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JUNE
2014

THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

THE REAL STORY OF EDUCATIONAL CULTURES AND CONTEXTS

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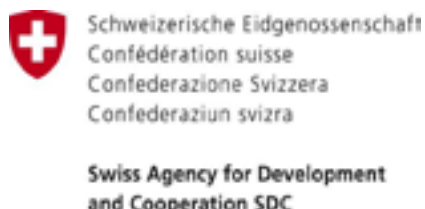
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What is NORRAG?

Since its launch in 1985, NORRAG has established itself as a broad-based multi-constituency network of researchers, policymakers, NGOs and consultants that aims to intermediate between research and policy, offering and producing neutral knowledge and critical analysis of complex international education issues. Its main objectives are:

- To stimulate and disseminate timely, concise, critical analysis and act as an incubator for new ideas

- To serve as a knowledge broker at the interface between research and policy

- To promote North-South and South-South-North cooperation and institutional partnerships

NORRAG's current programme focuses on the following themes:

- Education and training policies in the post-2015 and beyond agenda

- Global governance of education and training and the politics of data

- Conflict and education: Scenarios for their future interactions

- International perspectives on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) policies and practice in the global South

For more information, please visit: www.norrag.org

What is NORRAG News?

NORRAG News is a digital newsletter that is produced twice a year. Each issue has a large number of short, sharp articles, focusing on policy implications of research findings and/or on the practical implications of new policies on international education and training formulated by development agencies, foundations and NGOs. The niche of NORRAG has been to identify a number of 'red threads' running through the complexity of the debates and the current aid and cooperation discourse, and to dedicate special issues of NORRAG News to the critical analysis of these themes.

Other ways to engage with NORRAG:

- NORRAG NEWSBite http://norrag.wordpress.com/ - NORRAG's Blog about international education, training and development aid and policy.

- Follow NORRAG on Twitter - @NORRAG_NEWS

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NORRAG News 50

The Global Politics of Teaching and Learning:
The Real Story of Educational Cultures and Contexts

The last few years with their global focus on education post-2015 and review of Education for All (EFA) have emphasized the failure of LEARNING. Despite all the discussion of Learning Goals, and of Learning for All, the real storyline has been that students were not learning, or not learning enough (NORRAG blog: http://norrag.wordpress.com/2013/12/31/learning-and-not-learning-that-was-the-year-that-was-2013/). There has, of course, been the other side of the learning story which is about PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment) and success in learning – at least for some (See NORRAG PISA blog series: norrag.wordpress.com). This has then connected to QUALITY, another of the large themes of the post-2015 debates. It too, like learning, has been as much about the absence of quality, or about the misplaced focus on access rather than quality in respect of the Millennium Development Goals.

But what about the situation in ordinary schools and training institutions? The implication of the term 'learning crisis' suggests there may be a crisis in teaching. But what is the reality behind the large numbers in the *Global Monitoring Report 2013*?

Teachers are surely not responsible for the fact that there are said to be some 774 million adults who are still illiterate in the world. Are teachers connected in any way to the iconic figures of 57 million out of school primary age children in 2011, 69 million out of school adolescents, or the 250 million 15- to 24-year olds who lack foundation skills despite half of them having spent four years or more in school? Equally, are teachers connected to the growth of what are called 'low cost private schools', or to the massive presence in many countries of fee-paying 'shadow education' taking place after regular day school and at weekends? Or are they related to the claim that 1.6 million teachers are said to be needed to achieve universal primary education? These issues need to be interrogated further.

More than 30 years ago, the Research Review and Advisory Group (RRAG), which was the direct predecessor of NORRAG, focused on **Teacher Effectiveness Research** for its first state of the art review (1981); but there did not emerge a consensus about teacher policies that could be recommended in different settings; there was no golden fleece. Even after a multi-country ethnographic study of teaching by Beatrice Avalos, **Teaching Children of the Poor** (1986), there were no quick fixes to be offered.

More than 25 years later, in the Secretary General's High Level Panel (HLP) Report of 2013, teachers get just two sentences out of the two pages discussing the HLP's illustrative education goal: 'Teachers are often early mentors who inspire children to advance. The quality of education in all countries depends on having a sufficient number of motivated teachers, well trained and possessing strong subject-area knowledge'. In March 2013, the Global Thematic Consultation on Education Post-2015 underlined that 'In particular, a notable gap in current educational goals is the lack of focus on teachers, as the key agents in improving the quality of education'.

