global development goals might be, the implementation of policies at national and international level will require mobilizing financial resources. Safeguarding the financial foundations for future development goals should be discussed at an international conference on financing development.

The United Nations General Assembly Special Event on 25 September 2013 will be an important milestone on the road to a future global development agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after 2015. One input to the post-2015 debate has been the report by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which outlines the potential content of a future agenda.

Still, the international community has a long way to go before new global development goals are adopted. Many fundamental issues are far from being resolved. For example, there is emerging consensus that a new agenda will be universal and apply to all countries. This would constitute a remarkable evolution compared to the MDGs that applied mostly to developing countries. Yet, such a universal agenda would demand significant amounts of financial resources and commitments, not least when issues such as climate change, inequality and security are addressed.

Whatever the post-2015 global development goals might be, the implementation of policies at national and international level will require mobilizing financial resources. Setting well-intentioned goals without thinking about the means of achieving them – including the funding involved – would be careless. All political measures must be examined for their feasibility, in order to become more than mere declarations of political intent. The MDGs are a case in point.

The MDGs were specified in 2001, but only in March 2002 an international conference was held in Monterrey, Mexico, to discuss financing of the MDGs. In the Monterrey Consensus of 2002 rich countries agreed, among other things, to increase their financial commitments to development cooperation. In return, developing countries were to make greater efforts to ensure the resources provided were used effectively. The successful outcome of the conference benefitted from several external factors, such as the attendance of the President of the United States at the time, George W. Bush. Just shortly ahead of the conference, Bush had declared Mexico, the host of the conference, to be its most important foreign partner and announced the creation of the Millennium Challenge Account, which increased US foreign aid by US\$5 billion per year. Commentators agree that it is questionable whether the MDGs would have generated comparable international traction if Monterrey had not been a success.

For the post-2015 agenda, safeguarding the financial foundations for future global development goals should be considered at an earlier stage and not in hindsight, as it was the case with the MDGs. States should advocate the convening of a “Monterrey 2.0” conference on the financing of the post-2015 agenda ahead of a likely UN post-2015 summit in September 2015, where the new development agenda could be announced. The report of the High-level panel also formulated this demand:

“The Panel believes the principles and agreements established at Monterrey remain valid for the post-2015 agenda. It recommends that an international conference should take up in more detail the question of finance for sustainable development. This could be convened by the UN in the first half of 2015 to address in practical terms how to finance the post-2015 agenda.”

The importance of preparing a financing conference should not be underestimated because several conditions have to be in place. Among other things it will be important to plan the conference well in advance to guarantee high-level political participation and a maximum of public attention. Only then the chances of agreeing on an ambitious plan for financing the post-2015 agenda will increase. In terms of the content of a Monterrey 2.0 conference two key aspects should be noted.

First, adequate funds must be mobilised at national and global level at an early stage in the form of development aid, for example. However, it would be neither realistic nor appropriate for the subject to be viewed in narrow, development aid terms, since development aid is waning in importance in many developing countries as their own economic strength visibly increases. In addition, given the budgetary problems they are facing, traditional donors are unlikely to provide significantly more development aid. Furthermore, an important insight already emphasised in Monterrey is gaining ground: development aid is one way, but only one way, to finance development. It is, as a general rule, countries’ own budgets, largely financed from their own taxes that bear the brunt of public investment and recurrent expenditure. At the same time, the focus of the debate on development financing is widening to include other sources of funding, such as private international financial flows (foreign direct investment and migrants’ remittances), private foundations (e.g. the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), “new donor countries” (e.g. Brazil, India and China) and global taxes (global financial transaction tax).

Second, financial questions concern not only the need for funding, since the form that that funding takes always has major implications for the political and societal structures in which revenue is generated and expenditure is affected. In principle, developing countries' own revenue, for example, may have a positive influence on governance (although this is not necessarily always the case, as in resource-rich countries): if taxpayers demand information on how their money is spent, national parliaments establish the budget and national accountability structures monitor spending, political systems and accountability can be strengthened. This may have important effects across national borders, as when greater accountability leads to an improvement in cooperation between developing and industrialised countries in efforts to prevent global tax evasion and illicit capital flows. And it provides an important opportunity for development aid to use national structures purposefully and thereby reinforce them.

The debate on the post-2015 goals should start to address financial issues in a carefully planned manner. It is important that benchmarks and a timetable for this debate are set without delay. One way forward could be to announce at the UN Special Event on the MDGs in September 2013 the convening of a Monterrey 2.0 conference in early 2015.

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**POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT
VISIONS IN
DEVELOPMENTAL STATES?**

Development of the Post-2015 Education Agenda: Maintaining the EFA Brand

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Keywords: EFA Conveners; Adult Literacy; Dakar Compact; EFA Brand

Summary: Based on his long experience globally and in three E9 countries, the author argues for expanding the EFA convening agencies, the retention of adult literacy as an education goal, the strengthening of the Dakar Compact on funding EFA, maintaining the EFA brand, and a seamless transition to a post -2015 education agenda

As we move towards the adoption of a global post-2015 education agenda, I have been reflecting on the emerging scenario in the light of my experience in implementing EFA in India in the nineties and promoting EFA globally and in Nigeria and China since 2000. Based on my reflections, I offer a few suggestions for consideration of the international community.

EFA Convening Agencies: Since Jomtien in 1990, the global EFA agenda has been steered by five convening agencies, namely UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank (WB). A review of the roles of the convening agencies since 2000, when the current set of 6 EFA goals was adopted at Dakar, would suggest that UNESCO, UNICEF and WB have been the most active at global, regional and country levels. Meanwhile with the “skills for work and life” agenda coming to the fore in the political and educational arenas, there appears to be a good case for ILO’s inclusion as one of the convening agencies post-2015. This would allow a sharper focus on ‘child labour and education’- an important strand of the equity agenda - as well as the status, working conditions and remuneration of teachers – a critical element for improving the quality of education. In view of the crucial importance of linking the post -2015 education and sustainable development agendas, a case could also be made for UNEP’s inclusion as one of the convening agencies.

The case for adult literacy: The omission of adult literacy from the universal goal for education in the post-2015 development agenda of the High Level Panel is a major setback for UNESCO, the global literacy constituency and developing countries in Africa, South and West Asia where illiteracy, particularly of women, is still a major challenge. Given the strong correlation between adult literacy and universalising of primary education and alleviation of poverty, it would be in order for UNESCO to lead a major lobbying effort for inclusion of adult literacy (see Robinson, this Issue).

Strengthening the Dakar 2000 Compact: The Dakar Framework managed to forge a consensus on a division of responsibilities and roles between developing countries and donor countries that was considered to be a major breakthrough at the time. The essence of this agreement was that the former would assume leadership and ownership in seeking to achieve EFA goals by formulating education plans in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including civil society, and mobilising domestic resources to implement such plans. The donor countries and EFA convening agencies would coordinate and support country efforts through technical advice, capacity building, monitoring and, where necessary, additional resource mobilisation to bridge the domestic funding gaps. The latter assurance was the genesis of the Fast Track Initiative (now GPE) to assist LDCs in need of accelerated funding and support for achieving EFA goals. This compact weakened considerably in recent years with the stagnation of aid to basic education since 2006 and the

economic downturn. There is an urgent need for the international community to strengthen the Dakar Compact by stimulating resource mobilisation from the OECD/DAC countries for those developing countries that are lagging behind due to a paucity of resources and weak capacity. Besides, we now have the opportunity of exploring possibilities of engaging newly emerging donors (e.g. China, India, Brazil and South Korea) more systematically to complement the efforts of the traditional donors and to upscale North – South- South (NSS) as well as South –South (SS) cooperation for education.

Value of the EFA Brand: While it is necessary to keep in step and adjust to the new realities and emerging challenges while pursuing new development agendas, there is also virtue in consistency, continuity and predictability. In this context, snapping our links with the ‘EFA brand’ that now has international recognition , visibility and goodwill may have negative repercussions for developing countries, especially the LDCs, which have invested a great deal of time, energy and money in internalising and operationalizing the EFA agenda at national, sub-national and local levels. It would be sensible to see the period up to 2015 and post-2015 as a continuum in which countries move seamlessly from one phase to the next without any disruption in their planning and budgetary cycles. We could think of an EFA + 25 agenda on the lines of Rio + 20.

Education and Development in the Post-2015 Landscapes: Will Education Reform be Successful in Burma?

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Keywords: autonomy in education; democratic education reform; constitutional reform; 2015 election; Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Summary: The article expresses challenges for a democratic education reform in Burma. Major challenges are an undemocratic constitution and centralized control by the ministry of education. This article suggests constitutional reform and the rule of law before the 2015 election.

It is difficult to predict what will happen in post-2015 Burma according to the current political situation. Although President U Thein Sein is showing interest in political reform, his cabinet is still made up of ex-army officials and no less than 25% of parliamentary seats are occupied by current army officers. Besides, the 2008 constitution is widely criticized as undemocratic. In this situation, Burma is not particularly interested in global post-2015. It is interested in the political development in Burma before the 2015 election. Our post-2015 landscape depends on that who will form the government in 2015.

Democratic education reform is not easy. There are three major groups responsible for education reform in Burma. They are the Ministry of Education (MoE), Parliamentary Education Promotion

Committee (PEPC) and National Network for Educational Reform (NNER) - which is an alliance of civil society organizations.

The MoE launched a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) three years ago, supported by international donors. However it is difficult for the CESR team to get academic freedom under the centralized control of MoE. The members of the PEPC are former military government officials and they have already approved four old education laws with few changes to the wording. This happened before Daw Aung San Suu Kyi entered parliament. When they submitted the fifth one concerning a Higher Education Law, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi rejected it and a rewrite was suggested.

The NNER has been trying to collect public opinion widely, although there have been limitations. The NNER's draft of a National Education Policy was submitted to the President and PEPC. There were two remarkable areas of progress after the submission of NNER's draft. NNER representatives have had the opportunity to participate in the Higher Education dialogue in the capital, Naypyitaw, on 29-30 June 2013 together with CESR team and PEPC team. NNER representatives also met with the President and Education Ministers on 13 July 2013 providing information about reform in thirteen educational areas. However, the MoE is reluctant for democratic change and is still practising centralized control and thinks only of education for the elite.

The quality of teaching is very low in public schools and they give no consideration to teacher professional development. The assessment system is based on rote learning and university selection is based on exam marks. The majority of students have no autonomy to choose subjects at university and the curriculum does not provide skills and competencies to students. The indigenous minorities do not have the freedom to implement education in their regions, and their languages are not allowed to be taught in schools. If the education system continues this way, ordinary citizens - including indigenous minorities - will continue to suffer social injustice and restricted human development. If this happens, national reconciliation will not be realized. Besides, Burma will not be ready for economic integration when it becomes chair of ASEAN.

Some people may consider that education reform can be achieved after 2015 if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy wins in the election. The situation is not that simple. The 2008 constitution does not allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to become President of Burma. And 25% of parliamentary seats will still be occupied by army officers. The indigenous minority groups will not get autonomy and there is no guarantee for peace. Besides, it is believed that some elements of the former military regime are playing power games behind the scenes.

If Burma wants to integrate into the international economic community and enhance national reconciliation and peace, then constitutional reform and the rule of law as well as educational reform are urgently needed. Responsible citizens must work for social justice, human dignity, human capacity and education for sustainable development.

It can be seen that our national 2015 is inevitably more salient than the global post-2015 movement.

Development and Minority Languages

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Keywords: ethnic minorities; China; trilingualism; language education; policies

Summary: This article presents four models of language education that have been adopted in ethnic minority schools to cope with the pressures to learn national and international languages in addition to the local tongue as part of economic development. Some models support the local tongue. Others do not - signalling a threat to the social and cultural sustainability of ethnic minority groups.

Of the key issues in the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 era, sustainable economic development is a major concern for the 55 officially-recognised ethnic minority groups in the People's Republic of China (PRC). These groups, which number around 106 million people, live in 155 largely resource-rich but economically under-developed ethnic autonomous areas, many of which are located near the country's frontiers (China National Commission for UNESCO, 2004). Five autonomous regions make up the largest areas where such groups live: Xinjiang, Guangxi, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Ningxia. National economic modernization has resulted in a massive shift from the rural areas where large sections of many of the groups lived to urban areas where the population tends to be dominated by the majority Han Chinese. These changes, together with the impact of globalization, have had a side-effect on the social and cultural sustainability of these groups, which was already endangered by the marginalized status of ethnic minorities: their languages are further threatened by the vigorous promotion of Chinese as the standard national language for economic, social, educational and political affairs and the growing emergence of English as a powerful language for international engagement.

The arguments against the preservation of these minority languages are several. Although the equality of ethnic groups is enshrined in law and their languages are protected by state institutions, the fear of national disintegration because of ethnic diversity and concomitant tensions has led to coercive assimilation and linguistic suppression at different times since the founding of the PRC in 1949. Even in times of more liberal and supportive approaches, the teaching of minority languages can be considered an expensive luxury when there are other pressing calls on the education budget. Furthermore, there are vexed questions as to which of the hundreds of minority languages and dialects should be prioritized when it comes to selecting the ones to be taught in schools, to be used for textbooks and other resources, and to be employed as the medium of instruction, especially in areas where there is a variety of linguistic groups. The easiest solution is to advocate Putonghua (standard spoken Chinese) and the modern, simplified forms of written Chinese, supplemented by English, which is a prerequisite for higher education and for many prestigious professions. This solution is actually preferred by some minority groups, mindful of the social capital and mobility that is afforded by proficiency in the national and international languages.

On the other hand, supporting minority languages sends a message that the state is comfortable with diversity. By allowing minority groups to sustain their cultural heritage and sense of ethnic identity, it is argued that these people will feel empowered to contribute to national development. Some minority languages have economic advantages because of the potential for cross-border trade: Inner Mongolians and the Korean speakers in regions of Jilin in north-east China, for instance,

can use their language skills in dealing with Mongolia and both North and South Korea respectively. There is also an educational argument—students potentially achieve better academic outcomes when learning through a familiar tongue.

Schools in minority areas have responded to the challenges posed by the three languages (the minority language, Chinese and English) in different ways. A nationwide research project (see Adamson, Feng, Liu & Li, 2013) has discovered four major models. The first, found in regions where the minority group has strong cultural and economic conditions, promotes genuine trilingualism with the minority language being used as the medium of instruction in early primary education, before a transition to Chinese from Primary 3, with the minority language then becoming a subject. The second model, which can be seen in areas where there is a mixed population of Han Chinese and minority students, offers a balanced or double track approach involving the minority language and Chinese as both a subject and the medium of instruction. In the third model, which is the most common and is seen in places where minority languages tend to be weaker, Chinese is used as the medium of instruction while the minority language is learnt as a subject. The fourth model ignores the minority language. In all four models, English is taught as a subject, usually from Primary 3.

The latter two models demonstrate the vulnerability of minority languages in the face of a powerful national or regional language in particular (in this case Chinese), while the relatively new presence of English in primary schools since 2002 exacerbates the situation. Obviously, the first model - a form of additive trilingualism - is the most desirable for the cultural and economic sustainability of ethnic minority groups, but it is a rare phenomenon. See also Barbara Trudell (this Issue)

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China's National Consultations on Post-2015: from Yunnan to Beijing

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Keywords: China, post-2015, UN national consultations

Summary: Chinese national consultation on the post-2015 development agenda brought together a wide variety of stakeholders in two events held in Yunnan and Beijing. Key messages arising from the consultations include a need to build on lessons learned from current Millennium Development Goals, incorporating emerging challenges like climate change better and mobilizing support for future development efforts not only from all governments, but also from civil society and private sector. The two national consultation events were the first of their kind to be organized in China and the discussion continues actively.

China is one of the countries where the UN has carried out a national consultation process on post-2015 development agenda. The idea was to bring together a wide variety of stakeholders to discuss what should follow the current Millennium Development Goals. Two post-2015 national consultation events were the first of their kind to be organized in China.

The UN partnered with United Nations Association of China to organize the consultations. The two consultation events brought together government representatives, UN agencies, academics, think tanks, social organizations as well as several representatives from the private sector [i]. Some 170 participants took part in the country consultations. The overwhelming majority of participants came from various kinds of civil society organizations – from grass roots associations like Leishan Miao Embroidery Art Association to big, national platforms such as the All-China Women's Federation.

Having an event outside the capital was important in order to capture different development challenges across this vast country. First, a day-long consultation event took place in Yunnan on December 5th 2012. Over 50 participants, including the Chinese member of the High Level Panel on Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, Ambassador Wang Yinfang, took part in lively discussions. The second post-2015 consultation was held in Beijing on March 11th 2013. Several participants from the provincial consultation were also present in the national event, bringing messages from the people in Yunnan to the national arena.

The national consultations covered topics from education to environment and from gender to international development cooperation. The main messages arising from China were clear: it is important to stay focused on the core areas of MDGs – poverty reduction, education and health. The new global goals should build on the lessons learned and incorporate better the new, emerging challenges such as inequality, climate change and environmental issues. The goals should be global and responsibilities differentiated according to each country's capacity. It was clear that the post-2015 agenda will have to aim at mobilizing wide support - not just from governments, but also from the civil society and private sector.

What is next for China on the road towards 2015? Since the national consultation, several events have already been arranged by different organizations such as Save the Children, World Bank and China Development Research Foundation. Chinese civil society has also simultaneously conducted its

own consultation process with the lead of the Global Call Against Poverty national chapter. The UN Secretary General's Special Advisor on Post-2015, Amina Mohammed, spoke in Beijing at the end of July in an event hosted by China International Development Research Network and she called for continuing the inclusive dialogue on this agenda.

The most recent addition to the discussion is "Towards an Equitable and Sustainable Future – A Chinese Perspective on Post-2015 Development Agenda", a report by China Development Research Foundation, CDRF [ii]. It highlights the importance of the future global development agenda being based on human basic needs and rights, and having equity and sustainability at its core. The report calls attention to global governance issues, investing in children and social safety networks as well as to reducing inequalities. CDRF would like to see China play a constructive role in the post-2015 discussions as a way of taking a more active part in global governance, and it also proposes that China considers creating its own International Development Agency.

Footnotes

[i] Detailed information and participant lists of both national consultation events are posted at World We Want China country space at <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/china2015>

[ii] The report will be published in English later this year.

Any National Debate about Post-2015 in South Korea?

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Keywords: Korea, post-2015, aid fragmentation, Saemaul movement, developmental state

Summary: Korea's national debate on the post-2015 development agenda has been relatively lacking despite its high-level engagement in the UN's High Level Panel. Such a lack of interest can be understood from the domestic political economy context. And two frequently reported issues of aid fragmentation and 'Saemaul Undong' might be able to provide some interesting accounts to such context.

