

The Governance of Education and Training: Agenda 2030 and Beyond

Policy Paper

Following on the Public Conference held in Geneva on 22 June 2016



Network for international policies
and cooperation in education and training

Réseau sur les politiques et la coopération
internationales en éducation et en formation



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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education and training in Africa
AfDB	African Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CONFEMEN	Conférence des ministres de l'Education des Etats et gouvernements de la Francophonie
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	The Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
EFA	Education for All
ESSSA	Employment and Skills Strategies in Southeast Asia
ETF	European Training Foundation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAML	Global Alliance to Monitor Learning
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
GET	Governance of Education and Training
GGET	Global Governance of Education and Training
GNI	Gross National Income
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IAEG	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Groups
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IEA	International Energy Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGOs	International non-governmental organisations
LACI	Learning Assessment Capacity Index
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NORRAG	Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PASEC	Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
R4D	Results for Development

SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SC	Steering Committee
SCI	Service Civil International
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSC	South-South Cooperation
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skills Development
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESCO- UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

NORRAG'S CONFERENCE SERIES

NORRAG's new Conference Series in the Governance of Education and Training situates itself in the territory between the national and the global. It acknowledges that the discourses of Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were predominantly sourced in international, global contexts even if they had to be affirmed by the UN's Member States. Such global agreements are meaningless without national government and society buy-in, and without evidence of national initiatives for implementation.

The mechanisms for monitoring these global accords have also been principally constructed by international institutions whether in Education or in the 16 other SDG sectoral areas. But, again, these proposed monitoring tools have been agreed by national or regionally representative Member States.

In the epistemic space between the governance of the local, the national and the global, NORRAG has identified a number of concerns which it is hoped will illustrate the inevitable tensions between the national and the global lenses on these subjects. It will also interrogate both vertical and horizontal dimensions of governance.

The interrogation of this space has become increasingly complex in recent years, as a whole range of new actors have intervened. Quite rapidly, the issues we seek to address have become areas of contestation by a multiplicity of stakeholders, both state and non-state.

What has made exploration of these areas hugely more demanding in the recent period is that the very notion of 'expert knowledge' has been successfully and politically critiqued by local or popular understandings of these same issues.

Bearing in mind these very real concerns about carrying out traditional state of the art reviews of a range of possible sectoral or thematic areas for debate in this Conference Series, NORRAG has, in a very preliminary way, identified the following items. All of these will be addressed through the lenses of education and training:

- National and international foundations in human resource development and international education policies
- The role of think-tanks in a post-2015 and post-expert knowledge environment
- National skills development policies in highly constrained global mobility situations

The first in this Conference Series examines 'The Governance of Education and Training: Agenda 2030 and Beyond'. This fits precisely into the space that this Series expects to inhabit. It interrogates how the allegedly transformative agenda of Agenda 2030 is positioned essentially in national actions, but is massively influenced by the global architecture of multiple stake-holders, goals, targets and indicators.

INTRODUCTION

The *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report* of September 2016 (UNESCO, 2016a) argues the need for policy coherence and about the enabling conditions to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and the other SDGs, noting the importance of both 'horizontally integrated action' (cross-sectoral) across the goals and for 'vertical integration, i.e. coordination and collaboration between levels of government' as means to achieve the goals (ibid:133):

Fulfilling the SDGs requires integrated plans and actions where diverse sectors, levels of government and types of actors have to work together. (ibid: 133)

The previous quotation refers to government which is a specific public structure at a national level; one that is often part of binding intergovernmental agreements and embedded in a national governance framework. Governance is not a structure but more of a net of arrangements between different types of public and private organisations, at different levels (local, community, national, regional, global and transnational). Consequently, any one of these organisations at any one level, it can be argued, has potential impacts on all other levels – though to differing degrees. What is happening at different levels, what the relationship is between specific actors at these multiple levels of governance, and what are their interactions with governments and national education and training governance is of key concern when considering the implementation of Agenda 2030.

Governments and their national level education stakeholders, that are the key actors for implementing the SDGs, will have to develop their plans and actions while sitting in a complex net of influences coming from this national level, from the country's intergovernmental relations as well as from some of the regional and/or global actors belonging to specific thematic, geographic, political education governance arrangements. It is in this context that 'the new agenda... is expected to be driven by national governments' (GEM Report 2016 Summary, p.32, emphasis added). In other words, governments are not left alone: 'Local and national government authorities, civil society, academics, the scientific community, the private sector and global multi stakeholder organizations are some of the partners that can help implement global agendas such as the SDGs" (ibid. emphasis added).

This present Policy Paper contributes to the discussion of these horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms and partnerships that will have to be put in place at national levels for implementation and monitoring of the SDGs, and in the context of the existing numerous intergovernmental and global governance arrangements in education and training. The role of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, that 'is expected to be the main mechanism to support countries, review progress... and encourage harmonization and coordination of partner activities' (ibid:146) will also be discussed.

This was the subject of a Public Conference organised by NORRAG, in collaboration with the Education Network of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation which was held at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva on 22nd June 2016. This Policy Paper was initially framed by some of the discussions and debates of that day,¹ but it also refers to wider and also later

¹ Where an author is mentioned in the text along with a date, there is a reference in the bibliography. Where the author is mentioned without a date, the source is the author's presentation in the conference of 22nd June 2016, or to the author's subsequent summary

material for contextualization purposes. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors; they do not necessarily reflect those of the organisers or of other individuals or institutions represented in the Conference.

The paper covers the scope of the governance of education and training (GET), in its formal and less formal manifestations as well as in its interactions between the international level and the national governmental and governance arrangements. It also looks at the aforementioned issues through the lens of so-called emerging donors. Then, there is a review of the national to global GET dimensions of technical and vocational skills development (TVSD). The focus then shifts to how Agenda 2030 is being incorporated at the national level. It ends with a reflection on the inter-sectoral, horizontal dimension of education in the SDGs.

1. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NORRAG's concern with global governance arrangements and Agenda 2030 has been highlighted previously (King and Palmer, 2014), and it is worth reiterating a few core issues here. In this earlier paper, we noted that global governance in education and training (GGET) includes a range of stakeholders: grant and loan receiving countries; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) countries; Multilaterals (e.g. UNESCO, International Labour Organisation - ILO, World Bank); Regional Banks (Asian, African, Latin American and BRICS Development Banks); Emerging donors; Private sector companies and coalitions; Private foundations; and, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and think tanks. We also noted that these stakeholders 'create formal and informal mechanisms by which they exert power and influence' (ibid: 7). Formal mechanisms include for example: goals and targets (e.g. education-related targets and indicators in the SDGs) and their associated coordination approaches; laws, rules, conventions and charters; and, agreements, compacts, partnerships, and initiatives for policy and financial cooperation. Meanwhile, informal mechanisms also exist that influence stakeholders, and we noted these to cover (ibid):

- Governing by "best practice" – the influence of education and training strategies and policy papers of grant- and loan-making development agencies, and the propagation of "best practice" knowledge and approaches that can influence the behaviour and prioritization of national and international stakeholders.
- Governing by financial carrots and sticks – the influence that grants and loans for education, as well as their associated conditionalities (or "triggers"), have in recipient countries.
- Governing by numbers - the influence that data from assessments and testing have, as well as benchmarking and ranking approaches.