Fortunately, the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2013/4 has as its principal focus **Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality Education for All.** It has done two things: first, it argues for the absolutely crucial role of 'Education for Development Post-2015', showing how education contributes to a whole range of development outcomes. Second, the report looks at how 'quality teachers' need to be at the centre of 'teaching and learning for maximum impact'. In this part, the evidence linking quality teachers and quality learning is reviewed, along with issues on teacher supply and deployment. There is a review of innovative curriculum and assessment reforms that depend centrally on teachers. And for policy makers, ten key strategies are proposed for unlocking teachers' potential to solve the learning crisis.

In this special anniversary issue of **NORRAG News** we are paying considerable critical attention to the GMR of 2013/4; but we shall also look at how the multiple concerns about teachers and teaching are being positioned in the wider post-2015 education debates.

However, teaching is not principally about global positioning and global reports, even if there have been some very valuable reports on teaching, including from the OECD, McKinsey and others. It is about the many hugely different contexts and cultures of teaching and learning. Teacher assumptions about the nature of intelligence, achievement, and social class are all going to be vital to their cultures of teaching. Equally, their status and reputation in society are nowhere the same, and even within a single society, their status can change markedly over time, greatly influenced by salary, and by perceptions of schooling whether public or private. Again, if the teachers are migrants, teaching away from home or their country, it will be very different.

From NORRAG's current 4,000+ members, there are no less than 156 who profess that one of their areas of disciplinary interest and expertise is 'teacher education' while there are 101 who claim the same for 'teacher training'. Apart from those mentioned in the list of contents below, we hope to hear back from some members of these constituencies when you read this issue of **NORRAG News.** You may want to follow our blog series also on teaching and learning (www.norrag.wordpress.com/tag/teachers/)

Finally, we should acknowledge that this is the fiftieth issue of **NORRAG News** (NN)! Several of the people who were mentioned as members of NORRAG back in NN1 in 1986 are very active today, such as Sheldon Shaeffer, Noel McGinn, Ernesto Schiefelbein, Lene Buchert, Beatrice Avalos, Hans Weiler, Wim Hoppers, and Ingemar Fagerlind. Also Michel Carton and Kenneth King. Luckily, a few of these are also very well-known for their expertise on teachers and teaching.

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Foreword

Kenneth King, University of Edinburgh & NORRAG

SIDA, CESO, DFID and now OSF have been responsible for NORRAG News reaching the grand old age of fifty issues since 1986! The first page of the first issue said that 'The quality of our newsletters will depend on the contributions of individuals in the RRAG networks so please do send us material which you think other RRAG members should be made aware of'. The same is certainly true today.

There were only 15 members of NORRAG mentioned in the first issue, and it is satisfying that, of these, Beatrice Avalos, Michel Carton, Kenneth King, Noel McGinn, Ernesto Schiefelbein, and Sheldon Shaeffer have all contributed to this issue. By contrast with 1986, the call for contributions nowadays goes out to the more than 4,000 NORRAG members, almost half of which are located in the South.

Many changes have taken place since the first issue. It changed its name from **Northern Research Review and Advisory Group** to **Network for Policy Research Review and Advice on Education and Training** in 2002. Significantly, the dropping of 'Northern' coincided with a special issue of *NORRAG News (NN30)* on 'The Harsh Realities of Going Virtual: NORRAG and the Web'. By then, it had become very clear that there was a constituency interested in contributing to NORRAG, far beyond the traditional North. It changed again in 2013 to **Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training**. But like many acronyms, the term, NORRAG, has taken on a life of its own, and there are few NORRAG members who would be able to say what the letters stand for!

Though the coordination of NORRAG moved to Geneva in 1991-2, with a special issue of *NORRAG News (NN13)* on *Networking in Education and Training*, the editing of NORRAG News remained in Edinburgh. It is hard to believe that just 12 years ago, the hard copy red-covered NN was being put into envelopes in the Centre of African Studies, often late at night, and being sent off by airmail round the world. Hard copies are not entirely a thing of the past, however. Thanks to NUFFIC, there are still hard copies of the latest NN if there is a special meeting where NORRAG is responsible for a key part of the programme, such as at the biennial UKFIET Oxford Conference.