In contrast to a high-level engagement (the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade) on the UN High-Level panel on the Post-2015 development agenda, national debates on the agenda within Korea have been little reported on. My cursory web search on the national level post-2015 debate has shown only two events and few papers/studies including a KOICA report (Lim 2012). [The 'post-2015 Korea Forum' (25 August 2013) to set up/implement the post-2015 development agenda and to build national partnership between all interested parties including business, politicians, academics and civil society, and the 'Post-2015 Korea CSO-led Policy Forum' (3 July 2013)]. Yet, neither the events reporting nor the KOICA paper provides detailed analysis of the contents, direction or the nature of the Korean debates on the post-2015 agenda. Further, my interviews with CSO workers

revealed that the post-2015 debate within Korea has been ‘almost non-existent.’ Such a lack of interest in the agenda indeed raises the question as to why this is the case – especially considering the proclaimed role of Korea as a bridge in the process leading up to the HLF4 and thereafter in the post-HLF4 process. Nonetheless, it seems currently that the debates on international development within Korea are greatly determined by the context of domestic political economy.

From this perspective there are two frequently reported issues which are noteworthy as they are the manifestation of the domestic political economy: the fragmentation within Korea’s aid system; and the promotion of the ‘Saemaul Movement.’

Aid fragmentation has its roots in the ministerial turf war centred on the thorny question of ‘who controls what and how much’. This issue has appeared repeatedly in the DAC peer review reports (2007, 2012) as one of the main areas for reform. Despite the coordination/mediation by the Committee for International Development Cooperation under the Prime Minister’s office and the legal foundation (the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation and the Presidential Decree) established in 2010, some insiders continue to comment on the worsening of the competition and tension among government agencies.

Unlike other DAC donors, Korea’s ODA budget has continuously increased, and has now reached USD 1.8 billion. The growing budget indeed attracts even more actors (over 35 official entities and others) which further intensifies the existing fragmentation. Yet, it was interesting to note that the deputy speaker of the National Assembly hosted a round table debate on this issue last month by inviting academics, government agencies and CSO representatives. It would be interesting to follow how such a political interest may translate into a real political action leading up to a meaningful aid reform.

The current President Park, Geun-Hye, is a daughter of the late President Park, Chung-Hee. What has been the most interesting development since the start of her presidency in the field of international development is that various governmental and non-governmental organisations participating in international development began to promote ‘Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement, hereafter Saemaul) with great zeal. For example, KOICA has recently set up a special section dedicated to Saemaul. Even, the UN secretary-general Ban Ki Moon frequently proposes the utility of Saemaul for African development and for the MDGs through the Saemaul spirit of ‘diligence, self-help and cooperation’. Saemaul indeed was one of the key legacies by the late Park Chung-Hee. It was a Korean version of a rural development programme to reduce urban-rural inequality by boosting the rural economy.

Despite the enthusiasm expressed by both Saemaul promoters and the recipient governments, many commentators have expressed their concerns on the applicability/transferability of the past Korean experience. Moreover, there is some commentary on how the risk of incomplete/misconstrued understanding of Saemaul (i.e. the very context of the political economy of Korea in the 1970s at the height of Cold War era) by the Korean government may cause more harm than good as in-depth and rigorous research on Saemaul has been lacking. These critical comments echo the discussion/re-evaluation led by the progressive scholars on the developmental state within Korea. These critical commentators in particular warn of the danger of romanticising the Korean developmental state in the past without proper consideration of the political, social and environmental consequences.

UNESCO in Korea and the Post-2015 Preparation

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Keywords: UNESCO; Korea, post 2015

Summary: The UNESCO World Conference on Education will be held May 2015 in Korea. The Korean government and the Korean National Commission for UNESCO are revving up for the coming event, though various concerns exist inside the country.

It was 10 days before the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-53) when South Korea became a member of UNESCO. Even during the devastating war, the Congress passed a law to establish the Korean National Commission for UNESCO as a separate entity, independent from the Ministry of Education. This is rather rare and unique. In the following decades, UNESCO became deeply engraved in the minds of the Korean people due to its remarkable contribution to reconstructing the war-torn education system. Sixty years later, Korea is about to proudly host the World Conference on Education by UNESCO in May 2015 following the previous one 15 years ago at Dakar.

It looks like a coincidence or a serendipity if you like that Korea consecutively became the host country for such significant global events as the G20 Summit in 2010 at the height of the global economic crisis, the HLF 4 in 2011 at the turning point of aid policies and practices, and UNESCO World Conference on Education in 2015 at the launching of the post-2015 global endeavour. As such, the Korean ministry of education seems to be hard pressed by its self-claimed leading role as the host providing beyond mere logistics. The Ministry of Education has already commissioned research from the Korean National Commission and the Korean Education Development Institute (KEDI) so that the government can successfully perform the role of host country, reviewing the past events and searching for new agendas.

However, while the government and those few are excited and busy about the coming World Conference on Education, it seems that the education sector and the public in general are not very enthusiastic about it yet. Perhaps, there are several reasons behind it - other than it is somewhat too early to publicize the coming event two years away. Korean education is well known for getting the highest test scores at PISA, TIMSS, and other international competitions, but those achievements are the results of extreme levels of concentration of stakeholders on the domestic scene. On the other hand, Korean awareness and interest in education on the global scene are rather low, as education in Korea is still very much a domestic issue of politics and socio-cultural affairs.

Moreover, the short history of two decades or so in education ODA of Korea shows that Korea's support to international development and cooperation is focused on vocational facilities and some higher education institutions rather than basic and secondary educational provisions. In this respect, the Korean government's involvement in EFA has been virtually nonexistent. However, the global post-2015 dialogue in recent years has encompassed a vast array of topics including EFA, the MDGs, the environment, unemployment, and sustainable development; this is perplexing to some domestically focussed Korean education policy makers as they prepare for the World Conference on Education in relation to the post-2015 discourses.

Stimulated and encouraged by the brilliant performance of the preceding global events of the G20 Summit by the Ministry of Finance and the HLF 4 at Busan by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and further the weight of the coming UN Assembly in 2015 led by the Korean SG Ban Ki Moon, the Ministry of Education is now gearing up the preparation of the World Conference. Unlike at Jomtien and Dakar when the Korean government was like a bystander, this time the possibility to act like a global leader in education affairs is a real possibility. Whether this chance is taken it or not seems to be up to the mobilization of the expertise of the education sector in Korea. Less than two years of worrisome time is left to Korea until the hosting of World Conference in May 2015. However, Koreans are a culturally optimistic people, usually showing remarkable achievement with a high speed at the last spurt. Perhaps, that is one of the features of the accomplishments of Korean education for its people always vying for high stake exams. I hope I am not being too optimistic!

Consultations on Education in the Post-2015 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific

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Keywords: Quality education for all; lifelong learning; all-round development of learners

Summary: UNESCO Bangkok has facilitated various regional consultations on the future of education which all emphasize that quality learning for all could be a unifying umbrella theme for national education policy reforms and for the post-2015 development agenda. Focus should be on building effective learning environments supported by quality teachers in order for learners to acquire relevant learning including transversal skills and competencies.

UNESCO Bangkok, in its role as the Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, has been active in the debate on education in the post-2015 agenda-setting process. The approach it has taken consisted of first looking into the changes that have taken place over the past decade in socio-cultural, economic and demographic spheres and then facilitating the debate on the implications of these changes for education.

To this end, two regional high-level expert meetings about education beyond 2015 were held in 2012: “Towards EFA 2015 and Beyond – Shaping a New Vision of Education” (May) and “What Education for the Future? Beyond 2015 – Rethinking Learning in a Changing World” (November), the outcomes of which were fed into the “Asia-Pacific Regional Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda” organized by UNESCO Bangkok in cooperation with UNICEF and civil society organizations such as VSO, in late February 2013 in Bangkok.

A wide range of stakeholders were involved throughout this process, including representatives from governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (international, regional, national and local), universities and academia, teachers’ unions and youth organizations. Various means were mobilized to collect the voices of different stakeholders on shaping the future of education and the post-2015 development agenda, such as commissioned papers, collaborative

research, focus group discussions at the country level, national consultations, e-contests, six-word slogan competition, etc.

A number of key messages have been drawn from these regional consultations, including the following:

- **Education for All (EFA) is an unfinished agenda:** While noticeable achievements have been made in the context of EFA since 2000, significant challenges still remain in Asia and the Pacific: there are vast disparities between and within countries concerning access to schooling and quality of education and learning. The region still houses sizeable numbers of out-of-school children and illiterate adults.
- **Education is a catalyst for development:** Over the past decade, the region has become an important political and economic force, characterized by rapid economic growth, wider social development, and an increasingly outward-looking political environment. However, societies are increasingly divided in terms of the distribution of opportunities for “relevant” education, decent income and quality of life. Education inequalities in particular lead to economic and social inequalities.
- **The future agenda for education should take into account the emerging development trends:** In the face of rapid economic, societal and technological changes, it is critical that education systems adapt to a multitude of potential challenges. What sorts of educational responses are required to address demographic dynamics, such as ageing populations, youth bulges and growing migration? How should education policies best address climate change, sustainable development and formation of responsible citizenship? Given the spread of information and communication technologies, what does it mean to be ‘literate’ in the future and how can education systems harness the benefits of technology for enhanced learning? These are just a few examples.
- **Quality learning for all can be a unifying umbrella theme for national education policy reforms and the post-2015 development agenda:** Success or failure in achieving education for all hinges not just on countries providing access to education or delivering more years of schooling; the ultimate measure lies in what children learn. The focus should be on providing conducive learning environments facilitated by professional teachers and effective learning processes in order for learners to achieve meaningful and relevant learning outcomes including transversal skills and to be innovative, able to adapt to and assimilate change and able to continue learning. For doing so, a new and broadened conceptualization of learning is required, using a lifelong and life-wide learning approach. Lifelong learning requires the provision of multiple learning pathways, with multiple entry and re-entry points at all ages and at all educational levels. These considerations are critical in the development of a possible post-2015 education agenda, and should also be taken into consideration for the broader development agenda post-2015.

UNESCO Bangkok is continuing to be actively involved in the debate on the future of education and the post-2015 process through mobilizing various stakeholders in the consultation on the quality of teaching and learning, education goals and targets beyond 2015 as well as regional and international cooperation to strengthen education development and reform in Asia and the Pacific.

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The TaiwanICDF's Vision 2022

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Keywords: Republic of China; Taiwan; TaiwanICDF; sustainable development

Summary: This piece gives an overview of Vision 2022, of the Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF); the highest-level embodiment of the organization's mission and core values. It also explains TaiwanICDF's position regarding post-2015/post-MDG development.

TaiwanICDF's Vision 2022 is to 'become the best partner for sustainable development by 2022'. Formulated in June 2012 as part of a series of continuing reforms, this vision embodies the mission and core values of TaiwanICDF and clarifies the medium- to long-term outcome that we expect from our aid projects. As Taiwan's dedicated foreign aid agency, we are seeking to achieve our goals based on this vision, which guides our continuing efforts to reform, and the effective planning and distribution of resources.

Vision 2022 was designed to be clear and readily understandable to the full range of stakeholders we work with, and make us better able to support sustainable development when working with fellow providers of aid, or partners receiving aid.

In terms of becoming the best partner, within TaiwanICDF we are: (1) introducing results-oriented project management systems at project level; (2) utilizing ICT to give full play to decision-making; and (3) building a knowledge community that draws on knowledge management to help perform its assistance work.

As for supporting sustainable development, Vision 2022 builds on our Ministry of Foreign Affairs' White Paper on Foreign Aid Policy, subtitled *Partnerships for Progress and Sustainable Development*, which pledges Taiwan's commitment to supporting the MDGs and to work in accordance with the OECD's Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. As part of this, we have formulated a number of strategies based on development themes derived from the sustainable development policy in the White Paper, drafted with Taiwan's comparative advantages in mind.

Regarding post-2015/post-MDG development, Taiwan is not a party to the UN meetings that are shaping this debate. We are monitoring progress and the consensus (if any) of the international development community, and will respond accordingly in due course. In the meantime, TaiwanICDF continues to work toward its Vision 2022, in accordance with the policies set out in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' White Paper on Foreign Aid Policy.

Further Information

For more information about Taiwan's International Cooperation and Development Fund, please visit www.icdf.org.tw. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' White Paper on Foreign Aid Policy is available from the ministry's website at www.mofa.gov.tw.

Taiwan Strides Towards the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda: Who Upholds the Vision of Sustainable Development?

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Keywords: Taiwan; sustainable development; post-2015

Summary: Taiwan seems neither very involved in, nor ignorant of, debating new concepts or frameworks for the post-2015 development agenda. Before Taiwan further participates in the UN discourse on sustainable development and global partnership, it is argued that Taiwan needs to establish a comprehensive institutionalising process to engage the various governmental, business, and NGO sectors in effective dialogue and to develop a public consensus.

Whereas many national consultations on the United Nations (UN) post-2015 development agenda have taken place in more than 70 developed and developing nations, Taiwan seems neither ignorant of, nor very interested in, debating new frameworks or concepts for post-2015. Before the High-Level Panel (HLP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released its report on May 30, 2013, the frontline office of the Taiwanese government with contact to the UN, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York, hosted the seminar on Health in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda on May 24, 2013. In the same year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Taipei organised several seminars and non-governmental organisation (NGO) forums on development issues, including climate change, financing of private enterprises, and the Taiwanese experience of foreign aid, to set up new aid approaches under the viable diplomacy policy of Taiwan.

In comparison with the current eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 12 new goals proposed in the 2013 HLP report highlight the importance of sustainable development and its enabling, institutional environment. Correspondingly, the bilateral agency, the International Cooperation and Development Fund of Taiwan (TaiwanICDF), which has mobilised approximately 16.26% of Taiwanese official development assistance (ODA) under the supervision of MoFA, has undergone a process of organisational institutionalisation and professionalisation since 2010. TaiwanICDF states that its aim for the next decade is to promote sustainable development on the basis of the MDGs (TaiwanICDF, 2013). Yet, for what reasons is this work performed? Who in Taiwan upholds the vision of sustainable development? The reasons are related to diplomacy and the effectiveness of aid programmes (MoFA, 2012), but it can also be argued that institutional challenges already found within the broader public, private, and NGO sectors in Taiwan may obscure Taiwanese participation in the UN post-2015 development discourse.

Although the Taiwanese experience of foreign aid can be tracked back to 1959, international aid and development were omitted from its core public sector policy discourse until MoFA published the White Paper on Foreign Aid Policy: *Partnerships for Progress and Sustainable Development* in 2009. In spite of the abundant experience and involvement of the strong Taiwanese NGO and civil society sector in development work, they work in isolation rather than cooperating horizontally or vertically. Taiwanese small and medium enterprises in the business sector are active on a global scale; yet they are reluctant to invest in countries that are recipients of Taiwanese aid and have close diplomatic ties with Taiwan, such as countries in Latin America, Africa, and the Asian-Pacific region. Public-private dialogues should be employed to convince the business sector of the incentives, reciprocal benefits, and the sense of security and values that are associated with such investments.

Given the diplomatic difficulties of Taiwan, coupled with its relatively small and gradually shrinking amount of ODA, it is strategically important for Taiwan to participate in the international community through its NGO and civil society channels, and other possible private platforms. Therefore, before Taiwan further participates in the UN discourse on sustainable development and global partnership, a comprehensive institutionalising process in Taiwan to engage the various governmental, business, and NGO sectors in effective dialogue and to develop a public consensus needs to be well established.

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A Road to Post-2015 Agenda Setting: The Japanese Case

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Keywords: Japanese ODA policies, basic education, skills development, higher education

Summary: Since the 1990s, Japan has made efforts to expand its operations in basic education in alignment with the EFA goals and MDGs. Despite the two decades of prioritization of basic education, the current educational cooperation policy, which was issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2011, covers wider areas such as technical and vocational education and higher education. Based on the overview of the historical development of the policies, this essay will discuss challenges and prospects for Japan in setting the post-2015 agenda.

One of the difficulties of post-2015 agenda setting is the fact that the focus areas are much more diffused than they were during the period when Education for All (EFA) development goals and Millennium Development Goals framed the discourse and practices of international educational development. In the past couple of years, many donors revised their education-sector assistance strategies including the World Bank (2011), United States Agency for International Development (2011), Department for International Development (2010), and the Government of Japan (2011). One commonality of their strategies is the broadening scope from an exclusive focus on universal basic schooling to other aspects of basic education or to other subsectors such as secondary, postsecondary, or technical and vocational education.

In the case of Japan, in 2010, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) compiled a brochure to present the framework of Japanese educational cooperation until 2015. Subsequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) publicized “Japan’s Education Cooperation Policy 2011–2015”. In the process of developing these documents, a wide range of stakeholders in JICA, ministries, academia, and some civil society organizations were involved in the discussion about the strengths and priorities of Japanese operations in this field. These were the first official policy documents that specifically focused on Japanese cooperation in education after the Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN) was announced in 2002. BEGIN focused on basic education and attempted to demonstrate the Japanese contribution to EFA and its areas of strength, such as in-service teacher training and education for post-conflict nation building, in relation to its aid philosophies to support the self-help efforts of the assisted countries and to share Japanese developmental experience. In BEGIN, a significant part of the effort was directed to showing Japanese alignment with the global agenda. Compared to that, the series of documents developed at the beginning of the 2010s was more broadly based on operations across the education sector. Both JICA’s brochure (2010) and MOFA’s policy (2011) start with the Japanese contribution to the improvement of the quality of basic education, introducing projects addressing community-based school management and inclusive education. This is followed by the second priority area of assistance—the vocational training centres and higher education networks—and the third area—education for peace and security.

These policy documents in 2010 and 2011 are meant to serve as the operational framework for the transitional period between EFA and post-EFA. Soon, JICA is going to initiate the consultative process for developing the post-EFA policy framework. A couple of factors would affect the Japanese

direction in the country's effort to set the agenda for the post-EFA period. One is the changed domestic attitude toward Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). As a result of long economic recession, the pressure from within and outside of the government to demonstrate the efficacy of resource utilization has grown tougher. It hit ODA significantly because of its nature, which does not directly and visibly benefit domestic taxpayers. The total amount of ODA and its allocation to the education sector haven't changed dramatically in the past few years (net disbursement for ODA was US\$11,021 million in 2010 and US\$10,494 million in 2012). Regardless, MOFA has introduced the perspective of contribution to the Japanese national interest in evaluating ODA projects. In Japan, there is a general consensus that it takes time to see the results of investment in education, and human resource development has always been at the core of the Japanese philosophy for its own development and ODA operation. Even so, it is likely that the next direction of Japanese educational assistance will have to show greater consideration of and linkage with domestic educational and social concerns.

The second factor is the difference of historical background and, by extension, the mode of planning and operation between programs of basic education and of TVET (technical and vocational education and training) and higher education. The latter has been a traditional area of strength since the 1960s, and Japan has supported various training programs, scholarships, and infrastructure building for the development of mid- to high-skilled labour forces in diverse areas of industries, technologies, and social services. On the other hand, support for basic education emerged in the 1990s in the face of the demand to align with the global agenda of EFA. The significance of assistance for basic education has increased throughout the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s. The fact that the Japanese government issued BEGIN, an initiative specifically focused on basic education, would indicate the rapid prioritization of basic education in this period.