One of the key red threads that ran through this earlier NORRAG paper was the argument that the education SDG itself was only one part of a much broader governance framework and therefore that:

The global governance of education and training looks like it will only be partially influenced by the education post-2015 framework, goal and targets. GGET is not a single system. It is made up of a

of that presentation, sent to the writers of this report. In several cases, individual authors turned their presentations into a NORRAG blog. These are referenced in the usual way.

range of stakeholders who pursue a range of approaches and mechanisms that influence and steer education and training, whether intentionally or not. A goal and target framework is only one part of what the GGET is comprised of. Many other aspects of the... GGET [for example the influence of informal mechanisms, noted above] remain completely unaddressed by the whole post-2015 education process. So long as the issue of governance is not mainstreamed across the education post-2015 discussion, these connections will not be made. (King and Palmer, 2014: 10)

What appears to be the case, even at this early stage of the Agenda 2030 process, is that while there are a series of coordination and governance efforts that have been, or are being, set up in relation to Agenda 2030, there remain a set of informal governance influences that are less tied in to this formal process. Much of this became part of the discussions at the 22nd June workshop, and we shall refer to those below.

That global governance structures matter for education (McLean) was clearly a given for most discussants, but equally there was a broad agreement that national governance structures matter more (see further below).

The global governance of education and training is seen as

both a real and a contested space. It is real because despite [the fact] that it appears to happen up in the clouds, it has real effects on the ground. Governments sign up to the SDGs. Goal 4 targets determine actual priorities governments undertake to report on in relation to education and training. Progress on the indicators for Goal 4 targets will determine the parameters for most of the freer money governments will receive to build national education systems over the next decade-and-a-half. It is contested because it reflects the imbalance of power in the determining influences that have shaped and that will adjudicate progress on the SDGs: these are closer to the institutional interests of major global agencies and key donor countries than they are to the governments that rely on international assistance. (McLean)

Global governance of education is often seen as having little fragmentation when compared to other sectors like health; by contrast it was noted that the global governance of technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) remained highly fragmented (Comyn) (see further below on TVSD).

For stakeholders in the global governance of education to operate efficiently, it was argued that such actors need to engage based on their own comparative advantages; thus, for example, development banks through financing, UN agencies mainly through the definition of the normative framework, and bilateral cooperation through technical support.

There also needs to be recognition that 'the world is not fair' (Lolwana) - there exists an unequal distribution of power between governance actors (Novelli) - and therefore that formal governance and coordination processes set up in relation to Agenda 2030 need to try to mitigate this.

We turn now to review both the formal and less formal dimensions of GGET that arose in the discussions.

2. THE FORMAL GLOBAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION 2030

We noted earlier that the SDGs themselves constitute a part of a formal global governance mechanism. A few of the key dimensions of this structure are mentioned here. These are the Steering Committee, the Global Partnership for Education, and the formally agreed global indicator framework associated with the SDG 4 targets.

2.1. The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

During the NORRAG meeting on 22nd June 2016, the 'global governance structure for Goal 4' (McLean), which is led by a new SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) was discussed.

Both the Incheon Declaration and the SDG-Education Framework for Action 'entrust UNESCO to lead, coordinate and be the focal point for education within the overall SDG coordination' (Naidoo, 2016). In May 2016, UNESCO launched (and convenes) 'the main multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism' (UNESCO, 2016b: 4) for SDG 4 – the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC).

The SC 'builds on the old EFA [Education for All] Steering Committee' (McLean) and is meant to guide the agenda at the global level (Sachs-Israel). The primary objective of the SC is to support UN member states and partners to achieve SDG 4 and the education-related targets in other SDGs (UNESCO, 2016b). The main functions of the SC are to: Ensure linkage between global education development efforts and the broader SDG architecture and processes; Provide strategic guidance to Member States and partners to support the implementation of SDG 4; Build strong partnerships and enhance harmonization of activities among diverse stakeholders to support Member States to achieve SDG 4 and other education-related targets; Monitor, advocate for adequate financing, both domestic and external; Review progress towards the education goal and targets, drawing on the GEM Report, UN-wide SDG Review Reporting and other tools (UNESCO, 2016b).

The SC is made up of 38 individuals, almost half (18) from UN member states – who represent the various UN regional groups, 16% (6) from regional UN member state organizations (e.g. EC, ADEA), 8% (3) from civil society (including Education International, GCE), and the rest (26%) from SDG 4-Education 2030 convening agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women, ILO – 2 representatives) and partners (GPE, OECD) (UNESCO, 2016c). 'In addition, representatives from the private sector, foundations, youth and student organizations may be invited as observers'.²

Key reporting will be through the GEM Report and the SC will take the advice of the UIS-led Technical Cooperation Group on indicators. UIS will also convene two entirely new structures: the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning and the Inter-agency group on Education Inequality Indicators. 'It is not yet entirely clear how these are to work' (McLean).

The first meeting of the SC (25-26th May 2016) was concerned with 'confirming the broad base of representation; ensuring effective, democratic processes of the Steering Committee; and initiating discussions on a roadmap towards achieving' SDG 4 (Naidoo, 2016). The next meeting of the SC was in November 2016 and looked into developing concrete activities (Sachs-Israel).

² <http://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-s-action-plan-drive-education-2030-agenda-2016>

2.2. The Global Partnership for Education: GPE 2020

The role of the reformed Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in relation to Education 2030 should also be considered as an element in GGET – while noting that it is already part of the new SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

The GPE has been recently described as ‘the main multi-stakeholder financing partnership in education’ (UNESCO, 2016a: 146) and as the only global fund for education; of course, with the launch of Education Cannot Wait, a new global fund for education in crises, the latter description of the GPE no longer stands. In fact, it can be argued that neither the GPE nor the Education Cannot Wait fund are global funds – both focus on specific groups of countries, as the authors of this report have noted in a previous paper:

The Global Partnership for Education is not, of course, really global. It is a mechanism for mainly OECD-DAC countries and international NGOs based in these OECD-DAC countries financially to support 59 [now 65 in September 2016] developing, mainly low-income and African, countries. (King and Palmer, 2014: 15)

The GPE’s new strategic plan, *GPE 2020*, contains the general ambition:

To mobilize global and national efforts to contribute to the achievement of equitable, quality education and learning for all, through inclusive partnership, a focus on effective and efficient education systems and increased financing. (GPE, 2016: 7)

The Interim Evaluation of the GPE (R4D and Universalialia, 2015), conducted by R4D and Universalialia Management Group, and covering the years 2010-2014 found that ‘changes in GPE governance have had positive effects on the legitimacy and efficiency of the Board’ (p.x); most notably it has become ‘more representative’ with increased participation of developing country partners (ibid). However, the evaluation also noted that the ‘GPE Board has insufficiently defined what it means to operate as a global partnership’ (p.xi). Furthermore, the evaluation noted that this so-called global partnership has not been able to match its ability to raise financial resource with its level of ambition.