One of the critical developments with the move to Geneva was that Swiss Development Coordination began to support the NORRAG coordination. It also supported the translation of shorter versions of NN into French from NN14 in 1994 and into Spanish from NN36 in 2005. A very important development was the arrival, with NN49 in 2013, of the first edition of the Arabic version of NN, supported by the Omani Ministry of Higher Education. Later this year, the Chinese version of NN50 will be launched in Zhejiang Normal University on the Chinese mainland.

But the changes to *NORRAG News* have been much less important than what has stayed the same. Almost from the beginning, each issue of NN has been on a single theme. Also, from the beginning, the focus of NN has frequently been to take a key event such as Jomtien or Dakar, or a key report such as the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, and expose it to a whole diversity of views. The same would be true of NN's analysis of the international discourse around complex or controversial issues like 'Value for Money', 'Education Capacity Building', 'Development Knowledge', 'Aid Effectiveness', or the 'Politics of Partnership'.

NN has from the start till now kept its eye on aid or cooperation in education and training. A large number of the great events or major reports and commissions it has examined have been supported by aid, like the Global Monitoring Report, Jomtien or Dakar. Many of its regular contributors are or have been associated with development agencies.

Equally, it has sought to focus not just on education but also on skills development. Indeed over 700 members, a sixth of NORRAG's current membership, would claim that technical and vocational education and training or skills development is one of their three areas of professional interest.

NORRAG News has always distinguished itself from academic journals by ensuring that policy-makers, NGOs, consultants, and donors contributed to its pages – and not only academics and researchers. This is only possible because no contributor is asked to write more than a page or a page and a half. And one or two of our sharpest pieces have only been a paragraph long! This

has been the emphasis: short and sharp. In other words, a **critical** approach, and not just a description or a summary.

NN aims to offer busy people wanting to know, from a range of different viewpoints, North and South, what happened at Jomtien, or what is the landscape for education and skills post-2015, or, in a future issue, what is understood by the global governance of education. But it also manages to persuade busy people to contribute to the debate.

From May 2012, *NORRAG News* has been very powerfully reinforced by the NORRAG blog, www.norrag.wordpress.com, appearing at minimum five times in a month, and drawing like NN on a rich range of contributors, far beyond the core team of NORRAG. It too has been short, sharp and critical, and like NN, it has focused on a series of key themes.

Despite going virtual, *NORRAG News* cannot be separated from the regular face-to-face meetings of NORRAG members. These are essential to the life of any network or professional association. And it is through these that NORRAG's new 'Programmes of Work' have been encouraged from 2013.

Kenneth King, Editor, NORRAG News,

Saltoun Hall, Pencaitland, Scotland

2nd June 2014

Reaching Fifty: A Reflection on NORRAG News at NN50

Sheldon Shaeffer, consultant, formerly UNESCO, UNICEF, IDRC

Networks and newsletters come and go with considerable ease. Their founders lose their motivation and funding (or worse!); they don't keep up-to-date with the field, and so lose their relevance, their contributors, and eventually their readership; and they won't (or can't) adjust their format and mode of delivery to the technology of the time. The fact that *NORRAG News* has reached the milestone of 50 issues is therefore a truly remarkable achievement.

The Research Review and Advisory Group - RRAG - was established some 35 years ago by a small group of experienced and committed education researchers from around the world. They were brought together by the Education Section of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa to somehow make sense of the burgeoning amount of education research being carried out around the world, and particularly to raise the profile and quality of both education researchers and research in the developing world. Its primary function was to animate the "South", and hence half its membership consisted of influential researchers in the South. RRAG led to regional RRAGs which, although eventually succumbing to some of the challenges mentioned above, were effective for several years in linking researchers and promoting research. NORRAG was originally one of these regional RRAGs.

NORRAG also led to *NORRAG News 1* (NN1) - and who would have believed then that it would continue to attract as contributors the most thoughtful education experts in the world, grow in both readership and influence, find and sustain (not always easily) its financing, and adapt so creatively to modern forms of social media with the introduction of @NORRAG_NEWS and a Facebook presence, and introduce a Blog, NORRAG NEWSBite (www.norrag.wordpress.com). Most of all, as the current and recent issues show, it has maintained its relevance to the discourse around the post-2015 development agenda and particularly its influence in regard to the role of skills in that agenda. As one of the members of the first NORRAG generation, I look forward to its continuing and influential role in the debates that surround education - and to its 100th issue!

