

# WORKSHOP REPORT

## **Global Governance of Education & Training and the Politics of Data**

16-17 June, 2014

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Geneva, Switzerland



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## AGENDA (IN BRIEF)

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014

9.00-9.30	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> Speakers: Michel Carton and Joost Monks (NORRAG)
9.30-10.00	<b>Tour de table of participants' expectations of the workshop</b>
10.00-11.45	<b>SESSION 1: SETTING THE STAGE</b> Speakers: Thomas Biersteker (IHEID), Susan Robertson (University of Bristol), Kenneth King (NORRAG), Hugh McLean (Open Society Foundations)
12.00-13.00	<b>Discussion</b>
14.00-16.00	<b>SESSION 2: IDENTIFYING KNOWLEDGE GAPS IN SPECIFIC AREAS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public-private partnerships, foundations and corporations Speakers: Nicholas Burnett (R4D) and Antoni Verger (Autonomous University of Barcelona)</li> <li>Civil society engagement Speakers: Valerie Liechti (SDC ) and David Archer (ActionAid)</li> <li>Emerging countries Speakers: He Jin (Ford Foundation) and Wan Xiulan (Zhejiang Normal University)</li> <li>The global governance of Technical and Vocational Skills Development Speakers: Eva Hartmann (Copenhagen Business School) and Christine Evans-Klock (ILO)</li> <li>The politics of data Speakers: Aaron Benavot (UNESCO EFA GMR) and Alexandra Draxler (NORRAG)</li> </ul>
16.30-17.30	<b>SESSION 3: SYNTHESISING AND CONSOLIDATING</b> , Group discussions Rapporteurs: Annie Vinokur (University of Paris-Ouest Nanterre) and Mario Novelli (University of Sussex)

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2014

9.00-9.30	<b>Synthesis of previous day and perspectives</b> Speakers: Susan Robertson and Michel Carton
9.30-12.00	<b>SESSION 4: DEFINING A RESEARCH AND POLICY DIALOGUE FRAMEWORK</b>
12.00-12.30	<b>Wrap-up and concluding remarks</b> Speakers: Michel Carton, Joost Monks and Kenneth King

## ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education and training in Africa
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
EFA	Education for All
ETF	European Training Foundation
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HE	Higher education
IBE	International Bureau of Education
IHEID	Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IT	Information technology
LLL	Lifelong learning
LMTF	Learning Metrics Task Force
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NFET	Non formal education & training
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Public private partnership
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SD	Skills development
SNIS	Swiss Network for International Studies
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TVSD	Technical and vocational skills development
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation

# INTRODUCTION

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NORRAG held a scoping workshop on “Global Governance of Education and Training & the Politics of Data”, on 16-17 June 2014 at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva.

The workshop aimed at defining the contours and contents of a possible Research and Policy Dialogue Framework on global governance of education and training<sup>1</sup>. The framework intends to fulfil the two objectives of NORRAG:

- To stimulate and disseminate timely, innovative, critical analysis
- To broker knowledge at the interface between research, policy and practice

The workshop gathered a group of twenty international experts reflecting the diverse constituencies of NORRAG: researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from different regions of the world (see Appendix). The workshop was structured around four sessions, each of which had a specific aim, namely:

- i) To set the stage by a general discussion on the concept of global governance and the ongoing transformations in the fields of education and training (*Session 1 – Setting the stage*)
- ii) To share perspectives on the main issues at stake in different thematic areas and identify knowledge gaps (*Session 2 – Identifying knowledge gaps in specific areas*)
- iii) To reflect on the interconnections between the different thematic areas and define 2 or 3 topics of priority for the framework (*Session 3 – Synthesizing and consolidating*)
- iv) To discuss the next steps for establishing a framework and explore participants' interest (*Session 4 – Defining the process for establishing a Research and Policy Dialogue Framework*)

Through this synthesis, we seek to capture the richness of the discussions and reflect the diversity of perspectives expressed. It begins with a synopsis of the issues raised by participants regarding the concept of global governance and its application to the fields of education and training. This focuses in particular on debates related to the meanings and relevance of global governance of education. It includes also a range of contrasting positions on its origins, as well as considerations on the specificities of education with regards to global governance.