Recently, the importance of cross-border collaboration among universities has become a supportive wind for increased aid for higher education. Also, aid to TVET institutions has persisted. Such revitalization of interests and commitment to TVET and higher education in Japan is linked with the global discourse on post-2015. At the same time, those people who have been exposed to policy dialogues at the global and assisted countries' national levels tend to be in the field of basic education. Specialists in other educational fields, particularly higher education, are exposed to global discourse too, but not within the framework of development aid and EFA. Assistance for the quality improvement of basic education will continue to be one of the major fields of Japanese educational cooperation. One concern is that when the mainstream discussion shifts to the broader field of skills development and lifelong learning, Japan will have to reinvent the channels of promoting its achievements and expertise, not restricted to basic education but in coordination with other educational subsectors, to present the comprehensive picture of Japanese educational cooperation in a strategic manner.

Japanese ODA may not seem as dynamic as ODA of neighbouring countries like Korea and China, which are rapidly increasing their presence as donors. However, Japan's total amount of ODA is much bigger than these new actors', and Japan is still among the top 10 bilateral donors. Tightening domestic demands to demonstrate results would make aid practitioners more careful and accurate, which would be challenging but would help to improve the quality of work. Having the asset of a large pool of experts and experience, Japan would need a well-defined presentation of its lessons and innovations as a knowledge bank from which new donors can learn.

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The Post 2015 Education and Development Road - Oman's Prospects

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Keywords: Education for All, Early child Education, People with disabilities Education

Summary: The Sultanate of Oman has made remarkable advances in expanding the provision of education so that all children have free access to primary and secondary education. The levels of participation in Oman are equal to, or above, other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Notwithstanding this success there are a number of specific areas in which access to education should be improved, specifically with respect to Early Childhood Education and Education for People with Disabilities. In addition, the quality of education should be enhanced in all areas

In the year 2000, 189 nations made a promise to free people from extreme poverty and multiple deprivations. This pledge resulted in eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Sultanate of Oman was one of the nations committed to achievement of the eight MDGs. Emphasis was placed on these goals and a number of national projects and programs were approved in the Government's Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Five-Year Development Plans, which were implemented in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

In line with the second and third MDGs, which call for universal primary education, and the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, the Government of Oman is committed to equal opportunities in education by providing free access to schooling for all children. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was (98.1%) in 2011, compared to (85.4%) in 1990. The progression rate from grade one through completion of grade six was (98.5%) in 2011, compared with (81.6%) in 1990. The gap between the genders in various stages of education has declined. The Gender Parity Index in the Primary stage was (97%) in 2011, compared to (89%) in 1990; in the Secondary stage, it was (96%), compared to (95%) in 1990; and, in Higher Education it was (107%) in 2001, compared to (83%) in 1990. The literacy rate for the (15-24) age cohort was (98.9%) in 2011, compared with (92%) in 1990, an improvement which is seen as demonstrating that the Sultanate of Oman is on the way to eradicating illiteracy among youth, well ahead of the specified time. The 2012 World Bank Report on Education in Oman indicates that participation levels in Oman are equal to, or above, other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It shows in particular that young women in Oman have levels of tertiary education completion similar to the high levels found in top performing countries such as Singapore and South Korea.

The indicators show a remarkable achievement for the Sultanate of Oman on the road to Education for All; however, there are a number of specific areas in which access to education should be improved in order to reach the Education for All goals and contribute to the enhancement of quality in education as outlined below.

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

The Government of Oman is increasingly aware of the importance of ECE and is seeking ways to expand children's access to ECE programs and to improve quality. Nevertheless, the participation rate in ECE is still low. In 2009 only (39%) of four- and five-year-olds attended preschool. The 2012 World Bank Report on Education in Oman recommends that the Government of Oman develop a strategy for ECE that links ECE with an overall vision for education in the country.

People with Disabilities Education (PDE)

The provision of PDE requires specialized teachers, customized equipment and specially designed schools and classrooms. It is a challenging area that needs substantive financial commitment and technical capacity. The Ministry of Education in Oman is making an effort to improve the provision of education for people with disabilities, but the percentage of students with disabilities in the Ministry's Basic Education programs is still very low. The Ministry faces many challenges, including a lack of adequate mechanisms for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities, and a shortage of trained teachers for students with disabilities.

While the Omani Government's success in expanding the provision of education is impressive, the Government needs to shift its focus to the quality and relevance of the education system, to expand Early Childhood Education, and develop Education for people with disabilities for the Post 2015 agenda.

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Skills Development Post-2015

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Keywords: Education system; 21st century skills

Summary: According to the OECD, skills have become the global currency of the twenty-first century. Students must master a new mix of skills and competencies. Oman's Education System must be reformed to respond to the imperatives of the new global economy which is highly competitive and not as predictable as in the past century.

In the last thirty years, Oman has developed one of the fastest growing higher education systems in the world. The country has built a diversified higher education system of recognised quality that has contributed substantially to national development and to improving the quality of life for its citizens. This comes as a result of the fact that the people of Oman are the central focus of all economic and social development. The economic and education strategy of Oman is to build a well-educated and well-trained local workforce that will not only be able to replace expatriate labour, but also contribute to the prosperity of Oman in a competitive global market. The UNDP Human Development Report 2010 (UNDP, 2010) indicates that Oman was at the top of the list of countries that have been most successful in furthering the human development of their people.

However, the higher education system in Oman must meet the needs of the new global economy, which is much more competitive and much less predictable than in the past. The quality of the higher education system is predicated on provision that is fit for purpose. Currently it cannot be said that Omani graduates are truly fit for the purpose of employment. The World Economic Forum's Executive Survey 2012 identified an inadequately educated workforce as the second most problematic factor in the conduct of business in Oman. A survey of graduates from Oman's private higher education institutions in 2010 (MoHE, 2010) showed that there was a deficit in generic skills: problem solving ability was at 38 percent, creativity at 37 percent, critical thinking at 34 percent, and communication skills at 31 percent.

Hence, Oman's Higher Education system must focus less on content and more on ability to learn and re-learn. The system needs to become more concerned with fostering critical thinking, creativity and innovation. At the same time, the outcomes of the system must be focused more explicitly on the skills that employers need and expect. These include both twenty-first century skills and specific job-related abilities, as well as an appreciation of the entrepreneurial culture and ability to create wealth through innovation and entrepreneurship.

Skills have become the global currency of the twenty-first century (OECD, 2012). Only the education system can produce the properly educated and skilled people who are needed in a rapidly changing labour market. Oman's National Strategy for Education 2040 addresses the reform of the Education System so it can better respond to the needs of the national and global economies.

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Education and Development in the Post-2015 Landscapes: Financing Education : Oman Challenges

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Keywords: Education finance; sustainability

Summary: The Sultanate of Oman has been enormously successful in expanding access to education at all levels. The increase in the number of schools, colleges, universities and training institutes over the past few decades is a clear reflection of the scale to which access to education has expanded. The education sector is expected to further expand in the coming decades with the establishment of new universities, research centres, and schools. The most challenging task for the Omani education system is the sustainability of the expected expansion while maintaining its quality.

Education Budget Review

The Government of Oman allocates a high proportion of its civil ministries' budget to education. In 2009, education expenditures represented 12.8 percent of total government spending. With a steady increase of budget during 2010, 2011 and 2012, the education expenditure reached 4.6% of GDP and 13% of the 2013 budget.

Challenges

One of the most challenging issues in Oman's education sector is its full dependence on the government as the sole financier. In 2012, the oil and gas industry contribution to the economy reached 81% of the total government revenues. Since the government is the sole financier of education in Oman with some limited participation from the private sector, its ability to finance public sector expenditure, including education, is highly dependent on oil revenues. According to a World Bank study, Oman's absolute reliance on public funds to finance its top priority pre-tertiary education sector may put the sector in a vulnerable position if the fiscal space were to be reduced and/or sectoral priorities changed. The study concluded that even though the education system is

free for its users, its resource base is limited and there are several other important sectors of activity that compete for the same resources.

Sustainable Financing

A coherent and rational approach toward management of the entire education sector is therefore needed. More traditional, informal arrangements may no longer be adequate. The government must decide on the extent to which it will guide the development of a viable financing mechanism of Oman's education sector. One of these possible mechanisms is the establishment of an Education Investment Fund. The primary objective of this fund will be to ensure the financial sustainability of the education sector against the uncertainties of fluctuating oil prices. The fund will be invested and dispersed in a governance framework to counter the disruptive effects of oil price instability.

[This article underlines the crucial importance of sustainable financing, underlined by the High Level Panel. Editor]

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A SOUTH ASIAN ANGLE

Skills Development in India: Lots of Noise & fury, but Little Action

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Keywords: India; NSDC; demographic dividend; social values

Summary: Despite the launch of many high-powered initiatives, the challenge to India of training millions of workers to sustain its economic growth is very daunting. Not only are many of these schemes wasteful and planned in a bureaucratic top-down fashion, but local social values also discourage young people from opting for vocational education and training.

Until a few years ago, and for almost two decades before that, the “demographic dividend” was one of the most popular terms in use by the Indian media, economists and business consultants in any discussion about the country’s economic prospects. The term summed up the certainty in the Indian mind about the huge cost advantage that the country would enjoy in future due to its vastly younger working population and lower age-dependency ratio, especially in comparison to the aging populations of Europe, China and Japan. In those heady days, it was all too easily overlooked that there was nothing inevitable about this dividend, that India’s youth needed to be skilled to become a real asset, and that so much depended on how the country expanded, improved and modernized its educational and training infrastructure.

Now that the Indian economy is decelerating because of a series of self-created crises, India is unable to hide the uncomfortable truth of its large unskilled workforce, and there is a growing realization that the country is actually heading for a “demographic disaster”. Many infrastructure and engineering projects are stuck simply because there are not enough welders or crane operators to be found, hospitals are poaching nurses and lab technicians from each other, and most companies find the average Indian graduate to be “mostly unemployable” according to a recent report by a leading industry organisation. Only 2 per cent of India’s labour pool has any kind of formal training, compared to 75 per cent in Europe and 25 per cent in China. Moreover, evidence from virtually every sector of the Indian economy points to a huge demand-supply gap in skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Even the new airport in New Delhi was built by an Indo-German consortium employing hundreds of Chinese workers for the job. India’s celebrated success in information technology is a limited island of competence and the IT industry employs only two million people, while construction and agriculture employ in the hundreds of millions. Clearly, what India desperately needs are trained plumbers, masons, electricians, tractor & crusher operators, and water-pump technicians.

India remains industrially stunted and its population untrained because of years of neglect. For many years as an independent country, its political leaders embraced an ideology that was a strange amalgam of socialism, bureaucratic controls and unquestioned veneration of the simple, rural Indian lifestyle (as against, the scientific advancement of Western nations). As a result, India never did embrace a proper industrial revolution and therefore never invested in the educational infrastructure required to support it. On the contrary, a mix of regressive laws actually encouraged “smallness” in manufacturing over economies of scale, denying any incentive to any company, public or private, to invest in training. It is only in recent years that some Indian companies, notably in

automobile and motorcycle manufacturing, have begun to set up training centres. But even now, economic growth remains overly concentrated in the services sector, bypassing almost all of rural India and most of manufacturing, which constitutes just 15% of GDP, the lowest in Asia. (compared to 60% in China).

Chastened by the reality of recent economic slowdown and barraged by a series of negative references to its workforce by foreign investors, Indian policymakers seem to have finally realized the gravity of the skills problem. India has launched a slew of initiatives in past two years, most notably a new National Skilling Mission, which is directly controlled by the Prime Minister, and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), a unique public-private partnership company which aims to provide vocational skills to one million people every year. The government recently passed a budgetary supplement that grants almost US \$2 billion for this purpose, including \$200 as a monetary reward to each candidate who passes the training programmes of the NSDC.

Aside from these, there are many sector-specific skill initiatives under different ministries, especially in textiles, tourism and agriculture, where various kinds of courses and workshops are being planned and started. Taken together, the aim is to produce roughly 500 million skilled workers by the year 2022. The buzz in India around skills development is so strong that hundreds of new Indian NGOs have suddenly mushroomed in the last few years, and major international donors and development agencies, like the ILO and the EU, are now increasingly investing in this area.

However, despite so much public money being spent, skills development in India will likely remain woefully short in future because most of these schemes have been hastily announced with poor thought and little coordination, and consequently suffer from the usual Indian malaise: overly ambitious targets, wasteful duplication and bureaucratic turf battles. NSDC's current infrastructure allows it to train no more than 300,000 people a year, a far cry from its target of 1 million, while there are 17 different central ministries and hundreds of local government bodies now doing their own training. Outside of this vast government machinery, over 100 different expert committees and task forces have already been formed to give professional guidance to the government, leading to even further expenditure and delays.

On top of that, many of the skills the government is trying to promote seem like they were created in a fantasy world - for instance, "rag chopping" and "egg selling assistant" are some of the 1500-odd career courses now offered by the NSDC. There is also a cultural bias working against skills and vocational training in India. India's caste system has created a social attitude that equates manual work with low status, and except for the very poor who face issues of immediate survival, most Indians prefer formal education while looking upon vocational training as a compromise if not a stigma. Anecdotal stories abound of how difficult it is to convince young people in India that a marketable vocational skill can be more valuable than a college degree.

All in all, it looks very confusing, uncoordinated and daunting. The challenge of skills development in India, within or outside the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, reflects the social and administrative complexity of the country.

India is currently consumed with its own domestic debates on how to promote and fund various development goals, especially a recently launched initiative for free education, and India's initiatives in this area have undoubtedly been spurred by the adoption of the MDGs as a priority global agenda. But public debate in India about the post-2015 MDG scenario has also been indifferent, probably reflecting a lack of ownership of the MDG process rather than a lack of interest in MDG goals. Many civil society and policy activists in India have expressed irritation at the lack of linkage between MDGs and the local context. For instance, while India has made significant progress in primary

education, activists have also criticized easy MDG benchmarks which allow the Indian government to claim nearly 100 per cent universal coverage and pat itself on its back, when there are so many studies showing that this is an exaggerated claim and that the primary education in India remains uneven at best and sub-standard at worst.

SOUTH AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES

Latin America: A Post-2015 Education Agenda

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Keywords: Inequalities; education quality; policy priorities; funding; learning skills

Summary: Up to now Latin America's expanding educational opportunities have not compensated for socioeconomic and cultural inequality. A new policy agenda must include universal early education and care, K-12, that provides basic learning skills for the future to all, consistent with international standards, and a strong VET component at the post-secondary level in connection with the changing needs of the productive sector.

What are the goals that should guide education in Latin American countries after 2015? Whatever they turn out to be, they should go beyond those of Education for All (EFA), to which the national societies in the region - and their various internal groups of class, ethnicity, gender and location - have advanced unevenly. Moreover any gains have been principally in access to, participation in, and quantitative coverage in pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education.

What is now required is far more difficult – how to transform the educational experience, particularly for children and youth from sectors with few resources – into one that compensates for socio-economic and cultural inequalities, and prepares them for lifelong learning so that they can perform adult roles in an economic and social environment characterized by continuous change, insecurity and demands on labour.

Up to now, Latin America's expanding educational opportunities have not compensated for socioeconomic and cultural inequality. It is true that today millions of children and young people, previously excluded from education, now participate in the K-12 process. But on average around 50 percent drop out and the other half follow very different educational paths from the point of view of educational quality. Among those that do complete their secondary education (an increasingly important requirement in Latin America to avoid the risk of falling below the poverty line) half of them have not attained minimum levels of learning by the age of 15, as defined by the PISA tests. In brief, rather than compensate for inequalities at birth, the region's expanded education system actually reproduces them and so narrows the future opportunities for the majority of young people. And, it follows that only a small fraction of them can go on to tertiary education.

For this reason most young people - with low-quality secondary education or less in terms of schooling - are not sufficiently prepared to continue learning throughout life, join the world of work, assume their civic responsibilities and deal with the uncertainties of contemporary life. Further, their expectations for social mobility become frustrated, their material satisfactions and cultural needs unmet, as are their ambitions for participation opportunities and the assets of modernity. These circumstances result in a dull discomfort that, similar to volcanoes in the Andes, erupt from time to time and destabilize politics and society.

How best to advance then from 2015 toward a more equitable educational future for the population of children and young people in Latin America?

First, and above all, preschool education should be expanded but made universal together with programs for early attention and care (early childhood care and education, ECCE). Until Latin America reaches this standard, education cannot become an instrument to compensate for socioeconomic and cultural inequalities. For the next 15 years this should be the absolute priority – for public policy, State actions, public investment and private cooperation.

Second, children and young people in Latin America should receive an education between K to 12 that provides (at least) the minimum basic learning skills for the future, consistent with PISA standards, independent of their social, ethnic, gender or local background. The challenge is to transform school effectiveness and quality into a real tool that equalizes, as much as possible, the results of learning.

The two previous goals require three necessary conditions: (i) that the higher education system provides preschool and K-12 education with teachers and administrators able to convert failing or mediocre schools into those which meet the proposed educational standards; (ii) that together with civil society, national and local governments provide the required support to these schools so they can be transformed; (iii) that public expenditure for education is used for meeting priorities with high standards of accountability and transparency and not, as frequently happens today, when the two highest income quintiles receive the greatest proportion of public expenditures and in consequence it has a regressive impact.

Finally it is essential to revise the policies and goals of tertiary education, not only to dramatically improve the education of teachers and administrative staff at all levels of the educational system but to: (i) strongly develop vocational and technical education (VET) in connection with the changing needs of the productive sector and with their active participation and collaboration, so as to reduce the pressure of demand on long, complex, academic careers at a high cost; (ii) ensure the widest possible availability of information to guide young people when they are at the point of choosing a tertiary education institution or program, in order to reduce the high attrition rates, the frustration of expectations, waste of public and private resources and the potential for fraud that occurs when there is little or no trustworthy information in markets with strong information asymmetries; and, (iii) actively encourage with state resources, appropriate incentives and international cooperation, educational research oriented toward both system troubleshooting and pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary educational innovation; so that public policies can rely on evidence, teachers on knowledge to improve their work, and national societies on information and arguments that enable discussion and information about the best courses of action for education reform.