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL AND OVERVIEWS

Editorial on Connections, Cultures and Realities of Teaching and Learning

Kenneth King, University of Edinburgh & NORRAG

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Teaching children of the poor, edited by Beatrice Avalos, came out in 1986, the same year that the first issue of NORRAG News (NN) was published. This theme of teaching and of teachers is at the core of the 50th edition of NN. The theme was chosen deliberately to coincide with the publication in January 2014 of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2013/4 on Teaching and Learning. Over a third of this large volume is dedicated to 'Supporting teachers to end the learning crisis'.

Its chapters on teachers specifically focus on: how the learning crisis hits hardest the most disadvantaged; making teaching a national priority; a four-part strategy to provide the best teachers; and curriculum and assessment strategies that improve learning.

By contrast, 16 years earlier in 1998, the *World Education Report* (WER) was dedicated to *Teachers and teaching in a changing world.* Its three chapters on this topic covered the changing status and profile of teachers; teaching contexts and pressures; and teachers, teaching and new technologies. The WER paid a good deal of attention to the status of teachers, and to the 1966 *Recommendation on the status of teachers*, prepared by the ILO and UNESCO. Indeed 'status' and 'status of teachers' are two of the commonest terms in the WER[1]. By contrast, 'learning crisis' is an extremely frequent usage in the GMR of 2013/4, and is often linked to the iconic figure of 250 million children who are said not to be learning or failing to learn, despite some years in school.

Connecting teaching with learning: teacher expectations

There is no direct attempt in the GMR to connect the learning crisis to any crisis of teaching. Indeed, the area of teacher responsibility for learning, and the massive potential impact of teacher expecta-

tion on the determination of children to do well are not very evident in the GMR. By contrast, this huge potential was very clear at the end of the Avalos' study:

> The teachers in this study, by virtue of willingly assuming a position of enormous power and control over classroom events, were also very much responsible for its outcomes (e.g. the success or failure of their pupils).

Teacher perception of such responsibility, however, was generally weak. (Avalos, 1986: 162)

According to Cheng Kai-ming (University of Hong Kong), teacher expectations of children are uniformly high in many East Asian countries. As early as 1990, he wrote about 'The culture of schooling in East Asia', noting that:

> Teachers in China tend to believe that with due effort, a child should always be able to achieve the expected standard. They believe that genetic factors are always secondary, so long as pupils are trying hard…. As a corollary to this assumption, teachers believe that student performance is attributable to teacher performance. (Cheng, 1990: 164-5)

Personally I have always thought that you only need to meet a single teacher who believes in your potential for there to be a huge impact. This is precisely what Albert Camus said to his old teacher when getting the Nobel Prize for literature: 'Without you, without the affectionate hand that you held out to the poor child that I was, without your teaching and your example, none of this would have happened'. (Camus quoted in WER, 1998: 94).

Diverse cultures of teaching

The GMR does pick out a whole series of salient individual teacher voices illustrating key dimensions in its 'four-part strategy for providing the best teachers' in chapter 6. A few of these re-appear on the GMR's back cover. Equally, the WER has a box with different children saying what makes a good

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1 Interestingly, the WER is not in the bibliography of the GMR 2013/4.

teacher (WER, 1998: 20). But these don't really capture what Cheng calls the 'culture of schooling', and what might also be termed 'cultures of teaching'. Kelly, in this issue of *NORRAG News,* powerfully terms 'teaching as cultural practice'. But none of these phrases turns up in the WER or the GMR 2013/4, interestingly.

This means that the well-known Japanese study circles of teachers which are often thought to be responsible for the quality of primary and secondary education in Japan are not mentioned in the GMR. Doubtless, this may be because of the difficulty of drawing attention in a global report to a 'good practice' that may not take easily root in other teaching environments. But then what about the other end of the spectrum where it might appear, in some situations, that the learning crisis derives from the culture of schooling itself? Avalos, for instance, at the end of the ethnographies of teaching in Bolivia, Colombia and Chile, concludes that 'School failure, it seemed to us, is partly the result of circumstances, but, to a large extent, is actively produced within the schools' (Ibid. 163).