This synopsis is followed by overviews of the discussions on three thematic areas which emerged as priorities for the framework: i) the representation and power of different actors, ii) the politics of data, and iii) global governance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The synthesis concludes with the different options and activities mentioned as a follow-up to the workshop and contributions.

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<sup>1</sup> In this text, “the framework” is used as a shortcut of “Research and Policy Dialogue Framework” and “education” is most often used in a broad sense to include education and training.

# 1. UNDERSTANDINGS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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## Global governance, a loose and contested concept

*Global governance* is a loose concept in that it can be applied to a wide range of practices of order and regulation at the global level. In fact, global governance is essentially about norms and rules – be they formal or informal, widely accepted or not –, and it is a complex system of rules rather than a unitary one.

This system has become increasingly complex and fragmented over time given that rule makers have considerably evolved along with the political changes that have occurred since the end of the Cold War. There is now a myriad of governmental and non-governmental, for profit and non-profit, actors involved in multiple – and even competing – governance arrangements at the global level.

A focus on states and intergovernmental organisations is not adequate for comprehension of global governance, and account must be taken of the participation of different types of non-state actors and their impacts on the regulation and delivery of public goods. This explains why global governance, though not new in practice, has gained popularity over the past 25 years as a concept, a research issue and a discourse. This has led to the development of a varied vocabulary and discourse, as well as normative notions of ‘good governance’ or ‘democratic governance’, which make the concept of global governance fuzzy and contested.

Depending on how it is understood, on where people are located in the world, and on whether they are rule-makers or rule-takers, global governance might be perceived as a jargon or an ideology. In China, for instance, the state remains the central locus of authority and resists to certain aspects of global governance (e.g. political involvement of non-state actors, World Bank’s conditionality for loans, global reporting). Yet, China is involved in, and influenced by, global governance arrangements (e.g. world rankings, contribution to the post-2015 debates in association with the G77). It illustrates how processes of global policy borrowing/lending/dumping differ according to countries and their power, and this issue needs to be interrogated. The views and positions of different countries from the so-called ‘Global South’ in global governance of education would therefore constitute an interesting area for research and policy dialogue.

## Specificities and emerging trends in the fields of education and training

The regulation of education systems has traditionally been seen as a state affair and is somewhat resistant to a global approach. This is most probably due to the specific nature of education as a bearer of ethical, moral and cultural values that are both cherished and contested at national level.

Global governance of education and training has nonetheless developed gradually from the 1940s to the 1990s, through international organisations such as ILO, IBE, UNESCO and the World Bank. Since the 1990s, it has become more dense and complex. There has been increased involvement of

new actors and proliferation of global governance arrangements for each sub-sector of education (general education, TVET, higher education, etc.).

Three phases of intensification can be broadly identified:

- The 1990s, with the global campaign for Education For All, transnational civil society movements, pressure for education as a tradable sector through the WTO, OECD's push for global competitiveness and the development of large-scale learning assessments.
- The 2000s, with the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and related governance tools (Global Monitoring Report, Fast Track Initiative/Global Partnership for Education), as well as the further promotion of learning assessments by the OECD.
- The 2010s, with the increased participation of private for profit and non profit companies as well as foundations in the post-2015 debates, and further promotion of comparative data for rankings by a community of like-minded actors (OECD, World Bank, Pearson...).

Overall, there has clearly been a gradual change in the locus of authority, as it has moved beyond the traditional state level. With the rise of actors and tools promoting a global competitiveness agenda, a new range of terms has appeared: global knowledge, global education and global competency. In order to better understand this transformation of global governance over time, key players and their relationships should be mapped out in more details for each sub-sector of education and training.

## The historical dimension

The ongoing transformations of global governance are to be understood in the light of historical perspective. Tracing the origins of global governance in the fields of education and training is somewhat complicated. Most often, the mid 1940s are taken as a starting point, with the creation of the United Nations system (1945) and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Yet, other times in history could be considered: 1) the 1920s with the creation of the League of Nations and the first international organisations devoted to knowledge, education and training; and, 2) the period of colonial empires and faith-based organisations. For the latter period, the question arises of the difference between globalization and global governance. The two processes relate to each other, with global governance deriving from globalization, but their articulation would need to be better defined.