2.3. Governing by Global SDG Indicators

When it is considered what an enormous number of national, regional and global meetings took place between 2012 and 2015, not to mention the mountain of position papers, proposals and advocacy pieces that were generated in the attempt to secure the appropriate final language and text for the SDGs,³ it is astonishing how little global energy has gone into following and debating the global indicators by which the actual implementation of the goals and their targets are proposed to be measured. It is almost as if the setting of goals and targets was a highly inclusive activity with a whole range of actors involved from international NGOs, foundations, development agencies, the private sector and the entire UN family. By contrast the crucial governance mechanism of the indicators for the targets has been left mainly to technical or expert groups. Thus we have the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG), cutting across all 17 goals, and in the education area there has been, in addition, a Technical Advisory Group for Post-2015 Education Indicators (TAG), convened by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). Through the IAEG, there were just 11 global indicators for the 10 SDG 4 targets proposed in

³ See NORRAG working papers #1, 4, 6, 7 for an account of the history and scale of these meetings and papers.

their final list of early 2016 (UN-ESC) and adopted by the Economic and Social Council in June 2016, whilst the TAG had developed a list of originally 43 indicators for a similar but earlier version of these same education targets. These were available in draft at the World Education Forum in Incheon in May 2015 and confirmed in its *Framework for Action* in November 2015 (UNESCO, 2015a). Every country is expected to report on the 11 global indicators for the Education SDG 4, along with the global indicators for the almost 160 other targets linked to the other 16 SDGs (McLean). But in respect of the thematic education indicators, originally from the Incheon *Framework for Action*, their monitoring is voluntary but can be decided upon at the regional or national level (McLean). An additional complication for the monitoring of these potentially highly influential indicators of progress on SDG implementation is that the IEAG indicators were not made the subject of a formal motion at the UN General Assembly in September 2016.⁴ It seems possible that two additional global indicators may be added to the 11 already agreed for SDG 4; hence it will be later in 2017 before a final list of global indicators is submitted to member states for approval.⁵

It may be assumed that the national reporting on the 11 global indicators, in education and in the other 16 SDGs, will take priority over the thematic indicators, since it is the global indicator findings that will appear in the annual SDG report of the UN. This will be a challenge, however, as the appropriate methodology and the availability of regular national data are not yet in place for several of the 11 global indicators in education. A further complication is that the final list of 43 thematic indicators actually contains the 11 global indicators (UNESCO, 2016: 173-4).⁶

For many, a more serious challenge associated with the current listing of the indicators for the Education SDG 4 is that at least in the global IAEG list they don't deal with some of the really crucial elements of the targets, for example in target 4.1 that 'girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education...' (UN-ESC, 2016: 43). But there is no coverage for 'free' or for 'quality' in the current text of the global indicators. Similarly, when it comes to the vexed word 'skills' which the World Forum in Dakar failed so notably to define in April 2000, with long-term consequences for monitoring, the IAEG takes the SDG 4 target of 'relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship' and offers simply this bare and woefully narrow indicator: 'proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill' (ibid.).⁷

This minimalist and reductionist rendering of the crucial global indicators for monitoring the SDG 4 targets confirms the view that the approach to SDG indicator development has been 'ahistoric'; those responsible 'did not look back at what worked and didn't in the EFA and MDG [Millennium Development Goal] indicators' (McLean). Similar comments could be made about final versions of many of the education and skill targets: 'The indicators related to some education SDG targets are somewhat narrow' (Comyn). Particularly surprising in today's world of violent extremism has been the complete failure to address in the corresponding indicator the 'promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence' that was a part of the Education SDG target 4.7 (UN-ESC, 2016: 44).

⁴ For a valuable account of the monitoring of SDG 4, see UIS (2016). See also King (2016a) on 'Quality learning in the sustainable development goal 4 for education'.

⁵ The IAEG meeting scheduled for 18-21 October 2016 in Ethiopia has been relocated to Geneva during 17-18 November 2016.

⁶ The GEM Report team has organised a valuable series of blogs on: 'Monitoring SDG 4: What is at stake?' – see <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2016/10/10/monitoring-sdg-4-what-is-at-stake/#more-8417>

⁷ Some of the issues discussed here were also debated in the NORRAG meeting on *Learning from learning assessments* – see next reference.

2.4. Other GGET Mechanisms

Beyond the critical role of the proposed SDG indicators and their interpretation and application, there appears to be additional complexity in the sheer range of institutional actors involved in the review and monitoring of the education and skills goal and its targets. We have already noted the rebirth of the former EFA Steering Committee as the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee which will have several ad hoc groups reporting to it, including a Technical Cooperation Group. This last is expected to develop and implement the global and thematic indicator framework. The renamed *Global Education Monitoring Report* continues the vital role of review and monitoring, but now with the wider remit associated with SDG 4 and its targets. We have noted its concern with the role of education in relation to the other 16 SDGs, both to those with an explicit reference to education and those with an indirect reference. But the review and monitoring landscape now also includes two new structures, the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) and the Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators, both convened under the aegis of UIS. It is not yet clear how these will interact and cover the ground (McLean).⁸ There was a Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL) launched in September 2016.⁹

But already the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning has held the first two meetings of its steering committee in May and October 2016, and the composition of this underlines the enormous challenge of ensuring that a global alliance is truly global. The representation was from key multilateral agencies such as UNESCO, including UIS and UIL, the World Bank, OECD, GPE and UNICEF, a handful of bilaterals (USAID, DFID and DFAT), one or two NGOs (e.g. SCI, IEA), think tanks (e.g. Brookings), the private sector (Pearson), and 2-3 universities. There was no single representation from a body based in the South with the exception of PASEC, the Francophone West African assessment programme operating under CONFEMEN.

In GAML's desire to secure internationally comparative data on assessment, it will draw on the work of the Learning Assessment Capacity Index (LACI). This new index illustrates and reports upon country capacity and experience in carrying out large scale learning assessments (Costin and Montoya, 2016).

The Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators makes its membership clear in its title. It would presumably draw on the earlier, ground-breaking work of the Global Monitoring Report on educational marginalisation and inequality.