NORRAG News 50 (NN50) has several examples of what Naylor (in this issue of NN) calls the 'conservative culture of teaching and learning'. While in her case, the 'sacred text' may be 'hand-written notes, passed on from teacher to teacher, student to student, generation to generation', elsewhere, e.g. Myanmar, it may be memorized answer-books, bought in the local markets. But in many settings these conservative cultures of schooling are survival strategies derived from lack of text books, equipment, and, especially, lack of English (or French). This last is particularly visible in Sub-Saharan Africa where Trudell (in this issue of NN) argues that: 'hundreds of thousands of these African teachers suffer a serious pedagogical handicap: those whose classroom language practices prevent real communication and real learning on the part of their pupils, because the language of instruction is not understood by the children.'

Realities of teaching

What several contributors to NN50 appear to have identified are different versions of a teaching reality that is far removed from the participatory methods that teachers may have even enthusiastically learnt about at college. Thus Schendel (in this issue of NN) talks about 'the pervasive influence and importance of teachers' pre-under-

standings and perceptions of education. There is an acknowledgement that teachers tend to teach as they were taught, but there is no discussion of why that tends to be the case'. This is paralleled by Naylor, again, being 'struck by the resilience of the incumbent culture of teaching and learning in the face of an onslaught of teacher training, new curricular materials and other interventions all promoting the adoption of "participatory teaching methodology"'. The same point is made by the Schiefelbeins in a report they refer to in this issue of NN:

> In the absence of in-service training, or prior training that encourages reflection on practice, teachers continue to teach as they were taught to do in their pre-service formation or as they learned in earlier schooling. Interventions, such as improved textbooks, smaller classes, and in-service training that increase teachers' subject knowledge, will have little or no impact on actual practices.

These harsh realities of teaching and learning are laid bare in many NN50 contributions from Southern Sudan and Uganda to South Africa, and from Malaysia to Central America. Amin and Dhunpath (in this issue of NN) capture the 'deficit discourse' against which teachers' work is analysed; they thoughtfully explain historically how 'an unforgiving state of education in most parts of South Africa is, undoubtedly, also part of the problem relating to the emergence of scathing descriptions of teachers and the work they do. In the words of Bloch (2010) education is in a "toxic" state'. But they go beyond the essential critique of 'dysfunctionality' to make the case for mapping also the landscape of 'exceptionality'. Not to romanticize and glorify this but, in a very powerful phrase: 'to turn the pervasive pedagogy of despair to a pedagogy of possibility.'

The need for good news

As we said at the very beginning of NN50, the last few years with their global focus on education post-2015 and review of Education for All (EFA) have emphasized the failure of learning. In this regard, the first sentence is one of the most memorable of the GMR 2013/4: '…it is clear that, despite advance over the past decade, not a single goal will be achieved globally by 2015'. 'Learning crisis', we have noted, is one of its most common refrains. Hawker (in this issue of NN) comments that

the GMR 'paints a rather gloomy picture of the current state of the teaching workforce in many countries – there are not enough teachers, they are poorly trained, lack essential teaching skills, sometimes lack basic education themselves, are underpaid, undervalued, often unmotivated, get little effective support from the authorities, are often subject to insensitive and arbitrary policy decisions…'. This is why it is essential, in Guzman's words, to have the 'good news' as well as the bad. We can celebrate, with Ameen (in this issue of NN) the extraordinary achievements of girl students, and their teachers, in Oman, but worry over the massive underachievement of boys, at all levels.

Of course there are some bad apples in the crate, but Sawamura (in this issue of NN) following a long-term ethnographic approach in Kenya, concludes there are 'so many teachers who are committed to their vocation in spite of difficult circumstances, supporting their students' learning regardless of being paid well or not'. He argues that we should become more 'introspective', and that 'we had better start understanding and acknowledging how teachers work in demanding situations'. Heyneman (in this issue of NN) tells a parallel story in next-door Uganda after a decade of fiscal famine in the 1970s: 'Books were gone; copy machines broken; desks had succumbed to weather and insects. What had not disappeared were the teachers. There they were, day after day. What they lacked in materials, they made up with additional time, memory and diligence'.