A comparison with the historical development of global health governance would also provide interesting new insights and lessons learnt.

## 2. REPRESENTATION & POWER OF DIFFERENT ACTORS

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Discussions on global governance of education and training covered a wide range of stakeholders and raised three main issues: i) the unpacking of non-state/private actors; ii) the conceptualization of global governance to capture actors at different levels and their interconnections; and, iii) the 'improvement' of global governance.

### Unpacking the private

Non-state / private actors have been increasingly involved in global governance of education and training since the 1990s and a better categorization is required to capture their diversity. For instance, it is possible to distinguish three types of private for profit and non-profit actors involved in the international financing of education:

- Corporations and organisations that represent them, either involved directly in the education business (publishers like Pearson, IT companies like CISCO, test makers...) or not (e.g. World Economic Forum);
- Foundations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) arms of corporations;
- Individuals, private domestic funds and crowdfunding movements.

Although the motivations of these actors might differ, their involvement has an impact on the need for metrics and results. Similar observations were made regarding public-private partnerships for the provision of education, which have been promoted across the globe since the 1990s.

Non-state actors cover also a diversity of civil society organisations, unions and research institutions, whose participation in global governance is not well documented. Potential research issues include civil society counter movements, the growing power of think tanks such as Brookings, or the voice of different non-state actors in multistakeholder arrangements such as the Global Partnership for Education or the Learning Metrics Task Force. It was noted that these multistakeholder arrangements are very representative of new forms of global governance and are also contested spaces.

### Interconnections between global, regional, national and local levels

Another discussion revolved around the power of - and interconnections between - global, regional, national and local actors. Two particular concerns were expressed. The first one dealt with the unequal positions of different countries from the Global South in global governance and gave rise to two questions: what are the implications of country positions and power on global policy borrowing? And, what is the potential of domestic resource mobilization to mitigate external influence?

The second concern was about civil society engagement at different levels, including the engagement of local civil society organisations (CSOs) through transnational CSOs. What has been the influence of civil society in global governance over time? It has been pointed out that CSOs can play an important role for bringing alternatives and holding governments accountable by monitoring



budgets and policy implementation. However, civil society coalitions should themselves be accountable and broad-based in order to ensure representativeness and legitimacy.

## Improving global governance?

From the above discussions, emerged a very interesting question about the normative implications of the diversification of actors for education at both the global and national level. For instance, does it encourage uniformity and lead to a decline of diversity in education? It was suggested that the more complex global governance is, the more it gives an advantage to the powerful actors.

The legitimacy and effectiveness of global governance were also debated and gave rise to two conflicting positions. A majority of participants were concerned about how to improve global governance in terms of inclusiveness, accountability and effectiveness. The case of education in conflict situations was mentioned as an area where global governance is perhaps more effective. However, other participants argued that improving global governance should not be a goal *per se*, as global governance depoliticizes education.

### 3. THE POLITICS OF DATA

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‘Data’ has become a central governance mechanism nowadays, as it is shown among others by the recent UN call for a ‘data revolution’. A significant part of the workshop debates were devoted to discussing this issue: What do we mean by data? Who are the actors involved in the production and promotion of data? How are data used, and what are the implications for education?

#### A focus on comparative data about education

The type of data that was the focus of the discussion is that based on standardization and quantification of learning inputs and outcomes: e.g. OECD’s statistics and large-scale assessments (PISA, PIAAC...), World Bank’s statistics and SABER, Pearson’s Learning Curve, the WEF’s Human Capital Index. The scope of statistics, indicators and indices is continually expanding in terms of thematic and geographical coverage.

This ‘global data’ is primarily used for international comparability, benchmarking and ranking. It serves as an important source of legitimation and justification for decision-making and investment in education and training. The following statement of the Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division in the OECD illustrates well this trend of ‘governing by numbers’: “Without data, you are just another person with an opinion”.