Apart from these new approaches, another global mechanism has been established in the form of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (Lolwana). The launch of this partnership in the very same month, September 2015, as the SDGs were affirmed in the UN General Assembly is noteworthy, as is its claim that it has already 'gathered more than 150 data champions from around the world to harness the data revolution for sustainable development'.¹⁰ It is not yet clear how the education and skills sector falls within the purview of this particular global partnership.

It is entirely possible that this new data partnership derives from the declaration in the report of the UN's High-level panel of eminent persons on the post-2015 development agenda (*A New Global Partnership*). It

⁸ GAML is also discussed in NORRAG (2016).

⁹ Intriguingly, it would appear that there have been two GALs - one on literacy and one on learning, since GAML seems to have been called GAL in the early months.

¹⁰ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?progress&id=189>

underlined the crucial need for 'A data revolution' and recommended establishing a 'Global Partnership on Development Data' to achieve this (UN, 2013: 23-24).

In what McLean terms 'this metric-oriented governance space', therefore, there are already quite a number of 'global' actors. Nor should we forget the established ones like the OECD which, according to McLean, actually covers in its slew of modalities and assessment tools no less than 34 of the 43 indicators proposed by the *Framework for Action*, and all of the 11 put forward by the IAEG. Its purpose understandably, he argues, is to expand the take-up of these indicators and policy instruments. Hence there has been the opening up of PISA for Development to countries beyond the OECD, and the consequent debate about the pros and cons of this extension covered in NORRAG blogs in July 2016 (Zoido et al., 2016; Addey, 2016).

We should not forget that there are a number of private actors including edu-businesses which are increasingly global players and which are becoming linked to major players like the OECD in the global business of testing and assessment. Their desire to influence global policy (Steiner-Khamsi) and yet see education development as a source of profit (McLean) may well bring tensions between the public and private faces of global governance. On the other hand, it is widely acknowledged that governments on their own will not be able to deliver on the different demands associated with the SDG agenda (Lolwana); the state cannot be expected to implement everything.

After this brief glance at just a few of the global players in the brave new world of metric-focused and indicator-driven global governance – and we should not miss referring to the metric-driven, competitive sphere of university rankings – we need to return to our starting point; after the relatively inclusive public process of determining the SDGs and their targets, there has been a much more technocratic and expert process underway to drive the identification of indicators and to measure and then secure the capacities needed to work with so-called internationally comparable education data.

McLean argues that what is being missed in this allegedly global process is the vital place of national and local actors:

Global governance is definitively top down rather than bottom up. What should matter most for us are the local accountabilities, the ability and the determination to reflect and meet local demands. The real success, and precisely the sustainability of the Sustainable Development Goals, will be determined by the extent to which the emerging governance actors in education and training reflect local participation and democratic accountabilities at ground level. If metrics do not matter or have no meaning at community and school level, it's questionable whether they can ultimately mean anything at all (McLean).

3. POLICY BORROWING OR POLICY LEARNING? BEST OR BETTER PRACTICE DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE/INFLUENCE

A somewhat different, and less formal, approach to global influence is associated with the notion of learning from so-called best practice regionally or simply from country to country. NORRAG dedicated a whole issue of *NORRAG News* (see NORRAG, 2007) to explore the positive and negative sides of good, better or best practice in international education. As with the world of international large-scale learning assessments which we have just been examining through the data lens, so with best practice there have

been global claims made, for instance, about rates of return to primary education, or about four years of education making a difference to farmer productivity. But more commonly, countries have considered policy borrowing of better practice from 'significant others' such as their geographic neighbours, their economic rivals, or countries that have excelled (Care). Thus New Zealand might look to Australia; or Vietnam might look to Thailand; Germany might look to Finland' (ibid.).

The tens of thousands of higher education partnerships that at any moment are active world-wide are apparently based on a similar logic. But in fact closer examination will reveal that many education partnerships are actually founded on assumptions of policy transfer, or technology transfer whether from North to South or from West to East. This is particularly true of aid-assisted partnerships, where capacity-building of the weaker partners is assumed. We have already just noted this in the Learning Assessment Capacity Index. By contrast, much South-South partnership is explicitly predicated on claims about mutual learning and mutual benefit. There may very well be asymmetry in such partnerships despite their claim of mutuality and common benefit.¹¹

Equally, a number of donor countries, and particularly Japan, heavily emphasise the request basis of their aid projects. In other words, they underline the fact that the project has to be chosen locally, and it cannot ideally start till it is felt to be owned locally. Japan does not in fact use the language of policy learning by the recipient, but that is, in effect, what has been Japan's long-term approach to development cooperation.

More generally, though it is widely assumed that the governance of education is a national issue, as was discussed earlier in this report - and this may be particularly strongly felt where governments have long traditions of five-year plans as in China and India - nevertheless, 'aid providers, including banks, have a good deal of power which may influence national activities' (Care). Effectively, therefore, global governance or global influence are difficult to separate from aid conditionalities. At its most basic this implies that 'External stakeholders provide access to technical capacity that is aligned to the donors' perspectives - their views of how a country should develop' (Care). Though the present decade is now thirty years away from the crude conditions associated with structural adjustment programmes, there continue to be tensions around the external provision of technical capacity or expert knowledge embedded in areas of best practice. This may apply to participation in any number of fields, whether in international learning assessments, national qualification frameworks, or data capacity building.

We turn now to a different lens on GGET, and see to what extent some of the so-called emerging donors actually connect with the discourse of global governance. The following section particularly draws on such donors as were present in the Public Conference in Geneva on 22nd June 2016.

4. EMERGING DONORS, NON-STATE ACTORS AND GGET IN AGENDA 2030: THE CASE OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNTRIES AND CHINA

Interestingly, the 2016 GEM Report pays very marginal attention to the role of emerging donors in Agenda 2030; meanwhile most of the key actors referred to in the GEM Report include aid agencies providing official development assistance, multilateral agencies, civil society, the private sector, and global multi-

¹¹ See the section on 'Partnerships' in the Global Education Monitoring Report also (UNESCO, 2016a, 145ff).

stakeholder partnerships in education (e.g. Education 2030 coordination structures of the UN, the GPE and the Education Cannot Wait fund) (cf. UNESCO, 2016a: chapter 6). Indeed, the only main mentions of emerging donors in the GEM Report (UNESCO, 2016a) appear to be: i) in relation to the aim of the Education Cannot Wait fund 'to attract non-traditional donors' (p.147); ii) in relation to the ambition that DAC and selected non-DAC donors reach the 0.7% aid pledge (a long-held UN ambition in the case of DAC countries) and commit to spend 10% of that on basic and secondary education in low and lower middle income countries¹² (p.353); and, iii) the need to track loan agreements from non-OECD donor countries (p.355). What the GEM Report does also do is to flag that the International Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunities would submit its report later in September 2016, and that this was expected to 'look at a wide range of financing sources, including... non-traditional partnerships' (UNESCO, 2016a: 134-135), which we could assume includes emerging donors.