Changing the time line

One of the problems with the GMRs and with many other 'global' reports and initiatives such as Global Education First is that the UN's 2015 time line is assumed to be universally applicable. How many times have we read: 'With the deadline for the EFA goals less than two years away…'? But this is not the timing of national education reform processes, including for teachers. In Malaysia, what Fernandez-Chung (in this issue of NN) terms 'race-based meritocracy' as opposed to true meritocracy goes back more than forty years to 1971 and the New Economic Policy. Li (in this issue) points out that China's concern with promoting open education is a thirty-five year commitment. Avalos takes a twenty-year perspective on this GMR 2013/4; and Hattie's massive review of learning achievement, *Visible learning* (see Mason in this issue of NN) itself took fifteen years, and claimed to have iden-

tified the key factors (many of them teacher-related) that appeared to enhance learning more effectively. Further, McGinn's very modest review of his fifty years' experience in 'planning' would acknowledge that 'We ignored the wide cultural and economic differences that exist between countries (and even wider differences between individuals). Our objective was not to learn what would work best in another context--the intent was to transfer knowledge, not to acquire it' (in this issue of NN).

Hence, the deadline for countries considering the recommendations and strategies from the GMR 2013/4 cannot be only 17 months away in September 2015.

Further dichotomies

Many readers approaching the 462 pages of the GMR 2013/4 will start with the ten recommendations for 'unlocking teachers' potential to solve the learning crisis' - just two pages in the overview, and four in the last section. They all seem perfectly acceptable, following through on the logic of the rest of the volume. But they are aimed at what 'policy-makers should adopt'. And they are given urgency by reminding the reader that 250 million children are not learning the basics, and they must not be allowed to become a lost generation. 'School leadership' is also mentioned in relation to the proposals, 'to ensure that teachers are accountable'. But the term 'teacher leadership' doesn't appear at all. Hawker (in this issue of NN) argues that this is surely part of unlocking potential:

> It is crucial to identify the good practitioners, listen to their advice, encourage them to lead others and provide them with the resources to do so effectively. The teacher unions will have a role to play in this, as will local communities. The point is that, if we are looking for a massive improvement in the global teaching force, we must not neglect the leadership capacity which already exists within it.

The last dichotomy relates to the 'learning crisis' – a term which we have already noted is used throughout the GMR 2013/4 (almost 120 times!). It is perhaps interesting that 'teaching crisis' is not used at all in the whole volume. But this does produce something of dichotomy between the iconic figure (of 250 million) attached to the learning crisis and the acknowledgement that the majority of these non-learners are actually in school,

and many others of them have had a few years of school exposure:

> Of the world's 650 million primary school age children, at least 250 million are not learning the basics in reading and mathematics. Of these, almost 120 million have little or no experience of primary school, having not even reached grade 4. The remaining 130 million are in primary school but have not achieved the minimum benchmarks for learning. (UNESCO, 2014: 18).

We are also told that the cost of 250 million children not learning the basics is equivalent to US$ 129 billion (ibid. 192). Many of them are said to be from disadvantaged backgrounds. But we learn very little about their experience of school, or of teaching. We end up therefore with a very dramatic figure about children not learning, but this is almost entirely disconnected from what we learn about any teaching they may or may not have had. McLean (in this issue of NN) puts his finger on precisely this disconnect or dichotomy in which what we hear about learning (and often about non-learning) is in quite a separate silo from teaching:

> So it is strange, 30 years on, to witness a global debate on the post-2015 education goal in which there is a tendency to talk about learning as if it were disconnected from teaching, detached from teachers, different from education and somehow recently discovered. How did we get here and what is going on?

We have only referred briefly in these few pages to less than a quarter of the more than fifty contributors to this special anniversary issue of NORRAG News.

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The Central Role of Teachers in the GMR 2013-14

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Key words: Teacher recruitment, preparation and deployment policies; teacher working conditions and career structures; criteria for better teacher improvement plans.

Summary: This note highlights the comprehensiveness of the section on teachers in the GMR 2013/4 and the many areas in which comprehensive teacher policies are lacking. It notes, however, that many of the improvement proposals have been around for a long time, and that there is need to get these working through attending properly to the setting of priorities and attention to what are conditioning elements for improvements to take place.