However, there is a problematic relationship between data, knowledge/evidence and policies in the above statement. Data in itself does not constitute knowledge; it first requires to be processed. Yet, who is producing and processing the data? What is the evidence used to legitimate policies (including the post-2015 agenda)? It seems that think tanks, for-profit companies, and international organisations are the main producers, promoters and beneficiaries of data and evidence.

#### Interrelations between global governance and data

The above discussion highlighted the interplay between the transformation of global governance actors and the development of internationally comparable data as governance tools. Yet, there is a considerable knowledge gap about the political economy of comparative data about education.

It was also underlined that data and statistics are not a new phenomenon, and are politically and socially constructed. A history of quantification in education and comparative data about education and training is lacking for a better understanding of the current trends: what dimensions have become standardized before others, and by which actors? Why is there less comparative data for TVET than for higher and general education? What are the driving forces behind comparative data? How has it been used in policy-making?

## Implications for education and training

The rising importance of internationally standardized data on education led workshop participants to question its implications for education: what have been and will be the consequences – both intended and unintended – of focusing on the creation of such data at different levels (individuals, families, schools, governments and the world)?

It was estimated that such data can have negative consequences at different levels. For example, it weakens the legitimacy and power of nation states, and undermines quality education by encouraging teaching to the test. Furthermore, it was recalled that “not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted”. Yet, many important dimensions of education that are impossible to measure no longer receive policy attention.

Finally, scepticism was expressed about the positive impact of internationally-standardized data on social inequalities, as well as on a holistic approach to education. Context-sensitive educational data and ‘local data’ (at the level of students, schools, and classrooms) are likely to be more relevant and useful than ‘global data’ to improve education. The ‘data revolution’ in education should therefore be led by regional, national and sub-national levels.

Another issue of concern was the transparency and democratization of data to make it a liberating force: how to improve its accessibility to citizens? Would statistical literacy empower them to hold their government accountable?

It was concluded that the links between data, research and policies should be re-defined and improved to ensure that we develop evidence-based policies rather than policy-based evidence.

## 4. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF TVET

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The workshop not only covered education but also training, as current policy discourse tends to emphasize their autonomy and interdependence. For instance, tensions exist between two approaches of training: i) skills for economic productivity, vs. ii) skills for productivity *and* for human and societal development. The latter is clearly related to education. Besides, the quality of general education is a key factor for the success of any training. Therefore, the two fields cannot be considered without one another when it comes to global governance.

### Trends in the global governance of training

Like education, and maybe more than education, training is involving not only the state but also a whole range of actors: workers, employers, NGOs, CSOs... This explains the shift from the concept of TVET – mostly based on a supply-driven approach – to the one of skills development (SD) – more related to the demand of the concerned stakeholders.

The involvement of different stakeholders is not new, as demonstrated by the role of the ILO – a tripartite organisation – since the 1920s for the regulation of decent work, employment and training. Yet, like in education, governance of training has become more complex in recent years. As an illustration, UNESCO attempts to reflect this transformation by consulting a wide range of stakeholders for the revision of the 2001 Recommendation concerning TVET.

The transformations of both education and training are strongly related to the globalisation of the productive value chains (multinationals), as well as of the goods and services markets that are in a never-ending modification process. This leads to highly mobile labour markets for which global education and training markets are proposing commoditized programmes in the framework of the WTO-GATS.

### Keeping a connection between education and training

The future framework should be based on a broad understanding of both education and training, and thus include non-formal education and training (NFET), lifelong learning (LLL) and skills development for productivity and societal needs. The post-2015 negotiations have shown the difficulty of the parties involved to reflect beyond a sector approach, in a transversal and comprehensive way.

Yet, such a comprehensive approach is necessary to apprehend global governance. Two examples were given to illustrate the connection between education and training. The first one related to the renewed interest in TVET/SD for employability, which may lead to less interest in higher education (HE) on the part of some policy makers and students. The second was the comparison between the classification standards, meta-standards of comparability, international quality standards, and

recognition standards being used in the fields of HE and TVET: which field is more globally governed, and why?