When NORRAG first did a critical review of emerging non-DAC donors in *NORRAG News (NN) 44* (see NORRAG, 2010), it excluded the worlds of private foundations and private sector entities. It did look at the five BRICS donors, and it just glanced at the Arab donors in the Gulf. NN44 made the obvious point that the so-called 'emerging' donors were 'not so new', but had been in business in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. It also argued that the so-called 'traditional' DAC donors had in many cases changed their business models from the earlier years, and particularly since the end of the Cold War. Arguably, British aid was much less 'British' since its aid was untied in the later 1990s. On the other hand, at least some of the DAC donors, and notably Japan, remained true to their founding principles. The 'Japaneseness' of Japanese cooperation, including in education, is still very obvious today (King, 2016b).

By contrast, South-South Cooperation (SSC), as illustrated in the BRICS group of emerging donors, in many cases remains true to the 1950s' spirit of Bandung and its five principles of peaceful co-existence. Their approach to cooperation stressed country to country solidarity and non-interference in the South as well as mutual benefit.

Gulf Cooperation Countries

One of the intriguing issues is where the very important set of Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) fit into patterns of cooperation especially in education. Several of the GCC members have reached high levels of spending on ODA, especially the UAE and Qatar which are both now DAC participants, contributing more than 1% of GNI, but equally the GCC have developed almost a new form of aid institution – what are called 'state-funded foundations' (Ridge, 2016: 1). 'As a new form of governance in education' (ibid), these philanthropic entities are modelled partly on US foundations, and partly perhaps on the continental European tradition of NGOs deriving a large part of their funding from the state. It is interesting to note that these foundations are often linked to a member of the country's royal family, and they now constitute a really significant modality, with well over 50 such state-funded philanthropic institutions in just four of the GCC countries.

For many of them, education-and-youth is one of their most important fields of activity, and a good deal of this is deliberately targeted at lower and middle income developing countries, such as India, Pakistan and Indonesia. But the range of recipient countries covered by four of the best-known of such foundations

¹² Brazil, China, India, Kuwait, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates are specifically mentioned.

involved in education is very wide indeed. It is by no means restricted to the lower and middle income Middle-East, but it extends to Sub-Saharan Africa, South and South East Asia, and Latin America. One of the state-funded education foundations even explicitly names its focus in its title: 'Reach out to Asia'.

In terms of their being global governance actors, it is clear that the GCC wants to move from being 'policy takers' to 'policy makers'. In other words, the initiatives of such state-funded philanthropy can be construed as forms of GCC 'soft power' (Ridge, *ibid.* 5) and of growing 'reputation' and 'recognition'. Given that GCC countries have become participants of DAC, it would seem that they are more at home with the DAC and Western discourse on aid cooperation rather than with that of South-South Cooperation. Indeed, they don't use the SSC language at all (*ibid.*).

The greater challenge for new donors in becoming more of 'policy makers' than 'policy takers' is that it is one thing for major world education events to be located in a Jomtien, Dakar, Addis, Incheon or Muscat. But that may be very different from the countries where these global meetings are held actually influencing the policy discourse or the final texts of key declarations and frameworks. It has been argued that the political geography of influence continues to favour 'cross-Atlantic' agreement rather than any East-West or South-South conversation (McLean).

The issue of global agenda-setting is closely related to the question of countries effectively becoming policy makers. Even though it has been widely argued that the agreement on the SDGs was hugely more inclusive and bottom-up than the setting of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there can be a debate about whether the actual text of the UN's *Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development* really reflects 'universal goals and targets which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike' (United Nations, 2016: 3). Despite this powerful assurance, it turns out in a close analysis of the 29 pages of the text of *Transforming our world* that the terms 'developing' and 'least developed' countries appear no less than 137 times whilst 'developed countries' occur a mere ten times. It certainly appears, at least from a textual analysis, that this crucial text is more concerned with the so-called developing and least developed world.

As *Transforming our world* is already a central text in global governance, including in education, we have referred to it in this report, and will look specifically at the challenges to its implementation in *NORRAG News 54*. We turn now, however, to a very different non-DAC donor – China.

China – a non-DAC donor

China presents a somewhat different take on this issue of global influence than was evident in the case of the Gulf countries. For one thing, China is not a member of DAC, but continues very strongly to represent its cooperation in terms of South-South Cooperation. In its relations with Africa, it constantly affirms it is 'the largest developing country in the world' (China, 2006: 1; 2015), but its status in terms of global influence and impact is complex.

On the one hand, the success of Shanghai in the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) have secured global attention to its education processes, and there has been a 'wave of discussion about what can be learned from Shanghai' (Wan, 2016). Equally, its massive programme of scholarships and training awards, especially to Africa, has brought it a good deal of global influence, even though this is a very long-term process. In addition, its determination, within China, to move from planning to assuring 'effective policy implementation' could prove an attractive

example of good practice, particularly for countries that too often don't go beyond the policy development stage (ibid).

On the other hand, China too has been a country where there have been many high-level meetings and locations for global conferences on topics such as post-2015, but too often they have been merely located in China, and been run by international agencies (King, 2014). Similarly, in terms of direct Chinese influence on policy formulation within the UN system, it is apparently the case that China has not filled more than a quarter of the positions to which it is entitled according to its UN financial contribution. This is both in advanced and middle level positions. This gap may be directly related to language fluency in English and French, but also to the lack of long-term experience in the UN and other 'global' organisations, in what is perceived by China as essentially a Western bureaucratic culture (Wan, ibid.).

China appears to have no exact parallel to the wide range of state-funded foundations in the GCC countries. But what has been evident for a long time has been the encouragement of aid or cooperation activities by provincial level authorities. Of course this happens elsewhere, for example in Germany. But in the case of China, as early as Mao's time, individual provinces were encouraged to partner with individual countries in Africa, a pattern that has continued till today in some respects, including in the provision of both provincial and municipal scholarships to overseas students. Equally, at the provincial and municipal level today there are examples of institutions partnering with UNESCO to support an International Centre for Higher Education Innovation (in the case of Shenzhen) or a Centre for Higher Engineering Education (through the China Academy of Engineering) (Wan).

So far we have focused principally on the Global Governance of Education rather than of Education and Training. We now turn, therefore, to look at the training side of GGET.

5. GLOBAL-REGIONAL-NATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Technical and vocational skills are acquired throughout life through two main routes: formal and non-formal education, training, and higher education (public and private); and, on the job through informal learning by doing or more structured work experience and professional training.