Latin American will Meet the Access Goal, but will Fail the Any Quality Post-MDG

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Keywords: Educational policy, Educational indicators, Educational needs, Basic needs, Educational discrimination, Access to education, Development policy, Illiteracy, Literacy

Summary: Net enrolment rates and literacy rates keep moving closer to the MDG, but international reading literacy studies suggest that quality is poor. However, while positive news is widely distributed through mass media, few comments on indicators of poor functional literacy quality are broadcast. Therefore, policy makers - who usually enrol their children in good private schools-- tend to assume that public education guarantees a reasonable learning. Thus, it will be hard to generate a serious effort to improve the quality of LAC primary education in the near future.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) net enrolment rates and literacy rates keep moving closer to the MDG targets, but the OECD and UNESCO reading literacy studies suggest that quality is still fairly poor. However, public information on these two perspectives is somewhat biased. While local press widely quote easily available positive data on “enrolment” or “literacy” rates --published in Annual Education Reports or reported in Census Population Statistics-- few comments on quality indicators (like testing measures of literacy skills) are broadcast. Furthermore, for well-educated people reading newspapers it is difficult to understand or accept news about “half of primary school graduates not being able to extract simple written information reported in the press”. Therefore, there are no internal pressures for improving the quality of education.

Messages from abroad are also misleading. “The Millennium Development Goals Report. 2010” ends up with a rather optimistic conclusion for LAC countries: Enrolment in primary education has continued to rise, reaching 95 per cent by the end of the 1999-2008 decade (only one percentage point below the average for the developed regions). Therefore, (according to this finding) the LAC region would have already achieved the MDG2 given that some 10% of any population has learning disabilities that makes it difficult to reach universal schooling even in developed countries.

International comparisons on the literacy status of respondents in the National Population Census also provide a misleading message: literacy rates for Latin American youngsters have risen to 97% and the region would be only 3 percentage points below the developed world. Census literacy figures provide a systematic overly optimistic biased estimate because literacy is self-reported. Therefore, these rates cannot be used to compare the “ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts”. However, this self-assessment is quite consistent with enrolment figures (everyone that attended at least primary education will usually consider him/herself “literate”) and tends to reinforce the (wrong) feeling that LAC is providing good quality education.

Expensive objective international assessment of functional literacy shows a completely different picture. LAC countries perform far below the OECD countries in TIMMS, PISA and especially in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). The third IALS was administered for the first time in 1998 to adults in two upper-middle income countries, Chile and Slovenia. The test in Chile detected that

only 20% of the adult population aged 16-65 was able to perform over the minimum level required to cope “with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex advanced society”. Given that the Chilean schooling system is one of the top performers in the LAC region, it can be concluded that this region has a tough task for improving the quality of their primary education.

IALS data are consistent with UNESCO language tests administered in a dozen LAC countries. The UNESCO LAC Regional Office has reported that half of third and fourth graders cannot extract simple meanings from a short text.

In summary given the optimistic messages on access and coverage widely broadcast in the press and international reports, LAC policy makers tend to assume that being enrolled in primary education guarantees a reasonable learning (as defined in the standard curriculum). Therefore, it will be hard to generate a serious effort to improve the quality of LAC primary education in the near future.

**NOT ANOTHER EXTERNAL
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA
FOR AFRICA**

Crafting the MDGs in African Fashion: Consultation and Transparency in Action

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Keywords: Africa, MDG, Development, consultations and post-MDG agenda

Summary: This short piece examines the nature of the engagements around the post-2015 MDG debate. It provides an example of the way the debate is being managed in the South in preparation for the new sustainable world order and the various considerations that pertain to that.

Introduction

For an international post-2015 development agenda which is expected to take account of 'inclusive growth', 'transparency', 'accountability' and 'engagement' (United Nations, 2013), there is a remarkable degree of absence of debate in the public space. While there could well be feverish discussion at some government and inter-governmental level in Southern and South Africa, the absence of engagement in the public space and with civil society suggests a degree of secrecy and surreptitiousness as to the nature of the agenda underway, especially one as significant and important as the post-2015 Millennium Development agenda. Is it likely that the lessons learnt might well not have been learnt effectively and that the world is likely to be subjected to a range of goals that are crafted in secret, by and for an audience to whom it will be meaningless and inconsequential?

This contribution is based on an attempt to understand the process currently underway in crafting the African or Southern African position related to the post-2015 MDG debate as it is currently unfolding. It was found that far from far from being a non-event, as is evident in civil society, there was clearly a gush of feverish activity at inter- and intra-government level.

The sudden feverish activity at governmental level mirrors the High Level Panel (HLP) at international level tasked with identifying the parameters of the post-2015 MDG agenda (United Nations, 2013). The developments suggest that we are on track to deliver (and agree on) an agenda when the opportunity presents itself. Engagement at the African Union sharply contrasts with the absence of any awareness of the debate in civil society and in the popular press. According to one source, "Please understand that there is a lot happening that cannot be used for open source publications..." While I am grateful for the contrite candour of such a sentiment, it captures the nature of the debate in the deep South. It is clear therefore that King and Palmer (2013) who have referred to the current post-2015 process as 'Northern Tsunami and Southern Ripple' do manage to capture the current development between civil society and government. But there is apparently at least a small 'tsunami' in the upper echelons of national government (and inter-government). The nature of engagement at this level assumes that the agenda is crafted to benefit the rest of civil society. It might well be that the final result will provide an outcome for government, by government, and in the interests of government. Hopefully, this does not provide a precursor to the way 'development is expected to be done' (i.e. outside of the democratic space) in the new post-2015 era.

Development is clearly understood in the new way governments are beginning to understand development – that of a mechanism for legitimacy. A brief overview of the ‘tsunami’ of activity is recounted as a way of understanding the nature of the consultation underway and anticipated in the foreseeable future in the region.

The (South) African engagement

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has appointed South Africa and Ireland to co-facilitate preparations at its High-Level meeting to be convened on 25th September 2013. They are expected to review progress made in achieving the MDGs as well as to “accelerate progress towards achieving MDG targets in the remaining period until 2015”. The meeting is expected to ‘promote convergence between the myriad of initiatives currently underway on the development agenda post-2015 (and) ...lay the basis for a unified inter-governmental process to advance this process.’ At the time of writing, the Southern Africa Group has formally submitted President Zuma’s availability to serve on the AU High-level Committee of Heads of State and Government on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

It is reported that Africa has yet to adopt a common position on the development agenda post-2015. The African Union (AU) had during its May 2013 Session established a High-level Committee of Heads of State and Government (referred to as a High Level Panel), under the Chair of the President of Liberia, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson (Assembly/AU/Dec.475 (XXI), to coordinate the development of an African position. In accordance with the decision, each geographic region was expected to nominate to this panel, two representatives at Head of State and Government level. At the time of writing, the AU Commission has circulated a draft text of the “African Common Position” for review and additional inputs by AU members.

South Africa is in the process of currently making comments on the draft text through the Department of International Relation and Cooperation (DIRCO), which is the responsible co-ordinating line Ministry and agency. DIRCO has held interdepartmental consultations with relevant line Departments to solicit their inputs and to ensure South Africa’s ‘coherent and consistent engagement’ on the Post-2015 UN development discourse.

In addition to the consultations on the Common African Position, four inter-departmental workshops have been hosted by DIRCO. These workshops have served as the coordinating mechanism for the South African Government’s evolving position on the post-2015 issue. The role of civil society is to be obtained by ‘further workshops..... to ensure a fully inclusive and transparent process’. When and how this is to take place is unclear at this stage. The lack of engagement with civil society up to this point suggests that it will happen only after it is crafted and the results presented and pre-defined.

It is anticipated that South Africa’s position on the Post-2015 development agenda will be based on national priorities and national security and that, “.... in a wider context, the Post-2015 UN development agenda should not compromise the interests of the South and, in particular, Africa’s development priorities” (official). It is expected that the national development plan, “National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030,” (The Presidency, 2012), will inform the South African position. According to the plan, South Africa can realise the (MDG) goals by “...drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.” Interestingly, the Plan referred to, although adopted by government, has not been unanimously accepted by all alliance partners of the African National Congress (ANC). Although it is aimed at eliminating poverty and reducing inequality by 2030 and synergises with the ethos of the HLP report, it is also likely to resonate with the wider spirit of the international agenda as currently crafted. The representation of

a key South African individual on both the HLP secretariat and the NDP provides an important context of agreement between the two documents.

To close

It is evident that the current (lack of) wider engagement on the post-2015 agenda can be understood in terms of a range of levels. First, it is likely that the current UN HLP process has been replicated at the regional and indeed, national levels. South African panels have been established and despite reassurances that the process needs to be 'transparent', 'inclusive' and 'consultative', it is apparently restricted to government-level interactions, both internal and regional. Second, the actual debate (if that is happening) is likely to be based on the resonance of the international on existing national development agendas, which is likely to dilute the transformative capacity of any international agenda. Third, the promised engagement with civil society is likely to be less than robust and will be couched in terms that are likely to be symbolic rather than real. It would be important to remind ourselves of the HLP position as we craft this agenda that while, "Only UN member states can define the post-2015 agenda...the participation of civil society representatives in the UN processes will bring important perspectives to the discussions and help raise public awareness and interest" (United Nations, 2013, p. 25).

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School Infrastructure Challenges – Ways to Link with the 2015 Debates

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Keywords: South Africa; infrastructure; post-2015; accountability.

Summary: Mud schools are to be reconstructed following a public interest law suit that settled out of court in 2011 with a commitment by the South African Department of Education to spend R8.2 billion on crucial school infrastructure. Although allocation of funds is more than adequate, spending has proved problematic. This article explores the value of a post-2015 strategy that focuses on budget and expenditure monitoring as a means of holding government accountable.

Against the scenic background of bucolic Eastern Cape in South Africa there are children walking every school day to schools that are made of mud. Well, not every school day. If it rains it may not be worth going to school. Zinathi, a 12 year old learner at Tembani Junior Primary, explained in 2011 that she and her classmates could go to school on rainy days. 'When we get to school after it has rained like this, we have to clear the water from the class room before we can learn. We take some of the planks we use for desks to make a little bridge through the door of the classroom. Our school is made of mud and has no windows or doors and rain drips on our books. It is difficult to learn in our classroom, even when there is no rain'. (The Globe, 2013)

Zinathi is fortunate, her school was one of the first seven schools in the Eastern Cape to be replaced by a new, state of the art brick school. This came about when a crisis committee for her school and six others, together with the Centre for Child Law, were applicants in a case brought by the Legal Resources Centre, Grahamstown. The case settled out of court, and a memorandum of agreement signed on 4 February 2011 garnered a huge R 8.2 billion budget over three years for school infrastructure, which includes the reconstruction of 510 mud schools.

The post-2015 Development Agenda requires that no one is left behind. In the face of that, the inequality between the learning environment offered by mud schools and other public schools in South Africa is unacceptable. Accountability is also identified as a crucial element of that agenda. The use of public interest litigation of the type brought by the Legal Resources Centre is one way of holding the government accountable for its obligations to provide basic education for all its children.

A concern in the post-2015 era is that less funds will flow to developing countries, and the mud schools case is thus a useful experience in learning how, at country level, education advocates and activists might ensure that more money is allocated to and spent on the correct goods and services. Ironically, allocation of funds for Education in South Africa is not really the problem. South Africa's total public expenditure on educational institutions and administration amounted to 5.9% of the GDP, which is slightly above the OECD average of 5.4%. Moreover, the original amount of 8.2 billion leveraged by the Mud Schools case has in fact been added to by the government, and amounts to a total of 13 billion over the 2012 medium term expenditure framework of three years. The Centre for Child Law commissioned a study by Cornerstone Economic Research, to track school infrastructure spending and delivery (Abdoll and Barberton, 2013). The report makes the concerning finding that the national Department of Basic Education has woefully underspent the funds earmarked for infrastructure for two years running. In 2011/2012 spending was a little over 10 % and only at 23 per

cent in 2012/2013 at the end of the third quarter. The Cornerstone Report finds that the reason for the National Department's underspending is poor capacity within the Department to plan and manage an infrastructure programme of this size.

The post-2015 Agenda is premised on the reality that there will be less financial aid to developing countries in the future. If no children are to be left behind, then developing countries must find the means to provide equal opportunities for all children to learn in a decent environment. Parent bodies, education advocates and activists must seek new partners and learn new skills to hold governments accountable, and ensure that deliver on their obligations regarding the right to education. These new partners may include lawyers and economists, procurement experts, infrastructure planners and construction experts. Public private partnerships may need to be explored.

If we are to re-vision the post-2015 agenda, it should be done in a manner that encourages organisations, parent bodies and even learners themselves to hold governments accountable. This requires not only making demands on the public purse to ensure that more money is allocated to education, but also ensuring that, once allocated, it is efficiently spent.

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The Post 2015 Quality Challenge: Lesson From the South African Experience of Improving Literacy and Mathematics in a Poorly Performing System

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Keywords: Large-scale reform, language and mathematics, primary school, instructional infrastructure.

Summary: One of the key post-2015 challenges in middle income and emerging economies is upgrading the quality of primary education for all. This paper describes how the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy in South Africa combined prescriptive lesson plans, high quality learning materials and instructional coaches to leverage large-scale reform of instructional practice.

Although two to three percentage of children of compulsory school age (7-15) are currently not enrolled in school and some provinces continue to struggle to provide all pupils with access to adequate school infrastructure including qualified teachers, there is a general agreement in South Africa that the main post-2015 universal primary education challenge will be to improve the quality of education for all. Cross-national studies of pupil achievement including PIRLS, SACMEQ and TIMMS, the government's own national assessment tests and small scale academic studies consistently show that around seventy percent of South African primary school pupils are not reading, writing and doing mathematics at the levels required by the national curriculum. The national aggregates mask the massive inequalities. Essentially South Africa has two distinct systems in one. For middle class pupils, now both black and white, their schools are effective in teaching the foundational subjects for life-long learning. However, poor and working class children living in South Africa's urban slums and underdeveloped rural areas attend schools that fail to ensure that they become fluent readers and writers in any of the eleven official languages.

One programme, the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy, is beginning to provide new insights on how governments can address the 'quality' challenge. In 2010, the provincial Minister of Education in the Gauteng province (around Johannesburg) in response to the President's literacy and numeracy targets, launched an unusual primary language and mathematics strategy. Drawing on international 'change knowledge', the strategy was designed around four pillars: using data to improve teaching and learning, supporting teachers to improve their instructional practices, providing support to learners directly and retraining school and district management.

At the core of the programme was aligned 'instructional infrastructure' aimed at 1000 underperforming primary schools. This infrastructure included the provision of prescriptive daily lesson plans, whole class sets of high quality learning materials such as graded readers in all the national languages, and instructional coaches.

The instructional coaches, employed by NGOs rather than by the government department, rapidly won the trust of teachers as they assisted them to understand how to teach to the lesson plans and make use of the improved learning materials. In the first year of implementation, teachers complained that the pace and intensity of teaching work had increased dramatically, but nonetheless endorsed the lesson plans as a clear and sound guide to their work. The learning materials ensured that, for the first time in many of the schools, pupils had access to appropriate

and relevant reading books which built their confidence and competence as emerging readers. The emotional rapport that developed between teachers and coaches contributed to an emerging culture of professional accountability. Although the national standardised testing system was to be used to hold schools and teachers to targets, the weaknesses in the system meant that this component of the improvement strategy never really got off the ground.

After three years, there is a growing body of research that shows that teachers' classroom practices are beginning to change. Teachers are spending more time teaching. They are teaching more academically challenging content. They have expanded their pedagogic repertoire. Preliminary evidence shows performance gains, with the overall percentage of learners achieving at or above the minimum proficiency levels going up, and more importantly, the performance gap between middle class and working class schools narrowing.

Managing Quality Education by Numbers: the Case of Tanzania

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Keywords: quality education; quantification; Tanzania

Summary: In Tanzania, the 'learning crisis' has led donors and Twaweza, an East African NGO, to subject the 'quality issue' to a technology of quantification (outcome indicators, benchmarking, performance-based salary and school funding and randomised control trials). This management of quality by numbers may well represent a new stage in the dissemination of the new public management up to the school level rather than the promotion of a transformative education

After the enrolment improvements achieved within the EFA-MDG framework, the post-2015 debate on education has largely been driven by concerns over learning. The post-2015 agenda will certainly include a learning goal. The OECD has already launched its 'PISA for development' initiative to integrate more developing countries within standardized learning assessment exercises. Assigning a higher priority to quality education and surpassing conventional input-based policies constitute welcome strategic moves. Nevertheless, with a post-2015 agenda firmly anchored to a result-oriented framework, the insertion of 'quality education' within a regime of 'management by numbers' may well lead to unintended effects on public education systems in developing countries (King and Rose, 2005).

In Tanzania, after a 2000 decade chiefly focused on access, 'quality' has come to occupy a central position within the education aid arena. Indeed, since 2010 the country has been facing a 'quality crisis' fuelled by dramatic results at the form four examination, a declining pass rate at primary level and a low level in literacy and numeracy as revealed by the Uwezo studies, assessments of children's literacy and numeracy performances across East Africa. Development assistance has evolved to accommodate the growing anxiety over pupils' poor performances. With the quality crisis, the General Budget Support core instrument – the performance assessment framework - has swapped

its initial indicators focused on access and inputs with 'quality' indicators ('primary pass rate', 'secondary pass rate', 'the percentage of districts for which the pass rate is less than 40%' and 'higher education enrolment level'). At sector level, the donor-government dialogue has been largely shaped by another performance quantification tool – the 'rating framework' – which has granted since 2011 more weight to 'results' over 'processes'. Even if celebrated as objective and evidence-based exercises, the processes of performance quantification remain realms of negotiation and imprecision, marked by asymmetrical power relations. At the same time, they contribute to crowd out the policy space of government staff: target setting and endless discussions over numbers are so time-consuming that no time is left to deliberate, in substance, upon the quality challenge and the policies to address it.

Donors have also supported initiatives conducted by the NGO Twaweza, geared towards learning improvement: the measurement of learning performances (the Uwezo studies), the piloting of performance-based salary and school funding (cash-on-delivery, COD) coupled with randomised impact evaluations (RCT). Twaweza's three initiatives are situated in the direct lineage of donors' technology of quantification but with a change in scale. With Twaweza, the new public management technology goes 'local', with schools, teachers and parents as their primary points of application. The Uwezo/COD/RCT compact grounds public schools within the logic of the market, conveying the idea that their subjection to competition through continual comparison and to other entrepreneurial management rules constitutes the rational road to quality education. On the other hand, its evidence base remains very thin. The approach does not rely on any analytical questioning of the education process and works within a 'fundamental ignorance' about quality education (Hanushek, 1995). Besides even internally valid RCTs do not provide any evidence that an intervention that worked somewhere, in a specific setting, 'will work there' (Cartwright and Hardie, 2012). Ultimately, the Uwezo/RCT/COD compact constitutes an 'anti-politics machine' (Ferguson, 1994). Its underlying radical rejection of the inputs logic accredits the idea of well-endowed public schools and well-paid teachers, delegitimises claims for additional resources for public schools and silences power struggles over national resource allocation. It intends to provide policy makers (government and donors) with a pre-set, non-contestable but ideologically oriented solution (performance-based pay and funding) to 'fix' the quality crisis. Even if the Twaweza compact has been underpinned by a model of democratisation driven by the virtues of numbers and transparency, which remains to be validated, it more certainly eliminates democratic deliberation.