An integral, comparative and historical perspective on all the fields and sectors (including NFET and LLL) of global governance of education could be a key initial step for the development of the framework. This perspective has been partly adopted by the Inter-Agency Working Group on TVET - which includes since 2010 representatives of the Asian Development Bank, the European Training Foundation, the ILO, the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank – as some members of this group are not specialized specifically in the field of training. The WB 2012 *World Development Report* on Jobs has proposed an analysis of the respective relationships of the elements of the continuum that includes jobs, skills and basic education. The WEF's Global Agenda Council on Education and Skills has recently published a book *Education and Skills* (2014), that includes a Human Capital Index covering education and training indicators, alongside well-being, health, labour force participation, and social mobility. This may sound as a response from the multinationals to the UNDP *Human Development Reports*.

In order to overcome the difficulties of securing a transversal perspective on education and training, a recent trend consists in using a thematic approach. For example, the theme of youth employment requires to articulate education, training, socio-economic inclusion and jobs/employment. Both ILO and the ADEA's Inter-country Quality Pole on TVSD are working in that direction.

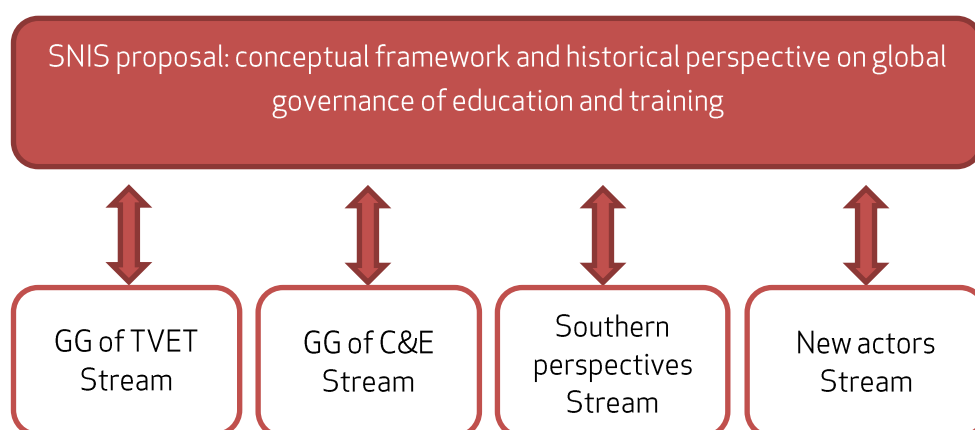
It is clear that the framework in elaboration cannot be that ambitious. The proposals made in the conclusions of this report aim at securing that the foundation of the proposed framework contains a shared holistic vision of education and training.

## CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

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The workshop has provided a wealth of insights on the complexity of contemporary global governance in the fields of education and training, and it generated many research issues. A foundational issue for the definition of the framework relates to developing the conceptual model and the historical perspective allowing analysing the evolution of actors and governance tools over time. This work would include the historical background to world data in education and highlight emerging trends in global governance.

Building on this foundation, and in order to complement this knowledge base, it is proposed to work on four specific thematic areas/streams for further research: 1) Global Governance of TVET; 2) Global Governance of Conflict & Education; 3) Emerging countries/Southern Perspectives; and, 4) New Actors. The below figure illustrates the proposed approach:



Specifically, it is proposed to submit a research proposal to the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS)<sup>2</sup> by January 2015. This two-year research project would focus on the history of data and global governance of education. Based on the ideas proposed in the workshop, various other sources of funding will be sought for the specific thematic streams. Each stream could lead to a separate set of activities to be determined.

The knowledge produced aims at contributing to innovative policy dialogues. A series of multistakeholder meetings could be organized for that purpose (e.g. a meeting on a specific thematic stream, twice a year throughout the duration of the SNIS project).

As immediate follow-up to the workshop, NORRAG will invite a small number of participants to form a preparatory group for developing jointly a framework on global governance of education. This preparatory group will have three main responsibilities: i) defining the objectives and operation of a

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.snis.ch/>

Working Group on Global Governance of Education convened by NORRAG, 2) drafting a 4-pager for the SNIS research proposal, and 3) discussing in more detail the next steps for each specific thematic area. The first meeting of the preparatory group would take place in the fall of 2014 (early October or November).