The Education 2030 Agenda makes specific reference to Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD), and contains several TVSD-related targets, including under SDG 4 (targets 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5) and SDG 8 (target 8.6) (see box 1 below).

Box 1. Technical and vocational skills in the SDGs

Under SDG 4 (Education)

- Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality **technical, vocational** and tertiary education, including university
- Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including **technical and vocational skills**, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

- Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and **vocational training** for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Under SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)

- Target 8.6: By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or **training**

Source: www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org (emphasis added)

Given the diverse nature of the TVSD domain, it is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that in most countries technical and vocational skills provision is highly fragmented, with public provision falling under multiple ministries (typically ministries of education, labour, higher education, social welfare, industry, agriculture as well as others); and with private provision split broadly between for- and non-profit private training institutes, and formal and informal enterprise-based training. Many countries have set up, or have tried to set up, national governance structures in the form of coordinating councils that are tasked with bringing order to this fragmented sector. Some countries (e.g. India) have gone one step further and created ministries of skills development (Bhavani). The increasing interest in national TVSD governance reflects the need for vertical and horizontal coordination across ministries as TVSD is seen as 'a crosscutting issue relevant to other policy domains such as trade, industrial development, regional development etc' (Comyn). Meanwhile, the effectiveness of national governance of TVSD varies from country to country as is the subject of joint research between the ILO and UNESCO (Comyn); in many countries, however, such national governance arrangements do not function all that well and much fragmentation remains.

At the global level, too, the diversity of the TVSD domain results in a comparable fragmentation between the UN education-focussed organisation (UNESCO), the UN agency which is focussed on work and skills (the ILO), as well as many other UN entities concerned with industry (UNIDO), agriculture (FAO and IFAD), and other international organisations including the World Bank Group and the OECD, and regional organisations including regional development banks, and the European Training Foundation.

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, noted above, contains several organisations whose remit very much covers TVSD, including the ILO, UNESCO, World Bank, and OECD. Skills and the world of work are regularly included as part of this agenda (Sachs-Israel).

However the much more institution- and location-fragmented state of affairs regarding TVSD (as compared to general education) (Comyn) means that 'the impact of the SDGs on the governance of [TVSD] is likely to be less than the case for education' (ibid). Nonetheless, there are 'noticeable [governance] trends and developments at the international, regional and local levels' (ibid). These are referred to briefly below.

The **G20** role with respect to TVSD has become a constant theme of recent G20 presidencies over the last 10 years. In addition to there being several policy announcements on TVSD, the implementation of the G20 training strategy (ILO, 2011) and the G20 skill strategy (OECD, 2015) have been financially supported by individual G20 members (Comyn).

In recent years, **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - BRICS** - are increasingly looking to collaborate on TVSD. TVSD has been identified by them as a 'priority area for collaboration and they have

undertaken several joint capacity building programmes' (Comyn). The BRICS Business Council¹³ has already established a Skills Development Working Group. The BRICS working group on skills development will function to 'promot[e] cooperation on skills development and technology transfer' (BRICS Business Council 2015: 66), 'to develop national reports, share concepts, methods and instruments of analysis matching workforce demands and supply for BRICS member countries' (BRICS Working Group on Education, 2015). Furthermore, the working group will also address BRICS support to skills development in Africa (BRICS Business Council 2015). A skills development fund under the new BRICS Development Bank will be established with a view to promoting investment in BRICS countries to improve the quality and access to TVSD (BRICS Business Council 2015: 64-78).

The **OECD** is increasingly working on skills development, including among non-OECD member states (Comyn) such as, for example, the OECD Employment and Skills Strategies in Southeast Asia (ESSSA)¹⁴ Program (ibid.). The OECD is also a member of the Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (see below).

The **Inter-Agency Group on TVET (IAG-TVET)** 'continues to advance collaborative work amongst the major international organisations involved in TVET and skills development, albeit, on a modest scale' (Comyn). The IAG-TVET, established in 2009, aims to improve communication, cooperation and coordination among the key international agencies active in the field of TVET (cf. UNESCO, 2012). Members of the IAG-TVET include: ADB, AfDB, EC, ETF, IDB, ILO, OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank. The IAG-TVET has closed meetings once or twice a year, with relatively little public information on the nature or outcome of these meetings. There are three Inter-Agency Working Groups (IAWG) under the IAG-TVET:

- the IAWG on TVET indicators (bringing together UNESCO, OECD, ILO, the World Bank and ETF and other organisations);
- the IAWG on Greening TVET and Skills Development (bringing together ADB, Cedefop, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO-UNEVOC, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). This thematic working group supports initiatives for greening TVET and skills development by raising awareness, providing advocacy, sharing and disseminating good practices, knowledge and expertise, and works under the umbrella of the IAWG on TVET (IAWG on Greening TVET);
- the IAWG on Work-based learning.

As its name implies, the IAG-TVET appears to be very much an inter-*agency* group, with its members composed largely of traditional multilateral agencies interested in skills development; with DAC bilateral donors participating in some meetings. Although the IAG-TVET claims to 'bring together the **main** international players in TVET' (UNESCO, 2015b: 8, bold added), it ignores many key international stakeholders; most notably: non-DAC donors, international NGOs, and the private sector (international consultancy groups, education companies).

UNESCO continues to be engaged in global TVSD issues via its TVET division in UNESCO Paris offices, via UNESCO-UNEVOC and other means. In July 2016, UNESCO launched its new strategy promoting TVET (see

¹³ The BRICS Business Council was created on the occasion of the Fifth BRICS Summit held in Durban in March 2013.

¹⁴ See <http://www.oecd.org/employment/leed/employmentandskillsstrategiesinsoutheastasiaesssa-outcomes.htm>

UNESCO, 2016d). Furthermore, ongoing development of the World Reference Levels¹⁵ led by UNESCO may also influence ongoing developments of national certification and qualification systems (Comyn).

Further, there are a number of **regional actors** with regard to TVSD, including for example: ASEAN, SADC, SAARC and the EC (Comyn).

Having looked above at issues related to the global architecture of governance for education and training, we now turn our attention to national level governance of these areas.

6. AGENDA 2030: CATCHING UP WITH WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENING AT NATIONAL LEVEL OR AN ASPIRATIONAL NEW AGENDA?

Education 2030 lays out an ambitious and aspirational framework related to education, and covers more or less all areas of education and training. On the one hand, therefore, Education 2030 clearly charts a new agenda beyond the EFA goals and education in the MDGs. On the other hand, Education 2030 is 'a little bit like the UN catching up with what is already happening' at the national level (Carton). Indeed, many countries would claim that they are already planning to do, or doing what the Education 2030 agenda calls for. For example, UNESCO Bangkok's own analysis found that 'many countries [in the Asia-Pacific region] feel that their sector plans already address many of the Education 2030 targets' (UNESCO Bangkok, 2016: 3).¹⁶

That many countries can identify lots of elements of Education 2030 that their country already has in its own national plans is perhaps because the global education agenda pretty much covers all bases and all education levels. The fact that Education 2030 ended up covering such a broad array is perhaps reflective of the wide consultation process which brought about the education agenda, but an agenda covering everything, it could be argued, is in practice an agenda for nothing. In other words, where everything is on the table, it is up to countries to pick up and prioritize as they would have done anyway.