If we recognise with Samoff that the features of quality education are the outcome of a locally and historically specific negotiation 'that is more political (in the sense that setting societal objectives and public policies is a process of addressing and reconciling conflicting interests and demands) than technical' (Samoff, 2007), this 'management by numbers' will certainly be of little help to underpin the transformation and innovation required to improve the quality of Tanzania's public education system.

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**A DETAILED LOOK AT
EDUCATION AND SKILLS IN
THE CURRENT POST-2015
PROPOSALS**

Reading Polanyi in Hong Kong: Why the Post-2015 High Level Panel Bypasses Our Region's Poor

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Keywords: Post-2015 Agenda; Economic History; Poverty; Inequality

Summary: This article asks why the region surrounding Hong Kong is largely neglected by the post-2015 High Level Panel despite widespread poverty. One explanation is that the model of development expressed in these goals is more focused on building bureaucratic nation states than on poverty reduction and inequality issues.

At the last count, more than 350 million Chinese live on less than a \$2.00 a day, with more than 150 million of those living on less than \$1.25 a day. Nearly one in five Filipinos, Indonesians, and Vietnamese live below that lowest threshold. Oxford's Multidimensional Poverty Index similarly shows that poverty in this region is often just as severe, but not as proportionally widespread, as that found in Sub-Saharan Africa. More widely, four fifths of the world's poor live in middle-income countries that typify the region surrounding Hong Kong.

Yet there is a palpable lack of interest and participation in the post-2015 agenda from the region of East and South East Asia, especially as it relates to the poor who live here. We were given only four of the twenty-seven seats on the Post-2015 High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP). China's role on the High Level Panel was likely that as an emerging donor, like Japan and Korea. The Indonesian government seems to have been the only invitee to represent the poverty issues of our region.

What can we make of this lack of participation? Perhaps it is that the process of development is as much responsible for creating poverty as it is about reducing it, and that our region's poverty is more related to the process of development than a lack of it. Using the United Kingdom as an example, Polanyi (1944) proposed a basic model of development in which societies transformed from subsistence "human" economies (Graeber, 2012) into "market societies," often against the will of those transformed. Key to the process was bureaucratic nation states co-evolving to manage the most socially destructive aspects of a "Great Transformation," which in turn allowed for further market transformation. Crucially, this interpretation suggests that poverty is both produced and alleviated by the degrees of success in the transformation, and that bureaucratic nation states and market economies are inventions of the modern age.

More recently, Ferguson (1990) argued that the global development project "is not a machine for eliminating poverty that is incidentally involved with the state bureaucracy." It is instead a "machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power, which incidentally takes 'poverty' as its point of entry and justification." Official Development Assistance (ODA) can thus be seen as an enabler or substitute for bureaucratic state power, as is the statistical capacity development that accompanies it and internationally agreed goals like the MDGs. These statistics make complex social processes, and the citizens engaged in them, "legible" and manageable to both the state and international leadership (see Scott, 1998).

The governments of our region largely have the sort of capacity, statistical and otherwise, that empowers state bureaucracies to manage the most extreme issues for people already “captured” by the market. As it relates to other regions, I have seen in my own research that the critical distinction between agricultural extension in Kenya and the Philippines is that the Kenyan government is still trying to convince farmers to produce for the market while the Philippines focuses on issues related to efficiency and management. One nation state is significantly more transformed into a “market society” than the other. In turn, the Philippines and China have negative net ODA per capita numbers where Kenya and Tanzania have upwards of \$55.

Global development goals of relevance to this region would require diving into unresolved post-transformation issues that are collectively packaged as “inequality.” These types of goals would have required the post-2015 agenda to engage in the tenacious and contentious political economy issues that arise alongside state-market development, rather than the less controversial politics of ODA priorities and state capacity building. I believe we would have needed to give more seats to explicitly political representatives outside of government and their partner development organizations - perhaps from international peasant groups like La Via - to have made the post-2015 agenda about the poor and the issues they identify and prioritize.

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Early Childhood Development in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

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Keywords: early childhood development, pre-primary education, post-2015 development agenda

Summary: Any post-2015 global development goals will only be met with increased and urgent attention to the overall development of young children, especially those from the most disadvantaged population groups. It is therefore essential that these goals include more and stronger targets related to various aspects of early childhood development or a stand-alone goal to reduce by half the number of children under age five who fail to reach their developmental potential.

For over a year there has been an active, coordinated effort among many proponents of early childhood development (ECD) to ensure that it receives appropriate attention in the one or more

versions of the goals and targets that might become the core of the post-2015 development agenda (e.g., MDGs, SDGs, and/or EFA). This has included ongoing involvement in a range of conferences, papers, and discussions around the agenda and, more recently, the publication of two advocacy documents outlining the importance of ECD – generally, in terms of reducing poverty and inequality; more narrowly, in terms of education. These are: *A Transformative Solution: Reducing Poverty and Inequality through a Post-2015 Early Childhood Development Goal* (http://www.ecdgroup1.com/pdfs/briefing-TransformativeSolution_Web.pdf) and *The Importance of Early Childhood to Development to Education* (http://www.ecdgroup1.com/pdfs/briefing-GlobalMeeting_Web.pdf).

In addition, a formal response to the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*, has also been drafted. Although there are many references to ECD-related issues in the report (e.g., “Increase by x% the proportion of children able to access and complete pre-primary education”), it makes no direct statement on the importance of early childhood development and the need to support continuous and responsive family care. Thus, the response to the report from the ECD community begins with this statement:

The global early childhood community proposes a Global Goal and Call to Action to reduce by half the number of children under age five who fail to reach their developmental potential.

It goes on to make the argument that global development goals will only be met with increased and urgent attention to the overall development of young children. And it refers to the growing body of scientific research that indicates that a broad range of risk factors, most notably poverty; poor health including HIV/AIDS and malnutrition; high levels of family and environmental stress and exposure to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and inadequate levels of care and learning opportunities particularly in the first five years of life, have a profound negative impact on a child’s future well-being, especially in regard to health, education, academic outcomes, and earning potential. These risks are exacerbated by emergencies related to conflict, climate change, and global demographic shifts through migration and urbanisation.

The response also argues that research has clearly demonstrated that the impact of these risk factors and adverse experiences can be mitigated by strengthening the environments in which young children grow and thrive. This can be done, in part, through evidence-based strategies such as parenting interventions; early detection and intervention for developmental delays and disabilities; early childhood programs of care, support and learning; targeted health, nutrition, sanitation and social protection services; and good quality preschools. But despite such evidence, **many governments still do not prioritise early childhood in their health, education, poverty reduction, or other national plans, and many countries still lack early childhood development policies, strategic plans, and laws.**

There has been considerable debate within the ECD community whether to work toward a stand-alone goal such as that quoted above. Those in favour of such a goal argue that a measurable and actionable ECD goal will not only strengthen efforts towards the survival, health, development, and well-being of young children but also work to reduce the inter-generational transmission of poverty and inequality. And, it is said, this particular goal meets the eight criteria outlined in the High-Level Report: strong impact, consensus-based, widely applicable, grounded in the voice of people, encapsulating a compelling message, easy to understand, and measureable.

There are others, however, who anticipate difficulty in gaining agreement on a stand-alone ECD goal given many competing priorities and therefore argue that effort should be directed instead at

proposing and strengthening ECD-related targets in whatever global post-2015 goals are developed. These might include, for example, the following based on the goals proposed in the High Level Panel’s report:

Additional/proposed ECD goals and targets	
Goal	Targets
1.End Poverty <i>Reduce by half the # of children under 5 years affected by poverty</i>	1d. Build resilience <i>in families for improved childcare</i> and reduce deaths from natural disasters by x%
2.<Empower Girls & Women> Achieve Gender Equality	Add: <i>increase access to affordable quality child care, especially for poor working families</i>
3.Provide Quality Education & Lifelong Learning	3a. Increase by x% the proportion of children able to access and complete <i>quality <pre-primary education> early childhood programs</i>
4.Ensure Healthy Lives	<i>Increase by x% children reaching age-appropriate growth and development</i> <i>Increase by x% children living in permanent, protective, responsive family care</i>
11.Ensure Stable & Peaceful Societies	11a. Reduce violent deaths per 100,000 by x and eliminate all forms of violence <i>and exploitation</i> against children

The debate over which approach to take in promoting ECD in the post-2015 agenda will no doubt continue. But whatever the final text(s), the essential outcome must be more attention provided to the care, development, and education of young children.

Teachers and Quality Education in the Post-2015 Framework: A Rights-based Approach is the Only Way Forward

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Keywords: Rights-based approach; Quality education; Teachers

Summary: Amidst the divergences in outlook for the post-2015 education agenda, the teaching profession is calling for a rights-based approach to quality education. Education International (EI) cautions against a narrow, instrumentalist approach to education, as it ignores the broader purpose and role of education and reinforces the disparities within and between countries.

Viewed from the outside, the international community might seem unified by a common purpose, which has resulted in the near certainty of the inclusion of an education goal in the post-2015

development framework. However, the education sector is not without internal debates. It is easy enough for all stakeholders to agree on the importance of education on a general level, as demonstrated in the narrative of the High-level Panel Report, for example, but the process of deciding on the content of the education goal, identifying its targets and indicators, has shone a spotlight on the disagreements amongst a number of different approaches within the sector.

Roughly speaking, there are three different groups or discourses that aim to influence and shape the education agenda: the “learning” discourse, focused on testing and measurable learning outcomes, the “skills for employability” discourse, centred around skills, employability and economic returns, and the “right to education” discourse. While proponents of each of these perspectives may embrace “quality education and lifelong learning for all” as a global goal, differences in approach are reflected in proposed targets and indicators. In the case of the two first discourses, the preferred targets and indicators reflect an instrumental understanding of education where quality is translated into measurable learning outcomes (in terms of reading, writing and counting) and/or employability.

In its post-2015 advocacy, Education International (EI) has called for the universal completion of a full cycle of continuous, free quality education from early childhood through to upper secondary, as well as equitable access to post-secondary education and lifelong learning. Our demands stem from the inalienable right to education as well as a broad notion of quality education, as one that builds intellectual confidence and self-esteem, enables learners to use information creatively to solve problems, reduces prejudice, and promotes social inclusion.

Clear targets and indicators will ultimately set the focus for the implementation of the new education goal(s). While literacy and numeracy are necessary and part of a broader set of competences that a quality education offers, they are far from sufficient. A narrow goal allows education systems to entrench inequalities by setting low standards, while still offering the elite the opportunity to develop critical thinking and other higher-order skills. Ultimately, a narrow goal also disempowers teachers as it leaves no room for teaching and learning processes beyond a focus on the basics and thus limits opportunities for a quality education.

EI advocates a set of rights-based indicators that shift the focus towards the education system as the unit of analysis, towards the inequalities within the system (in terms of inputs, processes and outcomes), and towards a multidimensional notion of quality, with teachers viewed as practice-based experts on educational quality. One example of such an indicator would be: “the percentage of teachers who report that they receive adequate resources (i.e. materials, facilities) and the support necessary for them to deliver quality education”.

Underpinning these differences in approach are more fundamental questions about the role of the State versus that of the private sector and donors. Disagreements within the education sector are not related solely to the provision and financing of education, but also the issue of who sets priorities and policies. It is fundamentally a question of whether human rights should be integrated in a systematic way within all goals, targets and indicators. EI’s perspective is that, being a public good and a basic right, education is the responsibility of governments and must be publicly financed. Tuition fees and indirect costs related to education form the single greatest barrier to equitable access to education; yet there continues to be a shift towards policies that promote “affordable education” and away from policies that guarantee “free education for all”.

Representing the teaching profession’s views on education, EI takes a rights-based approach enshrined within international human rights treaties, and defends the labour rights of teachers and education workers, as well their right to have a say in the formulation of a new education and development agenda. Easily measurable goals, such as literacy and numeracy, might be appealing in

their simplicity and clarity. However, in addition to ignoring the broader purpose and role of education laid out in the human rights framework, as well as large parts of the curriculum, such approaches lack ambition and reinforce the crippling disparities within and between countries.

KK.Note: Education International is a federation representing 30 million teachers and other education employees, from early childhood to higher education.

UNESCO and the Post-2015 Education Agenda: What have we done So Far?

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Keywords: post-2015 education agenda, equity and quality, lifelong learning for all.

Summary: A global consultation exercise co-led by UNESCO and UNICEF proposed ‘Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All’ as the overarching goal for education in the post- 2015 Development Agenda, which is much in line with the proposed universal goal on education in the Report of the High-Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda published later. Through an extensive consultation process at country, regional and global levels, UNESCO intends to assist its Member States to develop an overarching universal education goal and global priority areas/targets (such as those proposed by the HLP as well as UNESCO-UNICEF) coupled with an implementation framework to assist countries with target setting and indicator development at national level.

The education agenda post-2015 should contemplate how education systems respond to contemporary challenges, what kind of skills and competencies as well as values and attitudes are required for the future, how educational and learning processes can facilitate the acquisition of such skills and competencies, and what educational policies are required for such change. A life-long learning approach for all should be adopted for future developments of education in line with the goal proposed by UNESCO-UNICEF.

In the lead up to the 2015 target year for the Dakar Framework for Action and the MDGs, UNESCO, as a global coordinating agency of the EFA movement, has been co-leading the thematic consultations process on education in the post-2015 agenda together with UNICEF both at regional and global level as part of the “Global Conversation”. In addition, current efforts to define post-2015 also include a complementary dynamic around possible Sustainable Development Goals. In this connection, UNESCO has developed a proposal for a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

The Global Education Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, co-led by UNESCO and UNICEF and held in Dakar in March 2013, proposed ‘Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All’ as the overarching goal for education, based on which it was recommended to develop specific goals, indicators and targets around the following four priority

areas: equitable access and completion of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary/secondary education with recognized learning outcomes and equitable access for youth and adults to post-secondary learning including technical and vocational training.

It was recommended that the future education agenda should focus on a) expanded access to quality learning for all at all levels of education as well as providing opportunities for adult learning and literacy, particularly for women; b) focused attention on the quality of education, including its content and relevance, as well as on learning outcomes; c) a greater focus on equity in particular for disadvantaged groups; and d) continued attention to gender equality.

Milestones of the post-2015 MDG consultations

A first milestone of the post-MDG consultations is the Report of the High-Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda, which proposed 'Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning' as the education goal and a core pillar for building more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies. Priority education targets are proposed as illustrative examples in the HLP report, reflecting the outcome of global consultations on the post-2015 agenda.

We are pleased to note that proposed goal is much in line with UNESCO principles, underlining a holistic lifelong learning perspective on education. At the same time, while this report is an expression of the recognition of quality education and life-long learning as one of the top priorities in a post-2015 development agenda, it somewhat weakened the case of a new education agenda by falling short of including key areas such as adult learning and literacy, particularly for women. It also focuses on basic education (from ECCE to lower secondary) and skills development, thus not taking on board the recommendation of a universal agenda for education at all levels. This is however understandable as the report is only a first step with the purpose to provoke further debate on the post-2015 development goals.

What does UNESCO consider important going forward?

UNESCO believes that regardless of the final structure the post-2015 development agenda may take, education should be an explicit stand-alone goal as well as a cross-cutting theme of the broader development agenda, given the fundamental role of education in achieving much broader development goals and as an enabler of human fulfilment, poverty eradication, sustainable development, peace and democracy and as a vehicle for global citizenship.

There are presently two options for the way forward:

1. Establishing a new set of internationally agreed EFA goals, aligned with a universal education goal; or
2. Developing an overarching universal education goal and global priority areas/targets (such as proposed by the HLP as well as UNESCO-UNICEF) coupled with an 'implementation framework' to assist countries with target setting and indicator development at national level.

UNESCO is inclined to adopt the latter vision for the post-2015 education agenda. The agenda should be underpinned by the key principle of education as a fundamental human right and a public good that should be made available to all. The challenge will be for this agenda to strike the right balance between accepting an internationally comparable and measurable goal while allowing for national ownership and adaptability of specific targets.

The future education development agenda (goal, targets and ‘implementation framework’) must build on what has been achieved and what remains to be achieved and informed by the review and critical examination of the past EFA and MDG experience. It must take into consideration emerging trends and broader socio-economic development and challenges which affect developed and developing countries alike in a globalized, interconnected world with serious ramifications for education. The education agenda post-2015 should contemplate how education systems respond to contemporary challenges, what kind of skills and competencies as well as values and attitudes are required for the future, how educational and learning processes can facilitate the acquisition of such skills and competencies, and what educational policies are required for such change. A life-long learning approach for all should be adopted for future developments of education in line with the goal proposed by UNESCO-UNICEF.

Moving forward, UNESCO will support the stocktaking of the EFA experience and continue to facilitate the discussion on the post-2015 education agenda in close collaboration with other partner agencies, in particular with UNICEF, the World Bank, OECD, Education International, civil society and its Member States. It is critical to ensure that this process be bottom-up, consultative, inclusive and reflective on education development requirements of countries. For this purpose, national and regional as well as intergovernmental consultations will be undertaken in the coming 18 months. This exercise will be aligned with the on-going process of the global debate and development on the post-2015 development agenda led by the United Nations. UNESCO will continue to use the existing EFA coordination mechanism to consult governments and other education stakeholders for this debate. The final agenda will be developed based on the outcomes of these upcoming debates and consultations which will culminate in the Global Education Conference to be hosted by the Republic of Korea in the spring of 2015.

Skills, Work and Development in the High Level Panel’s Post-2015 Vision

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Keywords: VET; post-2015; development; work; skills

Summary: The HLP draft report talks about a transformative vision but its accounts of education, skills and work largely appear stuck in old development paradigms.

I blogged my initial response to the HLP Report on the NORRAG site very soon after the Report was published. In this short further reflection, I want to revisit my initial thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of the HLP Report’s treatment of education and work under Goals 3 and 8. Here I will refocus on questioning the Report’s account of what young people want and need in terms of skills and work, as expressed both in the Goals and in Chapter One- “a vision and framework”. My core argument is more unambiguously critical than my initial response: that the HLP vision is a narrow and unambitious one when it comes to thinking about skills and work, and that the overall transformational rhetoric of the Report as a whole is not developed convincingly in these areas.

That the Report contains goals that seek to “provide quality education and lifelong learning” (Goal 3) and “create jobs, sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth” (Goal 8) is welcome. However, I want to argue that the sub-goals; the supporting texts in Annexe II; and the way that skills and work are positioned within the overall “vision and framework” together are problematic in important ways.