Finally, NORRAG is planning different activities for the coming months:

- A thematic session on “Global Governance of Education and Training post-2015: Perspectives from China and Africa”, during the International Seminar on “China-Africa Education Development and Capacity Building”, to be held in Jinhua (China), 23-24 October in collaboration with Zhejiang Normal University. The outcomes of this session will be presented to the preparatory group and feed discussions on the specific thematic area n°3 “Southern Perspectives on Global Governance of Education and Training”.
- A preliminary mapping of major instruments & actors of global governance in the fields of education and training from the 1920s to 2015;
- A Working Paper on global governance of education in the post-2015 debates;
- A series of blog posts about global governance of education on NORRAG NewsBite.

Other possible activities include a special issue of NORRAG NEWS on global governance of education, as well as e-debates and executive courses on multilateralism in education at the IHEID.



Summary table: next steps for the framework on global governance of education and training

What	When	Who	Comments
China meeting	23-24 October	NORRAG & Zhejiang Normal University	Focus on southern perspectives
Preparatory Group meeting	Early October or November	Preparatory Group convened by NORRAG	Conception & writing up of SNIS pre-proposal (4 p.), discussion on the next steps for a WG & thematic streams
SNIS research proposal	January 2015 (short pre-proposal for pre-selection)	NORRAG/IHEID	Focus on developing the conceptual framework and the historical perspective



## APPENDIX: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Organisation	Name
ActionAid, UK	David Archer – Head of Programme Development
Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain	Antoni Verger – Researcher and Lecturer
Centre for Education Policy Development (CEDP), South Africa	Veerle Dieltiens – Senior Researcher
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark	Eva Hartmann, Assistant Professor
Ford Foundation, China	He Jin – Senior Programme Officer
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Switzerland	Thomas Biersteker – Professor and Director of the Programme for the Study of International Governance
ILO, Switzerland	Christine Evans-Klock – Director of the Skills and Employability Department
Ministry of Higher Education, Oman	Hana Ameen – Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education
NORRAG Team	Michel Carton – Executive Director Alexandra Draxler – Consultant Laetitia Houlmann – Communication Officer Kenneth King – NORRAG News Editor Stéphanie Langstaff – Research Assistant Joost Mönks – Managing Director
Open Society Foundations, UK	Hugh McLean – Director of Education Support Programme
Results for Development (R4D), USA	Nicholas Burnett – Principal and Managing Director
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland	Valérie Liechti – Education Policy Adviser / SDC Education Network
UNESCO EFA GMR, France	Aaron Benavot – Professor at University of Albany-SUNY and New Director of the EFA GMR
University of Bristol, UK	Susan Robertson – Professor
University of Paris-Ouest Nanterre, France	Annie Vinokur – Emeritus Professor
University of Sussex, UK	Mario Novelli – Professor
Zhejiang Normal University, China	Wan Xiulan – Professor and Deputy Dean of the Institute of International and Comparative Education

## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report is a distillation of the main points raised during the workshop “Global Governance of Education and Training & the Politics of Data” which was held on June 16-17<sup>th</sup> in Geneva, Switzerland. All views made in this report relate to the interventions made during the workshop. They do not necessarily reflect the specific views of the author, NORRAG, or any other individuals or organisations that attended or were represented at the workshop.

This report is edited by Stéphanie Langstaff, Research Assistant at NORRAG. She has been involved with NORRAG since 2006 and is currently contributing to the programme of work on global governance of education.

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## ABOUT NORRAG

NORRAG is an independent network whose Secretariat is located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva, Switzerland. Since its launch in 1985, NORRAG has established itself as a multi-stakeholder network of researchers, policymakers, members of NGOs, foundations and the private sector seeking to inform, challenge and influence international education and training policies and cooperation. Through networking and other forms of cooperation and institutional partnerships, it aims in particular to stimulate and disseminate timely, innovative and critical analysis and to serve as a knowledge broker at the interface between research, policy and practice. As of June 2014 NORRAG has more than 4,000 registered members in more than 167 countries, 45% from the global South.

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