While 'the heart of Education 2030 lies at the country level' (Eck, Naidoo and Sachs-Israel, 2016: 37), and the implementation of the agenda is therefore the primary responsibility of governments (ibid), *what* is implemented at the national level will obviously vary and depend on how countries interpret, adopt or adapt Education 2030 – or else repackage what they are already planning to do - under a new SDG umbrella.

Put simply, it is up to each country to decide what to do and how to do it. The SDGs were 'written as values and principles rather than prescriptions. This allows countries to interpret them according to their national agendas' (Lolwana).

There is already a national SDG consultation process underway in the majority of UN Member States (Naidoo, 2016) that seeks to outline at country level how the SDGs, including those related to education, will be mainstreamed into national policies. This integration of Education 2030 priorities into 'existing or new

¹⁵ See

<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=Expert%20Meeting%20on%20the%20development%20of%20World%20Reference%20levels%20of%20learning%20outcomes>

¹⁶ <http://nespap.unescobkk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Integrating-Education-2030-into-Education-Plans-and-ME.pdf>

education sector plans, rather than setting up a separate Education 2030 Action Plan' (Eck, Naidoo and Sachs-Israel, 2016: 37) is a lesson learned from the EFA period (cf. Hinds, 2016).

This [Education 2030] was created by countries. Not all countries will do the same thing. But the key is mainstreaming SDG 4 into national targets and planning needs. (Sachs-Israel)

The way that countries will manage their national plans or goals vis-à-vis the SDGs 'is not very clear... Which "master" do they serve?' – the global aspirations of the SDGs or their national needs? (Lolwana). In practice, there will certainly be a balancing of the global versus national "master", and the attention given to each will depend on the differential starting points of different countries, and by implication how much that particular country needs to 'look up' to the global agenda for external financial assistance (Lolwana). In the majority of countries, however, and except in the most aid-dependent ones, the bulk of education financing will continue to come from domestic resources. In this context, 'when countries have to fund the attainment of these goals themselves... poorer countries are likely to focus on what [in the education SDGs] they can afford' (Lolwana).

At the sub-national level, the importance of local governance of education and training were stressed (Fischer; King). The role that local actors can play in leveraging and strengthening governance capacities at the decentralized level was noted as being particularly key for basic education and vocational skills development which strongly rely on private sector involvement and development.. The GEM Report goes further and argues that where local level governance is done well, 'sector silos can be broken down' (UNESCO, 2016a: 142), and that effective governance at the local level is really the key to implementing national (and by inference international) plans and strategies such as Agenda 2030:

Success in vertical integration [of national plans with local implementation] is often contingent on subnational governments having the capacity to plan, budget, coordinate, implement and oversee processes between sectors – and the authority to do so. (ibid:142-143)

Having examined the vertical level of governance of education and training, the report now turns to look at another key axis of governance; the horizontal aspects of governing education and training across traditional sectors and silos.

7. EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A HORIZONTAL PERSPECTIVE: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND THE OTHER SDGS

Education and training run transversally across different fields (e.g. work, health, poverty, mobility, conflict, human rights, climate change – to mention just a few). This illustrates the point that intersectorality is one of the key transformative paradigm shifts in the 2030 Agenda. Education is widely claimed to be strongly related to the other SDGs and 'is recognised as having two-way links to almost all of the [SDG] goals' (Naidoo, 2016). Though the goals and targets as a whole are called 'integrated and indivisible', (UN, 2015: 3) the transversal nature of education is also partly recognised in the SDGs. SDG 4, the stand-alone education SDG, contains 10 education targets. However, in addition to these 10 education targets, there are an additional 6 SDGs that contain either education-related targets (SDGs 3, 8 and 13) or education-related indicators (in SDGs 1, 5 and 12) (see UNESCO, 2016c); these six other SDGs include:

- SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), target 1.a, indicator related to government spending on essential services including education.
- SDG 3 (Health and well-being), target 3.7 on ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for education.
- SDG 5 (Gender equality), target 5.6, indicator related to women’s access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education.
- SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), target 8.6 on reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.
- SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), target 12.8, indicator on global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.
- SDG 13 (Climate change), target 13.3 on improving education in relation to climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning.¹⁷

That education needs to be connected beyond its own sector (McLean) is recognised; ‘the holistic nature of Education 2030 requires better coordination within the education sector as well as across sectors (e.g. education and health)’ (UNESCO Bangkok, 2016: 3). However two key questions arise from this: First, to what extent are there horizontal (governance) links across these issue domains? Second, how do we channel support to education to the existing, fragmented global governance in the other thematic areas?

These are challenging issues for sure. Returning to the national level, where the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Education 2030 agenda is recognised to be, ‘effective coordination among ministries requires a very high level of political commitment as well as a national coordinating mechanism’ (UNESCO Bangkok, 2016: 6).

It is well known that in many (perhaps most) countries the education and training sector itself is fragmented; for example, early childhood development, primary and secondary education, higher education, TVSD and non-formal education are typically under different ministries. Connecting education and training to other ministries is even more of a challenge. The GEM Report notes that sectoral fragmentation is typical and that ‘government agencies tend to focus on policy formulation and implementation in their respective sectors, hampering coordination and collaboration’ (UNESCO, 2016a: 142). The ‘implementation [of Education 2030] at the country level calls for major adjustments’ in country systems and will require, among other things, the ‘establishment of a national coordination mechanism to ensure both horizontal (e.g. intra-ministerial) and vertical (e.g. national and subnational) coordination’ (UNESCO Bangkok, 2016: 4).

How are international organisations set up to address education and training in a horizontal perspective? The GEM Report notes that:

Agencies that provide overseas development assistance, like all government agencies, face two challenges in delivering programmes that are consistent with the integrated planning needs of the SDGs: they may lack a coherent vision of their approach to development, and they face difficulties in coordinating programmes that span different sectors. (UNESCO, 2016a: 143)

¹⁷ The UIS report on *Laying the Foundation* argues for no less than 7 global indicators linked to education (UIS, 2016: 29)

Many international organisations, whose mandate does not link them directly to education and training, are often 'functionally illiterate on education' issues; for example education is highly marginalised in UNHCR's work (Novelli). There is certainly a challenge of bringing together UN agencies around education in practice (Kayal). Meanwhile, there is some anecdotal evidence that bilateral agencies may be thinking more inter-sectorally in the way they support education. For example, even though the Dutch moved from spending 20% of ODA on education to 0%, they have been able to shift some of this education spending to other sectors, including the security sector (Novelli).