I’ll start with the specific sub-goals. First, 3d: “Increase the number of young and adult women and men with the skills, including technical and vocational, needed for work by x%”. Whilst any (sub) goal mentioning skills, and not just life skills, perhaps should be welcomed, there is real imprecision here regarding what will count. Moreover, we know that there are no mechanisms in place that can adequately do the counting: skills statistics are not fit for purpose in the vast majority of countries. We know furthermore that there are real dangers in a supply-side view of simply increasing the quantity of skills available. There is some sense across the document of the importance of increasing the demand for skills and promoting entrepreneurship, but little that suggests that this goes beyond long-standing and long-failing neoliberal platitudes.

The problems with the education goals are also very apparent from the accompanying text in Annexe II. The whole of this text betrays a highly instrumental view of education’s relationship to development. This is hardly surprising given the instrumental focus of the whole approach. Yet, the justification given for education and the vision for its purpose are impoverished by their instrumentalism. After a brief nuancing of the education-development relationship, Annex II’s discussion of Goal 3 quickly focuses in on questionable claims regarding education as human capital, buttressed by the education-as-contraception argument.

Such concerns about instrumentalism are simply heightened by 8b: “Decrease the number of young people not in education, employment or training by x%”. There is no sense in this exportation of the British NEET concept that there is a problem with supply-side solutions. Already in the case of South Africa, this notion has been adopted to justify massive expansion of post-school education and training in the absence of structural reforms of the economy that could deliver on decent work for all.

8a: “Increase the number of good and decent jobs and livelihoods by x” could point to possibilities for a reading influenced either by the development states’ literature or by arguments about the political economy of skills and development. However, the supporting text here too remains largely neoliberal. Indeed, there is little of the sense of recent debates about the need to see jobs and work in more nuanced ways. Rather, the Report treats the two terms as being identical. Moreover, there is a potentially problematic move on page 46, where it appears that the HLP are promoting a notion of “good jobs” that dilutes the ILO’s well-established notion of “decent work”.

The vision espoused throughout the Report remains a very narrow productivist one (cf. McGrath 2012). Whilst going beyond the MDGs regarding sustainability, the phrase “sustainable consumption and production” is underdeveloped. There is little sense of a genuine commitment to addressing unsustainable consumption, which would be a highly risky political move. Can “rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth” really be achieved? Isn’t this, rather, dangerous rhetoric?

The “vision” chapter offers the following account of what the HLP heard from young people: Young people asked for education beyond primary schooling, not just formal learning but life skills and vocational training to prepare them for jobs. In countries where they have acquired good education and skills, they want access to decent jobs.

This is fine as far as it goes, and perhaps we should congratulate the Report's research team for taking the time to listen to the voices of young people. However, there is danger in taking the rhetoric about listening that seasons the Report as anything more than an attempt to legitimate the voices of the powerful. What the Report, and the position on skills and work that it reflects, fails to do in any meaningful way is to hear young people. Rather than all parroting the simple messages of productivism, they have myriad and complex reasons for embarking on education and skills development, and a range of aspirations for their lives.

Yet, the Report sees nothing of this. It does not engage meaningfully with recent accounts of human development that seek to promote agency and to build goals from the public deliberations of individuals, communities and nations around contested and often conflicting goals. Rather, the HLP Report is a reworking of the MDG compromise between neoliberalism and human rights, only more heavily accented towards sustainable development. It cannot generate a transformation of skills, work or development.

Reference

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Education has Reached the HLP Finishing Line in the Post-2015 Olympics, But with a Few Injuries en Route

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Keywords: targets; adult literacy; Jomtien; Dakar; EFA; Skills

Summary: There are a series of anomalies and controversies at the heart of the very positive news that there is an illustrative goal proposed by the High Level Panel (HLP) for education. The most glaring omission is the failure to deal with adult illiteracy.

Relief all round!! The International NGOs, think tanks, development agencies and policy makers who have been concerned about whether 'Education' would make it to the HLP finishing line can relax. Education came in third, after Ending Poverty and Empowering Girls and Women, in the list of 12 illustrative goals and targets. Both 'Health' and 'Education' were mentioned more than 80 times in a document of 101 pages, with only 'Poverty' and 'Sustainable' being more frequent, at 131 and 185 times respectively.

But, frankly, most of the bodies promoting an education goal over the last year and longer had assumed that Education would reach the end of the race; the worry was about what shape it would be in when it got there and how it would look. Would it just comprise a basic education learning

goal? Would there be any link to skills? Would early childhood education be mentioned? And what about adult literacy?

Again, most of those lobbying for particular dimensions of education-and-skills in any final goal can relax. The HLP has covered and confirmed the importance of many of the most crucial aspects of basic education, from early childhood, through primary and lower secondary, to skills development. Here is the illustrative goal and its country targets:

“Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning

3a. Increase by x% the proportion of children able to access and complete pre-primary education

3b. Ensure every child, regardless of circumstance, completes primary education able to read, write and count well enough to meet minimum learning standards

3c. Ensure every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to lower secondary education and increase the proportion of adolescents who achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes to x%

3d. Increase the number of young and adult women and men with the skills, including technical and vocational, needed for work by x%

Debates & Controversies; Winners & Losers; Positives & Negatives

We shall mention just a few of the debates that may arise from the positioning of the Education goal and its four targets in the text of Annex II of the HLP.

First, the fate of adult illiteracy and of any set of Post-EFA Goals.

Compared with the six suggested goals/targets of Jomtien (1990) and the six EFA Dakar goals (2000), there are no less than four key dimensions of education that are targeted in the HLP.

But those constituencies concerned that there were still over 775 million illiterate adults in the world in 2010 (GMR, 2012: 5) will be deeply disappointed that a document that aims to ‘end poverty’ and ‘empower girls and women’ did not also seek to ‘end illiteracy’, especially when the majority of illiterates are female. The absence of an adult literacy target will be particularly galling when right up front in the main HLP text it is stated boldly that:

‘The Panel believes there is a chance now to do something that has never before been done--to eradicate extreme poverty, once and for all, and **to end hunger, illiteracy,** and preventable deaths.’ [emphasis added]

If the adult literacy constituency worldwide will certainly be shocked that the chance to ‘end... illiteracy’ has not, logically, been translated into an appropriate education target, it may not be the only loser.

Arguably, those concerned with the importance of developing a new set of Education for All (EFA)

Goals may find that the HLP has taken much of the wind out of their sails. The HLP has covered most dimensions of the six Dakar goals, including quality and learning outcomes which were missing in the MDGs. So the Post-EFA constituency may turn out to be a loser unless they can refocus around the needs of adult illiterates, and emphasise very differently the four education targets in the HLP report.

Second, what about the Trade-offs on Access, Completion and Learning Outcomes?

It will be recalled that the failure to retain the concern with learning and with quality from Jomtien and Dakar in the MDGs was one of the key lessons from the last 13 years. What, then, has happened to access, completion and learning in these HLP targets? There are some intriguing trade-offs:

3a on Pre-Primary only encourages increased access and completion but has no comment on learning or measurable standards.

3b on Primary assumes universal access but also has completion and minimum learning standards.

3c on Lower Secondary includes access for all, but the percentage of those reaching measurable learning standards has to be determined locally or nationally. This must surely weaken the target. Why should primary have a learning standard for all, regardless of location, even if minimum, but lower secondary not have a universal learning standard?

3d on Skills ... for Work, like pre-primary, only has an increased access criterion, and the learning standard is just taken as 'skills needed for work'. Yet elsewhere, in the Executive Summary of the main text, it is said that 'We should ensure that **everyone** has what they need to grow and prosper, including access to quality education and skills' (emphasis added). In other words like the promise to end adult illiteracy, the main text has a universal pledge on access to quality skills, but the final target only talks about an 'increase' in the number of young and adult men and women accessing skills. There is no learning outcome mentioned except that the skills should be 'needed for work'. Of course the skills needed for work in the massive informal sectors of many countries or in informal employment in the so-called formal sectors are very different from the skills needed for decent work.

Third, country percentages for targets weaken the targets dramatically.

Like Jomtien which only had six suggested targets for countries to consider, the HLP has phrased a very large number of its 54 targets in terms of percentages to be determined nationally or locally. Essentially, this very understandable device makes for a **two-tier set of targets**. Half the targets are for universal application with no national percentages suggested, such as 'End child marriage' or 'End preventable infant or under-5 deaths'. And half are left to the countries to determine.

In the case of the Education Goal, only one of the four targets is for universal application (primary education); the other three targets are all left for different country percentages to be attached.

There is also a surprising anomaly in this two-tier approach when we consider skills needed for work. In the target statement, it is left to countries to determine the percentage or the scale of increase in skills; yet in the main text of the HLP under 'Potential Impacts', it is boldly stated that there could be by 2030: '200 million more young people employed with the skills they need to get good work' (HLP, p.29). This quantitative potential impact figure in the main text sits awkwardly with the illustrative goal and targets in the Annex II.

Fourth, there is a challenge of presenting Education and Skills as a cross-cutting Goal in relation to creating Jobs, Sustainable Livelihoods and Equitable Growth

The Jobs-Livelihoods-Growth Goal, like Education, has three targets which are left to national decisions about percentages, and one which is universal (universal access to financial services and infrastructure...). But one of the country target statements attached to the Goal is: '8a. Increase the number of good and decent jobs and livelihoods by x'. However, under Potential Impacts, an actual figure is produced: '470 million more workers with good jobs and livelihoods'. Undoubtedly, the iconic figures about the possible numbers of decent jobs and of skills, or of reduction in hunger (1.2 bn), or connections to electricity (1.2 billion) are tempting to include, but they point up a contradiction between leaving the decisions to the country level, and offering a potential, numerical, global target.

Fifth, the HLP has sought successfully to fulfill a listening mission

The HLP's treatment of education and skills certainly confirms that they have been listening to the many different constituencies which have been aiming their suggested goals and targets at them: i. The very phrasing of the HLP's illustrative goal for education draws directly from the Overarching Goal of the Global Consultation on Education in Dakar in March 2013. ii. The discussion about skills is sufficiently nuanced to distinguish basic skills, non-cognitive, life skills, and technical and vocational skills. iv. The HLP clearly listened to what young people told them about wanting education and skills beyond primary. 'Not just formal learning but life skills and vocational training to prepare them for jobs' (HLP.2). It is vitally important that the HLP does not in fact present these skill sets as alternatives, but rather as all being 'needed to build capacity and professionalism in governments and business, especially in fragile states' (HLP. 31).

Sixth, Jobs, Livelihoods, Work, Growth, and Enabling Environments We have mentioned already Goal 8's proposed target to increase the number of good and decent jobs and livelihoods by some agreed country percentage. But Goal 8 also proposes a target to decrease the number of young people 'not in education, employment or training' (NEETs) by some country percentage. NEETs is, however, very much a phenomenon of developed, mostly OECD countries with unemployment benefits for the youth who can't find jobs. It has no meaning for the majority of developing countries. It is perhaps understandable that, in the crisis of youth unemployment in OECD countries, the HLP should target NEETs, but this neglects the needs of the great majority of young people worldwide who are not in education, employment or training but are in the vast informal economies of so many countries. The HLP does acknowledge 'informal employment', and, equally, it recognizes the crucial role of both national and global enabling environments. It is perhaps a pity that HLP's valuable recognition of skills needed for work, NEETs, and good and decent jobs is not more powerfully linked to enabling macro-economic, political and social environments.

A last word

The HLP race has more winners than losers, more positives than negatives. But a closer connection between the logic of the main text and that of the illustrative goals and their targets would have made it even more persuasive.

Adult Literacy: Trends and Prospects Post-2015

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Keywords: Literacy; post-2015 development goals; adult learning; Education for All (EFA).

Summary: In spite of explicit targets for adult literacy in the EFA goals, efforts are not keeping pace with the ongoing challenge, and the proposed post-2015 targets, even though including lifelong learning, give no focus to adult literacy and learning. A broader vision of development as a learning process, and an understanding of the place of written communication within that, is a necessary but elusive condition of further progress in literacy.

On the face of it, we're making progress in adult literacy. The hopes inspired by the quantified EFA goal in 2000 have resulted in an increase in the headline world literacy rate from 79% (UNESCO, 2002) to 84% by 2010 (UNESCO, 2012), with developing countries achieving an 80% overall rate – up from 73% in 2000. However, these figures mean that, globally, EFA goal 4 of 'increasing the literacy rate by 50%' is unlikely to be achieved by 2015; we should note that the goal was re-interpreted in practice to mean a reduction of illiteracy by 50%. Looking at the estimated absolute numbers of 'illiterates' – to use the highly contested term – there is no room for optimism: there has been a reduction of merely 6 million in the region of South and West Asia (from 412m to 406m), and an increase of 34 million in sub-Saharan Africa.

What went wrong?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focused only on learning for children in school with no reference to adult literacy, and this omission made it extremely difficult to include adult literacy and learning in the development agenda during the last decade. The UN Literacy Decade (2003-2012) did not mobilise the international community as hoped, and its impact, though positive (particularly through its regional conferences and mid-decade review - Richmond et al., 2009) was quite limited. In taking up the challenge of the six EFA goals, many governments followed the trend in the international community to give high priority to schooling within the basic education agenda. Resources became available for improving access to and the quality of schooling, for example through the Global Partnership for Education. Funds for the wider challenge of adult literacy were rarely available and even then, they were small. This was a repeat of the trends in the 1990s, in the follow-up of the Jomtien declaration, when adult literacy and learning also slipped off the agenda during the course of the ensuing decade. Of course, it is critical to improve basic education for children – and when successful, the numbers of adults without access to literacy drops dramatically over time as a result. However, in some regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, schooling is manifestly not resulting in reduced numbers of adults without literacy, as it is not achieving quality outputs or keeping pace with demographic growth.

Another serious challenge is to promote a vision of education that encompasses more than its supply through the school system. It is only when a broad vision of a learning society takes hold that the importance of giving everyone a chance to participate in the processes of written communication (increasingly in digital form) will provide the motivation for adult literacy and adult learning more generally. Such a vision will be based on the recognition that there can be no real

social change and development unless learning – in its broadest sense and for everyone – is at the heart of the process. Thus, two basic changes in approach will be necessary: first, conceptualising social change as an individual and collective learning process, and second, stressing the need for learning societies, not merely the supply of basic education through schooling.

The academic study of literacy has led to important insights about why literacy matters to people, what they do with it and how it connects with broader patterns of personal and societal communication and participation. These insights have not fed through adequately into the design of literacy acquisition programmes – most governments have continued with supply-driven literacy efforts with little attention to the actual uses that people make of literacy. Many NGOs have moved to new approaches, but their work has largely not been of a scale to make a major impact on the numbers of those without literacy.

What, then, are the prospects for the post-2015 agenda?

The report of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development agenda (UN, 2013) introduces lifelong learning (LLL) as an element of the goal on education (#3). However, the nature of LLL is not detailed and no target is proposed; in fact, the description of the goal focuses on the supply of education to children and adolescents; so the needs of adults without literacy competence are again rendered invisible.

Are there indications in the post-2015 agenda that the basic concepts of development will provide a supportive framework for adult literacy? There is recognition that development must reach “all the neediest and most vulnerable” (emphasis in the original, p.14), and that “education and changed behaviour” (p.17) will be key drivers of sustainable development. The importance of basing development on the lived realities of people at the grassroots is a basic principle (p.1), offering hope that the design of interventions will take account, among other things, of local patterns of communication. However, to see glimmers of hope for adult literacy in these more general statements about development is probably an illusion, given that no target or measure to improve adult literacy are mentioned in the Report. Talk of education as a key component of human development, as a right and as a means of empowerment, cannot be taken to include adult literacy or indeed adult learning of any kind.

Will a new “global partnership” for development give new opportunities for those without literacy to participate more fully in the circuits of written communication? Unfortunately, past evidence and current statements give little hope in this regard. As far as adult literacy is concerned, what may be needed is not so much a new global partnership, but rather a closer understanding of local patterns of life and communication and how literacy fits into them.

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“Leaving No One Behind”: A View from the Cheap Seats

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Keywords: Quality of learning; Language and development; Marginalized populations

Summary: The High Level Panel's post-2015 determination to "leave no one behind" is laudable. However effective learning and development can only take place in a language that the population understands. Taking this obvious fact on board, and creating space for the use of local languages of instruction, will give the world's truly marginalized populations a real chance of inclusion both before and after 2015.

The High Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons has spoken: the global post-2015 development agenda must be headlined by the resolve to “leave no one behind” as the world moves together towards a presumably brighter future. Setting aside a few logical queries about the actual links between national economic growth and improved quality of life for the poor, not to mention the increasing sociocultural distance between the world’s wealthy and those who are not, it is commendable that this determination is so prominently featured in the HLP’s report.

This recommendation is even more encouraging because such a Panel must of course struggle with the fact that it is composed of global elites. Sitting in the “box seats”, ringside to the global education debate, it can be difficult to remember those in the cheap seats behind you, marginalized from the action and able only to witness – not to influence - the global education game as it plays out in the distance.

So, given the good intentions, what will it look like to leave no one behind? Inevitably, operationalizing the aim of “attacking the causes of poverty, exclusion and inequality” is going to bring program implementers head-to-head with the issue of language. Today’s minority language communities are also (coincidentally?) among the most marginalized populations on the planet. These communities have been “left behind” on almost every level: economically, educationally, politically and socioculturally. They are thus squarely in the path of the HLP’s goals for a development agenda that is characterized by inclusion and equality.

What would inclusive development look like for these communities? Among other things it would mean true access to both formal and nonformal education opportunities, to equal the opportunities that are routinely afforded to majority-language speakers throughout the world. For children, this means providing a truly quality formal education experience in which their own language fluencies and their own knowledge can be built upon, rather than being utterly ignored as has been the common “pre-2015” practice.

And lest it be forgotten in the enthusiasm for improving education quality for children, massive numbers of adults are less productive and less able to improve their own life circumstances because they have not been able to access literacy and basic education in a language they speak. Writing off adult learners, as some educationists and funders are prone to do, is a very big mistake – particularly when those categorized as “adults” can be as young as 15 years old.

Development is founded on learning, which in turn depends crucially on understanding and internalizing new knowledge. The incredibly obvious fact about development, then, is that it can only take place in a language that the population understands. Taking this obvious fact on board will give the world’s truly minoritized populations a real chance of being included. Continuing to ignore this will certainly result in more “left behind” than ever.

Coordination and Compromise in Researching New Goals

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Keywords: Consensus, expanded access, quality and skills

Summary: Despite some nuanced differences there is general consensus on the need for an explicit education goal focusing on equity, access and quality learning in the post-2015 development agenda. Accordingly the education consultation proposes 'Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All' as the overarching goal, emphasizing acquisition of new knowledge, skills and competencies for a rapidly changing world.

The overall objective of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda was to assess the progress and remaining challenges in meeting the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the broader Education for All (EFA) goals with a view to developing a holistic vision of how best to reflect education, training and learning in the post-2015 agenda. There was little if any disagreement with this objective. However, getting agreement on a single goal or goals for the post-2015 agenda, the scale and scope of the consultation process, who participates when and how, the weight of voices, competing organizational positions etc. proved far more challenging and generated a fair degree of contention.