Although it may be highly satisfactory to the international education community to note that there are direct references to education in six of the SDGs outside SDG 4 (UNESCO, 2016: 368) and indirect references to education in other SDGs (ibid.369), this makes for a huge additional monitoring challenge for education beyond that associated with monitoring SDG 4 itself. The GEM Report also makes the crucially important point that the education and capacity building requirements associated with behaviour change in the many other SDGs are not necessarily linked to formal schooling but to adult education and training. This is the crucial 'lifelong learning' that is mentioned 'as a factor contributing across the SDGs' (ibid. 373), as well as in the SDG 4 itself.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

These are some of the questions that arose during the NORRAG meeting on 22nd June, and which discussants addressed to varying degrees: Who are the main actors in this multi-level governance arrangement? What are their differentiated roles and responsibilities for policymaking and implementation in education and training? Is there overlap – through competition and/or coordination across domains, geographical zones, or partnerships - or does each actor continue to operate in isolation, and are there still governance gaps? And what does this all mean for the implementation of Agenda 2030?

Beyond these general questions about horizontal and vertical integration around the SDGs, which are a challenge for the many agencies charged with implementing the SDGs, there is a particular opportunity for "International Geneva". As the brief for this Conference suggested, Geneva is itself a city and a context where a large number of the 17 SDG themes have an institutional or intellectual setting. This suggests an opportunity to promote and enhance ongoing attempts to interrogate the implementation of the SDGs in an inter-sectoral institutional context within the space that Geneva offers:

Geneva is also home to many organizations that work on issue domains as diverse as health, conflict, migration, economy, and human rights. Education and training run transversally across these fields and this event will furthermore target policy practitioners in Geneva-based organizations that can better integrate education and training issues in their ongoing work in relation with the SDGs. (June 22nd Geneva Conference Series)

This brief review of vertical and horizontal governance issues related to education and training shows that the current governance architecture is not yet fit for purpose for the successful implementation of the 2030 education agenda. One year into the 15-year time span of Education 2030, this suggests major ongoing challenges. There clearly needs to be significantly more emphasis paid to global governance – especially the influence of so-called informal governance mechanisms, and those that involve emerging

donors. Perhaps more importantly, significantly more emphasis is needed to support and strengthen national and local governance at country level. The domain of TVSD governance is particularly challenging and one that needs a particular focus.

Given the multiple challenges of implementing and monitoring the 2030 education agenda, across the multiplicity of different institutions discussed above, NORRAG has dedicated the next issue of *NORRAG News* (NN54) to analysing: *Education, Training and Agenda 2030: What has been the Impact of SDG 4 in the Twelve Months since September 2015?* NORRAG will also continue to promote "International Geneva", including through this Conference Series, as an inter-sectoral dialogue space for the governance and implementation of the SDGs.

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APPENDIX:

Agenda (in brief)

Maison de la Paix, 2 Chemin Eugène-Rigot, Room A2
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

Wednesday 22nd June 2016:

13:00 – 13:30 **Coffee and Registration**

13:30 – 13:45 **Panel I: Mapping governance arrangements in education and training: global, national, regional and local perspectives**

Panellists: Chantal Nicod, Head of West Africa Division and Education Theme, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Bern, Switzerland

 Margarete Sachs-Israel, Programme Specialist, Division for Education 2030, UNESCO, Paris, France

 Jean-Marc Bernard, Deputy Chief Technical Officer, Global Partnership for Education Secretariat, Washington D.C., USA (via Skype)

 Paul Comyn, Skills and Employability Specialist, International Labour Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

Comments and reactions: Peliwe Lolwana, Associate Visiting Professor, Center for Researching Education and Labour, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

 Rao R. Bhavani, Director, AMMACHI Labs, Amrita University, Coimbatore, India

Moderator: Joost Monks, Managing Director, NORRAG, Geneva, Switzerland

14:45 – 16:00 **Panel II: Emerging governance actors in education and training**

Panellists: Esther Care, Senior Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings, Washington D.C., USA

 Xiulan Wan, Deputy Dean, Institute of International and Comparative Education, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China

 Natasha Ridge, Executive Director, Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

 Hugh McLean, Director, Education Support Program, Open Society Foundations, London, UK

Comments and reactions: Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Professor of Comparative and International Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, USA

Moderator: Kenneth King, Emeritus Professor at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland and NORRAG News Editor

16:00 – 16:30 **Coffee Break**

16:30 – 18:00	Panel III: Education and training in a horizontal perspective: connecting to other issue areas and the potential for International Geneva
Panellists:	Lyne Calder, Policy Adviser, Global Institutions Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Bern, Switzerland Jennifer Roe, Technical Adviser and Reporting Manager for East and Central Africa, RET International, Geneva, Switzerland Mario Novelli, Professor in the Political Economy of Education, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK and NORRAG Scientific Adviser
Moderator:	Michel Carton, Executive Director, NORRAG, Geneva, Switzerland
Reactions and wrap-up:	Noura Kayal, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and to the other international organisations in Geneva, Switzerland Valérie Liechti, Education Policy Adviser and SDC Education Focal Point, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Bern, Switzerland Joost Monks, Managing Director, NORRAG, Geneva, Switzerland
18:15 – 20.00	Cocktail

Attendance by institutional background

Category	Attendance
Academia	11
Consultants	5
Educational Institutions	3
Foundations	3
International Organisations	10
International Non-Governmental Organisations	5
Non-Governmental Organisations	4
Partners – Global South	6
State of Geneva	1
Think Tanks	4
Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	11
NORRAG	9
TOTAL	72

ABOUT THE PAPER AND THE AUTHORS

This Policy Paper is framed on the discussions held during the Public Conference on “The Governance of Education and Training: Agenda 2030 and Beyond” which was held on 22 June in Geneva, Switzerland. It also refers to wider and also later material for contextualization purposes. The views made in this paper do not necessarily reflect the specific views of the authors, NORRAG, the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs or any other individuals or organisations that attended or were represented at the Conference.

Professor Kenneth King is the Editor of *NORRAG News* and one of the founders of NORRAG. He is an Emeritus Professor at the School of Social and Political Studies within University of Edinburgh in Scotland, United Kingdom. His current research covers development cooperation in general, and specifically the topics of China-Africa collaborations, skills development, and post-2015 agenda.

Dr Robert Palmer runs NORRAG NEWSBite, NORRAG’s blog (norrag.wordpress.com) and twitter account (@NORRAG_NEWS). He has research interests in international education, post-2015 and technical and vocational skills development. He currently lives and works between the UK and Jordan.

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