From the outset there was a clear understanding that the delivery of a new post-2015 framework is the prerogative of Member States, building on agreed norms and principles, while the UN system’s responsibility rests on supporting Member States in fulfilling this task with evidence-based analysis and field experience. At the same time, there was clear directive from the [UN System Task Team](#) that all consultations had to be an inclusive and reflective of multiple voices. The co-leads [i] of the education consultation were fully committed to ensuring the process was inclusive and that multiple voices were heard.

In the lead up to the face to face consultation meeting in Dakar in March 2013 involving over 100 participants, including representatives of Member States, multi- and bilateral development partners, youth groups, teacher unions, the private sector, civil society and UN agencies, the consultation process included an online education platform structured for four e-discussions, ongoing EFA regional meetings, member state briefings, consultations of NGOs and with representatives from the private sector and from donor agencies. It also included a synthesis of debates on the post-2015 framework, with a specific focus on education, and there was also a desk review of selected documents relating to the post-2015 education and development agenda.[ii]

By and large, the consultations did not yield any major surprises, most calling for the retention of current priorities but with some important shifts in emphasis. In general, many were critical of a perceived narrow focus on access to primary education at the expense of other priorities, in particular, the quality and relevance of education. Furthermore, there was general consensus that there has been inadequate attention to equality and education in emergency and conflict settings.

As a result, there was overall consensus that regardless of the final structure of the post-2015 agenda, education must claim an explicit goal focusing on equity, access and quality learning. Accordingly, 'Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All' was proposed as the overarching goal for education. In order to be relevant, it was emphasized that the post-2015 education agenda must prioritize the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies that are linked to twenty-first-century livelihoods, and must also contribute to shaping learners' attitudes and behaviours that promote social inclusion and cohesion as well as environmental sustainability.

However, a number of different education goals have been suggested by different organisations and groups. The various approaches identified ranged from those suggesting abandoning the global framework altogether to others arguing for a more fundamental restructuring of the current global framework for development. Within all the approaches, there is some debate about balancing global- and country-level goals. Some suggested that while the international goals could keep universally defined targets and indicators, every country should develop its own target level.

It may be argued that the proposed goal proposed is a compromise that tries to appease all the varied positions and therefore does not serve us well. However, based on the assessment of the various strands of the consultation it does reflect the broad consensus on the direction of travel. But it must be acknowledged that there remain important strategic issues to be resolved, not least agreement on more specific goals and targets beyond the broad goal currently proposed. In addition, one key challenge that remains unresolved is the interrelationship between the EFA goals and the education MDGs or any post-2015 goals. This is necessary to overcome duplication and the marginalization of some goals, and to ensure a more rational and coherent approach to education and development post-2015.

Despite the perception that the proposed goal was too broad and somewhat of a compromise, it was quite effective in generating support and enjoyed substantial buy-in. The outcomes of the consultations fed into the [report](#) of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the [Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). The HLP Report stresses that "we should ensure that everyone has what they need to grow and prosper, including access to quality education and skills" and there is a "need for the post-2015 agenda to go well beyond the MDG's focus on primary education" which reflects the goal proposed through the education consultation. Similarly, in its interim report, the Open Working Group on SDGs recognized: "Education is absolutely central to any sustainable development agenda. It is not only an essential investment but an important basis for human enrichment through life-long learning."

Footnotes

[i] The Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda is co-led by UNESCO and UNICEF, with the support of the Governments of Senegal, Canada and Germany, and the Hewlett Foundation.

[ii] More than a hundred documents were identified for the desk-based literature review, which was conducted between December 2012 and January 2013. The search included academic publications, technical reports and discussion papers.

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Higher Education and the Post-2015 Development Agenda: the Implicit Goal

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Keywords: higher education; development goals; capacity development; donor programmes.

Summary: The importance of higher education to achieving the old and new development goals is evident. As such it should feature in the development agendas.

The [Report](#) of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda proposes 12 major development goals divided into 54 sub-goals. Many of the goals are in line with the current 8 Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)). Among the new elements are the attention for access to water and sanitation, sustainable energy, the creation of jobs, good governance, stable and peaceful societies and the creation of a global enabling environment.

Goal 3 on education

Education is addressed in Goal 3 with a focus on quality education and lifelong learning. The sub-goals deal with pre-primary education, (quality of) primary education, access to lower secondary education, learning outcomes of adolescents and skills for young and adult women and men.

Higher education does not feature in the agenda. It is only mentioned once in the whole document (in Annex 2) . One could argue that higher education has no direct impact on poverty reduction, the improvement of health or food security, productivity and so on. So why include it in the post-2015 development agenda?

The importance of higher education

On the other hand, at the start of the millennium, influential UNESCO and the World Bank reports ([Peril and Promise](#), 2000; [Constructing Knowledge Societies](#), 2002) called the attention for the role of higher education in social and economic development of developing countries. It is now widely acknowledged that it is important for building a strong human capital base and an important impetus for innovation, research and economic development and that the quality of the whole education system depends on the inputs of the higher echelons (e.g. teacher training, curriculum development, research). In recognizing the importance of this interlinkage, the [IAU](#) set up a global project called Higher Education for Education for All ([HEEFA](#)).

It is evident that the achievement of the proposed 12 development goals requires the contribution of higher education systems to build the necessary human, research and institutional capacities to achieve and sustain these new goals. Funds and facilities are not enough, expertise is needed to plan, implement and monitor programmes to achieve the new goals. And this expertise should be local, familiar with the context and committed to local needs and ambitions.

Donor support programmes

Fortunately there are many donors who sponsor programmes which are aimed at capacity development of individuals and higher education and research organisations in developing countries. They do this because they believe in the importance of good education and research infrastructures for the development of countries. Besides, they see opportunities for capitalizing on goodwill of alumni (of scholarship programmes) and partnerships between institutions (joint degree programmes, mobility of staff and students and collaborative research) for the benefit of developing as well as developed countries.

These scholarship and (university & research) collaboration programmes of donors are valuable instruments in supporting the present MDGs and future post-2015 development agenda.

Explicit or implicit

The question may be raised whether the importance of higher education and research for achieving the post-2015 development agenda warrant an acknowledgement, or something more in the final version of the agenda. I would argue that the importance of higher education to achieving the old and new development goals is evident. There is no need to make it into a specific (sub) goal but it is essential that higher education and research are integrated in programmes which aim to achieve the 12 development goals and their contribution is mentioned as such.

It is also vital that the focal areas of donor funded capacity building programmes in higher education and research coincide with MDGs and the new post-2015 agenda. This is an issue of policy and programme coherence. The Dutch capacity development programmes [NFP](#) and [NICHE](#) and the Norwegian NORHED programme clearly illustrate this point. The programmes not only focus on building local post-education and training and research capacity but they also thematically focus on many of the 12 new development goals such as: health; food security; water; job creation and

economic growth; justice and security, gender and good governance. As such they are well aligned with the new development agenda.

The content of this contribution appeared in a slightly different form as a blog on 7 June 2013 at the [Nuffic blog site](#).

Donors' Goals and Children's Perspectives: Antecedents and Incongruities of Present-Day International Development Assistance to Education

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Keywords: Education; Post-2015; Post-MDG; School students; Love of learning

Summary: The conventional wisdom is that education should be viewed as instrumental to poverty reduction and economic growth. Students worldwide reject that view, preferring enjoyable and stimulating teaching and the development of a love of learning.

Many contributions to the post-MDG debate embody the well-intentioned yet thoroughly misguided notion that education is only (or mainly) about poverty reduction and material progress. Many participants in that debate take that misconceived stand not as a debatable hypothesis but as a given. They see education as instrumental to economic growth and they measure its effectiveness in terms of marketable skills acquired, employment generated and productivity enhanced.

School students worldwide reject that objective – in fact it is extremely difficult to locate any valid empirical study that shows youngsters calling for their education to incorporate explicit workforce training or for childhood to be geared to career preparation.

A modified version of the My World – United Nations Global Survey for a Better World questionnaire - was administered to sets of secondary school students – in Bangladesh, Australia, Fiji, Trinidad & Tobago and Sudan. They were asked to select which six out of twenty-six issues (14 of the original MY World fifteen, with 'a good education' becoming 12 split up alternatives) were "most important for them and their families". The now-fragmented 'Good Education' alternatives received in total 40 per cent of all ticks, and those with the most were, in descending order, the following:

- 'Interesting and stimulating teaching' (32.0% of the 259 students ticked this one);
- 'Enjoying music, films, literature, art and cultural activities' (30.1%);
- 'Developing a love of learning' (28.6%);
- 'Good opportunities for lifelong learning' (28.2%);
- 'Pleasant, safe and student-friendly schooling' (24.3%); and
- 'Facilities and coaching for playing sport' (21.2%).

while:

- ‘Acquiring specific skills related to my future work’ (13.6%) and
- ‘Getting formal qualifications – degrees and certificates’ (10.8%)

were very much lower down the list of preferred educational priorities.

It is apparent that a hypothesis along the lines of ‘school students tend not to regard their education as world of work preparation’ has been supported. Clearly, students appear to value enjoyable and stimulating teaching and the development of a love of learning away above the acquisition of diplomas and work-related skills. Donor-supported interventions seldom address these concerns. Essentially, the educational agendas of external agencies differ radically from what the young eventual beneficiaries say that they are seeking from schooling. This significant divergence suggests that the key assumptions of the post-2015 education debate are dangerously at odds with children’s perceptions and priorities regarding their schooling’s purpose, nature and content.

FUTURES OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Donor Policies and Priorities in Support of Education over the Past Decade: Some Questions for the Post-2015 Agenda

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Keywords: education; equality; quality; community.

Summary: In comparing donor policies in support of education over the past decade with current thinking on the post-2015 agenda, a number of questions are asked about concepts such as human rights, equality, quality and community engagement.

The paper presented at the UKFIET Conference in 2013 follows on from the conclusion of a study which examined the policies, practices and investment priorities of bilateral and multilateral agencies in support of education since 2002. In the overall development cooperation policies of 22 OECD-DAC countries and three development banks over the past decade, the overriding focus has been on poverty reduction together with sustainable economic and social development. Also prominent have been the themes of peace, human security, democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance.

In the High Level Panel (HLP) report on the post-2015 development agenda (UN, 2013) these themes are reinforced under five transformative shifts. Among other things, there is the intention to end extreme poverty, to ensure that no person is denied universal human rights, to bring about more social inclusion and equal opportunities for all, to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of well-being, to recognise freedom of speech, and to build a global partnership on principles of common humanity and mutual respect.

Given the current state of human conflict in Syria and elsewhere in the world, what strategies can be employed to bring about these policy directions, these transformative shifts? Does common humanity exist? Can mutual respect go hand-in-hand with the behavioural differences and customs that occur in different societies, faith-based or otherwise? Can there be anything approaching equality or mutual respect in those societies where women are treated as second class citizens or even worse, and are thus being denied their human rights?

In the HLP report there is also the intention to bring about access for everyone to quality education and skills. This intention is also elaborated in the report of the EU High Level Conference on education and development (EC, 2013) where two of the key conclusions are that (i), to ensure equitable access for all children, it is pivotal to include ways to stimulate demand for school, get children into school at the right age and reduce the multiple barriers to access for marginalized communities; and (ii) improving the quality of education is now a top priority.

Surely the first conclusion is more concerned with poverty reduction, human security, social inclusion and good governance than strictly with education? Unsurprisingly, therefore, in the 20 or so education policies and strategies studied, there was little attention paid to how to address persistent education disadvantages based on poverty, ethnicity or location. Regarding gender equality, there were some similarities across donor policies. Firstly, donors tend to focus on parity in girls' and boys' access and retention in education rather than on broader, and less easily

measurable, issues of gender equality. Secondly, few donors move beyond stating their commitments to gender parity. Nothing is said about the inequality brought about by parents and elders before school through, for example, female genital mutilation, or how education could possibly compensate for this and its lasting effects.

There now appears to be a strong move towards what is being termed a comprehensive approach. Essentially this can be said to recognise the fact that (i) education does not take place in an economic, social or environmental vacuum, (ii) one level of education is necessarily inter-related with other levels, (iii) different parts of the education system need to be coordinated in order to streamline its management and finance and (iv) support to TVET is often wasted if it is not linked substantially to the existing or potential labour market.

There is a sense of urgency regarding the low quality of education in developing countries with all donors stressing the need for quality improvements and giving extensive attention to the topic. At the same time there is awareness of the complexity of the issues involved, together with the need for greater engagement by communities—such a comfortable word. At the EU conference a third conclusion was that communities must play a central role in developing solutions to inequity in access and learning: governments need to engage communities to increase their sense of ownership of their schools (i.e. pay for them?). But is this not going back to the 1970s and 1980s where the rhetoric of self-help was often directed at poor rural communities which were not as susceptible to collective actions of political dissent as urban populations? And to what extent are local communities accountable for their schools in developed countries, especially in inner city areas?

Finally, what emerges from the study is that monitoring and evaluation make more sense when there is clarity of objectives and when it is the effectiveness of activities that is measured. Furthermore, evaluations are more useful in guiding future policy choices and programme orientation when a robust system of monitoring is incorporated in programme design right from the beginning. The HLP report reinforces this conclusion when it recommends that ‘any new goals should be accompanied by an independent and rigorous monitoring system, with regular opportunities to report on progress and shortcomings at a high political level’. And then? ... we come back to good governance, democracy and so on.

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The Future of Innovative Financing for Education in Fragility

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Keywords: Innovative finance; fragile states; post 2015

Summary: The author raises three questions that need to be addressed regarding the future of innovative financing for education in the context of fragility. She argues that, rather than trying to come up with new sources of funding to fill the education for all financing gap, these funds should be concentrated on more profitable sub-sectors so that official development assistance and domestic spending can be targeted to where the results may not be so easily demonstrated.

The shock to the global economic system over the past five years and the related budgetary retrenchment by government and international actors has pushed the need for innovative and sustainable development financing in the education sector into ever sharper focus. A small selection of recent reports and initiatives highlights how this realisation is currently reflected in the various conversations feeding into the framing of the Post 2015 agenda. For example, the fifth target proposed by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report team aims to ‘maximize’ the wide variety of sources and stakeholders, including ‘government revenue, aid and private sector funding’, that make up the education finance landscape (EFA-GMR 2013a: 3). Save the Children’s (2013) report on learning and equity in education post 2015 devotes great attention to the innovative form of publicly-funded, privately-run schools. The recent report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda included the target to ‘encourage stable, long-term private foreign investment’ as well as restating the need for developed countries to meet the target of 0.7% of gross national product as official development assistance (UN 2013: 31). It also states, ‘sponsors of sustainable projects are searching for capital, but new channels and innovative financial instruments are needed to link the two’ (2013: 12). The education and fragility agenda has made important progress in highlighting the serious underfunding of the sector (Save the Children 2007, Brannelly and Ndaruhutse 2008). Despite the fact that 42% of the world’s out-of-school children of primary school age (a total of 28 million children) are located in conflict affected contexts, education accounts for just 1.4% of humanitarian aid provided to these states (EFA- GMR 2013b). So, what are the implications of some of these proposed mechanisms for the education of children caught up in conflict and fragility?

In terms of securing a significant amount of money, Daniel Bond’s proposal to harness the \$6 trillion held by institutional investors in developing countries is hugely appealing (2013). Even more so as thanks to the young populations of the countries these funds are increasing by around 15% a year. Bond proposes use of these funds through Debt Conversion Development Bonds. Another option would be for governments to issue a local currency bond which institutional investors could purchase, thereby mobilising these funds for the development of their own country’s education sector. The main challenge is the need to prove a financial return to investment in education in order to justify issuing the bond. In practice, this usually means arguing that education will lead to increased employment and therefore increased tax revenue.

In the case of fragility, however, this assertion does not always hold true. Firstly, the examples of weak linkages between the education sector and the labour market are all too common. This leads

to little impact in terms of increased employment and can even lead to creation of grievances when individuals feel the returns do not match up to their expectations. Issuing a bond to finance education in this context might further compound these grievances by creating future debt. Secondly, where markets are well aligned, is there a well established tax system capable of the necessary collection rates? Strict accountability and transparent reporting mechanisms would also be required to build trust and civic ownership of these initiatives.

Another significant financial lever is the \$50 billion currently available in the field of impact investing. Following criticism of both the financial sector in the wake of the financial crisis and the short term and unsustainable nature of philanthropy, this field is set to grow to an estimated \$500 billion in the next decade. As the High Level Panel Report states, 'Social impact investors show that there can be a "third way" for sustainable development – a hybrid between a fully for-profit private sector and a pure grant or charity aid programmes' (2013: 11). In the context of a complete deterioration of government it may make sense for a private investor to fill the gap in educational services, at least in terms of provision. Where there is a functioning form of state education it also makes financial sense to invest in higher education where the returns are quicker to materialise. This may free up space for the government to focus on basic education. To date investors in this field have been split at the two extremes (Dalberg 2012), but there is potential for impact investors to catalyze models and approaches that target high impact and financial sustainability simultaneously. However, careful thought needs to be given to the construction of the relationships given the challenges to equality and the development of the social contract.

Within the context outlined above, I would argue that there are two crucial questions regarding the future of innovative financing in education and fragility which must be addressed

Are we focusing on the wrong countries?

Many efforts have been made in the innovative financing debates to identify mechanisms and opportunities for reaching the poorest and most marginalised populations. However, given the importance of equality and the social contract for this section of society, particularly in the case of conflict-affected or fragile states, innovative finance is arguably more suited to middle income situations. This would free up aid finance to be concentrated in the countries with the highest levels of need.

Are we focusing on the wrong sector?

Basic education is of fundamental importance but innovative financing is arguably more suited to the higher education sector. Business can play an important role in strengthening the link between higher education and employment opportunities. It also presents quicker and clearer financial returns. Again, this would free up aid to be redirected to basic education.

Furthermore, the focus on basic education has led to a failure to look for opportunities to improve education through investment in sectors other than education. This type of finance might, for example, be more effectively used to build infrastructure to help deliver teachers to remote rural areas and in the long term reduce rural/urban inequalities.

In line with Nick Burnett's recent blog on the subject (2013), I would argue that the future of innovative financing needs to involve a shift away from trying to simply raise new funds. Rather, a better option may be to focus such funds on more profitable sub-sectors so that official development assistance and domestic spending can be targeted to where the results may not be so easily demonstrated. Addressing each of these questions will therefore be central to the

development of an innovative education financing model which meets the needs of government, international actors and agencies, and most importantly, children and young people in fragile and conflict affected states.

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Further reading

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Can Education Play a More Powerful Role in the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, not only those Related to Education?

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Keywords: schooling, health, agriculture, sanitation

Summary: This article argues that more attention needs to be paid to the content of education, and the context within which it teaching and learning takes place, if its impact on other development goals is to be maximized.

While everyone can agree that education is a vital pre-requisite for combating poverty, disease and malnutrition, the global community seems to have more difficulty than ever before about envisaging just what the content of that education needs to be, and how, organizationally schools need to be related to their surrounding communities for that learning to be applied in the most effective way. Indeed, the term 'Education, along with 'Training' might be an obstacle to discussing what knowledge, attitudes as skills are needed in various contexts.

Millennium Development Goals such as No 1c - eradicate hunger, No. 4 – reduce child mortality, No 5 – improve maternal health or No 7c - increase access to sanitation - are examples of fields in which application of knowledge and skills (and sometimes traditional wisdom) in all communities by the broader community would clearly make a difference. And this is often knowledge that could be taught in Basic Education.

The idea of using schools as one avenue to promote learning in the community related to health is not new. In 1979 the 'Child to Child' approach to health care with a basic curriculum on preventive health for school children was initiated by David Morley in 1979 for the international year of the Child. It arose from his observation that many children had responsibility for looking after their younger brothers and sisters. It stressed the immediacy of the application of learning in the everyday life of the school child, not seeing knowledge as something to be stored away and only used in a profession long after one has left school (Werner & Bower 1999).

The approach of the 2012 Learning Metrics Taskforce of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Brookings Institute is to describe a universal curriculum to be studied by all children; however, many scientific and technical processes which form the basis of health, agricultural and mechanical knowledge are missing such as growing, preparing and serving nutritious food, understanding the germ theory of disease or the systems of the body.

A contrasting approach to the 'Universal Curriculum' is that of the French-based Maisons Familiales Rurales (MFR) an organization which tackles the issue of 'what should be taught' in a highly systematic fashion [i]. Not only does teaching and learning alternate between the classroom and the farm, workshop, business etc. but the curriculum is determined by a combination of a centrally appointed panel and a local teachers' and a parents' committee. This means that for example in a coastal area in New Caledonia, fish biology, economics, technology etc. would all be given higher priority than in an upland area. Curriculum would relate to the local context and economy while retaining a core of basic science and communications skills. The concept of project work is also

important in the MFR, in a student's final year both boys and girls will prepare a financial plan, grow some crops, sell them and begin to work out how they will get land, a house and other necessities for starting their own enterprise (Hill 2001).

If new Goals are to be adopted which avoid simply measuring education by reference to years spent in classrooms and levels of examinations achieved and, instead, try to look at effectiveness of teaching and learning, there might be some opportunity for the international community to adopt some ideas such as these and promote better practice in dealing with knowledge, attitudes and skills and their application.

Footnote

[i] The MFR of New Caledonia is part of a world-wide organization, headquartered in France <http://www.mfr.asso.fr/mfr-dans-le-monde/Documents/presentation-des-MFR-en-anglais.pdf>

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EFA Skills Development - Palestinian Experience and Recommendations for Post-2015 Goals

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Keywords: TVET, oPt, development cooperation, international aid, EFA, MDGs

Summary: Palestine is not only under occupation and lacking sovereignty, but is also dependent on development aid. Although some progress has been made in the education sector, far less has been made in the TVET sector. This piece sheds some light on the challenges faced and provides recommendations for development assistance and for post-2015 education agenda.

Billions of US Dollars have been poured on the Palestinians since 1948 from development aid agencies through UNRWA, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and NGOs.

Remarkably, even under occupation, the education sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) was able to progress with the support of the international community and the will of the Palestinian people. The PA, UNRWA, and the NGOs were able to plan, deliver and grant the support needed, guided by the MDGs and the EFA goals, as well as their own strategic plans (UNESCO, 2013).

However, all achievements are donor dependent; the PA is donor dependent and the economy is aid economy. In this context the progress in education is not sustainable without the continued support of international aid or the end of Israeli occupation. According to international law and fourth Geneva Convention, the occupying entity – Israel – is responsible for providing education, health and other social services. Unless the occupation ends, and Palestinian are granted their rights, any achievements will be fragile and state building efforts will be stymied.

There have been various critiques of international aid given to the oPt. Nakhleh has pointed out in his recent book, *Globalized Palestine*, that aid under occupation is political aid that is given to ensure the receiver submit to an imposed political agenda and program; it is far away from sustainability and keeps people away from their liberation (Nakhleh, 2011). An international NGO has found through research and consultation with civil society in various areas of the oPt, that development aid breaches various rights to aid and called for various steps to enhance aid. Develtere (2012) has stated that the definition of development aid is based on the actions of the givers, not the value of the 'aid' to the recipient, and concludes that development cooperation is moving towards being a market.

The oPt is considered a market for donor agencies, hence all negative related donor practices appear in different instances, though the Ministry of Planning is making an effort to coordinate and lead. Donor competition, donor-centred plans, and aid being effectively returned to the donor through staff salaries, consultancy payments and goods are some of the negative practices seen. Donors tend not to share information or monitoring and evaluation results readily. Most importantly, in certain cases, there is a lack of national lead of their own plans. Nakhleh (2011) argues that an informal tripartite coalition made up of Palestinian capitalist-political elite, Palestinian NGOs, and transnational aid agencies, are impeding, obstructing and negating, what he called, the People-Centered Liberationist Development.

The TVET sector, however, has long been providing its services for the Palestinians and, since the *Nakba* in 1948 - when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians lost their land and became refugees – has provided refugees with skills needed to earn their living and support themselves and their families. However, the arena of TVET in oPt is fragmented with different historical backgrounds to each system. In a proactive step, the TVET sector was the first to develop its strategic plan and action plans in a participatory way. The TVET plan of 2000 called for a unified system and a governance structure that could lead implementation. However, almost fourteen years later the TVET sector is still fragmented, the governance structure has not seen the light, and donor support is geared towards systems that are rarely adopted by the PA after the piloting phase ends, or towards unnecessarily structures.

Donor support towards supporting the governance structure was unsuccessful. Donors opted for community-based structures to plan, implement and support TVET. However, the lack of a unified body and unified coordination mechanism for donors has allowed some donors to take over the national role in leading the sector. Where donors disagree on approaches, lack of coordination has led to replication and implementation of contradicting methodologies, all of which contradicts the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Based on the above, there are two sets of recommendations with regard to EFA/skills post-2015 in Palestine;

First, at the national level, there is a role needed for the PA to revise its priorities and policies toward TVET and to decide on an immediate plan to move along the sector towards a unified system.

Second, at the international level a clearly stated post-2015 goal (post-MDG and post-EFA) on skills development linked to employability and human development (with clear indicators) would direct the interest of the policy makers in the PA towards TVET.

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Aid to Education in Fragile States: an Unresolved Issue

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Keywords: Official Development Assistance (ODA), fragile states, education

Summary: The analysis of the situation of the fragile states in the last decade vis-à-vis official development assistance to education indicates a current contradiction between the inclusiveness of the EFA goals and the exclusionary nature of the paradigm of aid effectiveness. Today, financial instruments to support the development of education systems are seemingly not yet suited to situations of fragility.

Currently, over a third of children not in school live in countries considered being as fragile or affected by an armed conflict. These countries, which are mainly located in sub-Saharan Africa, will not reach the objectives of Education For All (EFA) for 2015. Especially in these countries, internal resources are limited (Bourdon, 2006). Insofar as investment in education is perceived as a necessary, if not sufficient, to vanquish poverty, the option to stimulate and accelerate the development of education constitutes an opportunity for the international community.

Access to basic education can be considered as a "public good" (with health, food and housing). This approach, based on a humanistic concern and justice (Sen, 1999) gives the legitimacy of intervention of countries richer (Naudet, 2006). However, this legitimacy is determined by the aid effectiveness. Indeed, the principles of selectivity and optimal aid allocation resulting from the analyzes of Burnside and Dollar (1997) have inspired aid reforms of many donors. However, an allocation based on economic and institutional performance may lead to the exclusion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) a number of countries that do not meet the requirements of "good governance". The principles of selectivity have put in light the situation of "aid orphans" which generally are also the most fragile countries. In this sense, the growing concern of aid effectiveness takes the risk to exclude countries that the more need aid (Cartier-Bresson, 2011). The research of Dollar and Levin (2004) reveals that overall, fragile countries received 43% less aid than would predict their characteristics (population, poverty level, policy and institutional performance). Jones et al. (2004) indicates that the strict application of the principle of selectivity has excluded the less performing countries from the aid allocation process. Already taken in a "poverty trap", countries in fragile situations are also taken in an "aid trap".

Thus, the analysis of ODA's data indicates a targeting aid to primary education: (i) to countries the "less" late to the objectives of EFA; (ii) to countries where institutional quality is expected to improve the performance of aid allocated. With the adoption of individualized development goals (Millennium Development Goals - MDGS) in 2000, it has become almost impossible, for the international community, to think about a desirable aid allocation without considering the efficiency criteria (Cogneau and Naudet, 2004). However, the issue of fragile states underlines the current contradiction between the inclusiveness of the EFA goals and the exclusionary nature of the paradigm of aid effectiveness. The failure of these countries to achieve universal primary education by 2015, and more generally the MDGS, raises questions about an approach using too consequentialist and whose financial instruments are clearly not suited to situations of fragility. Modes of articulation between education, poverty and fragility are still to seek and raise questions

on methods of intervention adjusted. For the international community, the challenge then could be to reconcile two objectives often disjointed in aid allocation: economic efficiency and social justice.

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High Level Panel's Recommendation for a New Data Revolution

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Keywords: New Data Revolution; Missing Populations; DHS/LSMS/MICS Survey Bias

Summary: The advocacy of a New Data Revolution by the High Level Panel has completely missed the point. The problem of statistics of 'progress' towards the MDGs is that between 300 and 500 million of the poorest of the poor are missing from the sampling frames of international household surveys.

The High Level Panel's recommendation for a Data Revolution to tackle inequalities and extreme poverty has almost completely missed the point in their argument. There does indeed need to be a Data Revolution but one that focuses on coverage of the poorest; my recent estimate (Carr-Hill, 2013) is that between 300 and 500 million of the world's poorest (between 17% and 35% of the bottom quintile) are missing from the sampling frames of household surveys, which are the main vehicle for the new Data Revolution proposed by the HLP. Instead of 'leaving none behind' (which is the title of their first transformative shift), the poorest will continue to be left out.

The reason is that, in developing countries, assessments of progress toward development goals are based increasingly on household surveys. These are inappropriate for obtaining information about the poorest. Typically, they omit by design: the homeless or street children; those in institutions (hospitals, military, prisons, refugees, etc.); and mobile, nomadic, or pastoralist populations. Moreover, in practice, household surveys typically under-represent: those in fragile, disjointed households; slum populations and areas posing security risks. Those six sub-groups constitute a large fraction of the "poorest of the poor".

There is a very partial recognition of the problem in the research by the Overseas Development Institute (published in June 2013) where they say that surveys should be extended to cover individuals outside traditional household units (e.g. in residential-care facilities or orphanages). They are quite right but (a) the majority of the omitted poorest are those in informal settlements or urban slums and nomadic pastoralists (b) it is often very difficult to obtain good individual data from residential facilities, because when the respondent is unable to respond, a proxy respondent is used (HSER, 2003).

For pretty obvious reasons, many of my estimates are imprecise. The largest 'missing' sub-groups are those in the informal settlements of urban slums and nomadic pastoralists (the issue of residential facilities is more a concern for developed countries; and all I can do is to guesstimate that between 10% and 20% of the estimated numbers of those in urban slums and about 1 in 5 of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists are missing).

There are three possibilities for making more accurate estimates of the scale of the problem: carrying out a very well-funded census in a diverse region of, say, SSA but that would be very expensive and not easily generalisable; desk-based statistical manoeuvres (Carr-Hill, 2013) but those would only give quite wide estimates of the ranges; and detailed reviews of my estimates by national researchers (probably sociologists and demographers) in the 10-20 largest developing

countries. I believe the latter is most promising but whatever avenue is followed, it is the most urgent issue when talking about data availability or the new Data Revolution in developing countries.

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Publications

“China’s Aid & Soft Power in Africa: The Case of Education and Training”, by Kenneth King

Q. I wonder why you decided to work on China after working on Africa for most of your academic life?

You are right; I have worked on Africa for more than thirty years, but I have also worked on aid policies in education for the same period. So when I was invited to go for a year to China in 2006-7, I thought: why don't I work on China's aid policies to education in Africa? And by coincidence I arrived in China in the month after the government had issued *China's African Policy*. The government had also decided that 2006 would be 'The Year of Africa'. So things serendipitously fell into place, and within a year I had funding from Hong Kong's Research Grants Council.

Q. There are some questions already raised on the back cover of *China's Aid & Soft Power in Africa*, basically asking WHY is China offering all this long- and short-term training in China to tens of thousands of African students and African professionals. What's the answer?

There are several answers. The official version would be that China, as the largest developing country, is helping, the best it can, to respond to the interests of Africa, the continent with the largest number of developing countries. These training pledges arise from the agreements of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which meets every three years, to review progress on China and Africa's long-term strategic and political partnership. So, in a way, these are not China's offers of aid, but they are a series of joint agreements. Some of the pledges are valuable to China, and some to Africa. But taken as a whole, they speak of mutual benefit and the common development of China and Africa. In other words, China seeks to avoid presenting these pledges as aid from a donor to a series of recipients. They are seen as a form of South-South cooperation, where both sides benefit – 'win-win economic cooperation', in a favourite Chinese phrase.

Another answer from China's side would be that there is cultural diplomacy involved in the offer of these thousands of training awards and scholarships. Other large-scale training providers such as Germany, Japan, India and Brazil would say the same. It is one thing to see Chinese contractors working on a road or a dam in Africa, or to see a Chinese mall in many African countries. But to visit China and to see what has been achieved in some 20-30 years is something else. In the words of a Chinese official in Africa: 'To see is to believe'. We shall say a word below about what is on offer.

A more sceptical answer would be that China's massive requirements for resources from Africa lie behind these offers of awards and scholarships. This 'aid' may just be the icing on the cake of resource extraction, an example of aid for trade. There are difficulties with this answer, and not least because China maintains relations with all but four of Africa's 54 states. And FOCAC's pledges and commitments are relevant to all of these, and not just the more resource-rich. For this reason, we selected case study countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya.

Q. How does China select the thousands of awardees? Does it try and select future leaders or opinion formers, for instance?

China basically uses the local ministry channels which are responsible for student selection. These differ from country to country. For long-term scholarships, those selected at the country level are

forwarded to the China Scholarship Council (CSC); there is an overall preference to offer scholarships in the applied sciences. But for the much larger number of short-term awards, the relevant ministries and the Commercial Councillor's Office (CCO) in the country decide. For these latter awards, there are literally hundreds of different courses; so the CCO discusses with the national authorities what are the country priorities, e.g. for Aquaculture, Textile Engineering, or Micro-enterprise Development.

As to whether the short-term courses target current or future leaders, there are courses which are aimed exclusively at University Presidents, for instance, but there are others which are aimed at primary school head-teachers, e.g. in Francophone Africa. Others are aimed at particular professions, such as media, culture, specialist health or agricultural fields, even acupuncture and corruption!

Q. What about the messages that come across in these short-term courses?

From having sat in on one or two of these, I would say that they basically describe 'best practice' in China. They don't look critically at the situation in Africa, or tell Africans how to improve. There is no preaching at Africa. Many of these short courses do also deliberately take the participants to the poorer parts of China; so they can see that there are still millions of poor people in China.

Q. I see from the back-cover of your new book that there are 33 Confucius Institutes in Africa. How is China promoting these in Africa, and what message are they sending to Africa?

Like much of China's aid, Confucius Institutes (CIs) are in the 'response mode'. China's Language Council is not targeting Africa, or Asia or Latin America with offers of CIs. Rather, it is the other way round. The vice-chancellor or president of a university interested in having a Confucius Institute writes to Beijing and applies. People think that these CIs are like British Council offices, or Goethe Institutes etc. No, they are very different. Essentially they are partnerships between a university like mine (Edinburgh) and a host university in China (Fudan). So the CI is not on the main street like the British Council, but it is embedded in the university. Nor is it a Chinese project. Every CI has two directors, one local and one from China, and the local university has to offer accommodation for the CI and also for the staff sent from the partner university. The CIs don't promote a common syllabus; they are strongly encouraged to relate what they do to the context of that university and that country. So some have been responsible for introducing Mandarin at the degree level for the first time; others have carried Mandarin out to surrounding primary and secondary schools. But one of the key messages is that it may be possible to visit China for more intensive language study. So good, keen students, whether in Nairobi, Cape Town, Cairo or Harare can find themselves exposed to Mandarin in China, for a few weeks, months or even for a degree. – We should underline perhaps that the CI 'movement', despite being in the response mode, must surely be the largest and most rapidly expanded language project the world has ever seen.

Q. I believe that China tries to distinguish its aid from that of many traditional donors. Is China really so very different? After all, France, Britain and Germany all promote their languages, and many donors from Sweden to UK to USA promote partnerships?

China certainly has a different discourse on educational aid, emphasising long-term friendship, mutual benefit, common development, as we said above. But in reality is the experience of being an

awardee or a student in China very different from being in Europe or North America? We don't know enough about whether this **ethical discourse** translates into a different experience. But what we do know from most of the African students who are studying or have studied in China is that they are hugely influenced by the culture of hard work of the Chinese students. Many claim to have changed their own attitudes towards work in their home country as a result! And we do know that African governments appreciate the speed with which the FOCAC targets are achieved, on time or even before time.

Q. One of the more provocative areas you deal with in *China's Aid* is the record of training by Chinese employers in Africa. It is widely held that China doesn't train local staff but just brings its own workers from China, and even uses prison labour.

The answer is that it depends a great deal on the employment & training policies of the African government in question; some are very strict about training in exchange for additional Chinese labour. Others less so. Another factor is that formally skilled labour is in very short supply in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to almost 50% of young people going to vocational high schools in China. Furthermore, there is a huge difference between the training policy of a multinational telecoms firm like Huawei, which has six regional training centres across Africa, and the approach of the traders who are setting up 'China shops' even in rural areas. On the other hand, there are similarities in the attitudes to very hard work of many of the Chinese traders and those of the *jua kali* or informal sector entrepreneurs in countries such as Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria. On the prison labour claim, it can be dismissed categorically, according to several of the leading authorities on China-Africa.

Q. What was most enjoyable about this research project?

I enjoyed doing several hundred interviews in Africa and in China with my wife, Pravina. And we both found it very rewarding to talk to China's Africanists, often working in very new centres of African Studies, but also in centres that are as old as ours in Edinburgh University. We found discussions with Chinese and African staff in CIs very interesting. And most of all, discussions with African students in China, as well as African alumni/ae from Chinese universities.

For China's Aid and Soft Power in Africa (by KK) - published May 2013, see www.jamescurrey.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=14171

[Editor: This comes from the African Griot:
http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/content/docs/African_Griot_VI_Spring_2013.pdf]