Teachers have never been absent in the past Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs), especially in the *Quality Imperative* one (GMR 2005), simply because no education subject can be handled without referring to one of its key actors. However, for the first time, the GMR 2013/14 Report presents a complete and thorough analysis centred on teachers and their role in the achievement of the Education for All targets. The themes discussed consider the main elements that need attention in well-formulated teacher policies: attracting good teacher candidates, preparing them competently for teaching, deploying them equitably in order to serve diverse groups in diverse locations, supporting them in their work, and providing them with career structures, salaries and working conditions that retain the competent ones in schools. The Report also discusses the need for appropriate teacher performance evaluation as well as forms of dealing with unprofessional behaviour. As with all other Reports, this one provides illustrations of country cases that "do it well", while also highlighting controversial practices that affect teachers and their well-being; and, very importantly, it draws on relevant and recent research to illustrate issues and possibilities for change. The Report is not limited to the very poor countries but also notes similar situations that affect more developed ones.

Despite what is said above, a second reading of the key chapters 5 and 6 of the GMR 2013/14 makes for an unsettling sense of "déjà vu". It would seem that nothing much has changed in the past twenty or so years in respect to the big gap in some countries (especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia) between what is desirable and what is feasible or possible to achieve as far as provision of teachers and the quality of their work is concerned. Although the Report shows exceptions and some positive country experiences, on the whole it presents a picture of very little real progress in these matters, thus helping to explain in part why many EFA targets will not be met by 2015. Unfortunately, there is not much analysis of why this has been so, beyond references to low levels of education spending, inadequate teacher conditions and obvious external causes such as warfare and its after-effects in various countries. A possible hypothesis is that in many countries there has not been an adequate policy-formulation environment, in the sense that priorities may have been set that do not sufficiently consider how one set of factors influences others, thus resulting in piecemeal interventions with little enduring effects.

Individual country-settings have problems and dilemmas related to teacher provisions that are not necessarily equally shared by other countries. Such dilemmas are reflected in decisions about priorities for increased expenditures. For example, the need to improve the educational opportunities for those who live in remote geographical areas or particular cultural communities may be mainly a question of recruiting new teachers from those contexts with additional incentives or may be a more complex issue related to working conditions and the number of teachers available in the country. If the issue is to have a greater number of teachers from outside those communities, then it is also an issue to have relevant teacher preparation opportunities and to improve the curriculum of teacher education programmes along those lines as well as to improve in situ professional development opportunities. If the issue is that conditions of service do not attract teachers otherwise prepared for those contexts, then it is those conditions that must be given priority in

policy decisions. From another perspective, the policy need of a particular country may be to raise the subject-matter understanding of new teachers and the skills to teach this appropriately to diverse populations. This, in turn, requires teacher educators or mentors able to contribute to widening of their knowledge base through professional development activities and to provide feedback on their practice.

Faced with a large number of problem areas and the inability to deal concurrently with all of the Report's recommendations on teacher quality, countries should realistically assess what would be the trade-offs of selecting some and leaving others for a later opportunity, though keeping in mind the factors that condition a positive result. In other words, the big picture presented throughout the Report in relation to teacher quality should feed into policy formulation in accordance with each country's needs, setting the appropriate priorities and conditions for achievement along with a realistic time-line for implementation as well as clear understanding of the conditioning factors to be attended at each stage in order to achieve real progress. These criteria should also be part of external aid programmes. The figure below illustrates the relationship between three goals to be achieved and the attention that must be paid to two sets of their conditioning factors: Teacher education and career structure /working conditions.

Teacher education quality and curriculum: opportunity to learn and improve

1. Increase qualified teacher candidates and secure equitable deployment

2. Improve teacher subject knowledge and teaching skills

3. Evaluate teacher performance and monitor/regulate professional behaviour

Career structure – conditions of work (status, salary, progression, teaching hours, pupils per class)

Positioning Teaching in Education Planning: a Long View

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Summary: The most effective teaching enables students to generate new knowledge based on both transmitted information and personal experiences. The process is interactive and necessarily complex, that is, marked by uncertainty as to consequences of particular actions. Students and teacher move from situation to situation attempting to increase understanding. This requires a type of planning at odds with most policy planning done today.

Effective teachers rely on detailed lesson plans for every class. The plans are based on the teacher's current knowledge of each student, whether they learn best with oral or written presentations, and what that student might be able to achieve given particular instructional methods. In most classrooms, students differ in prior knowledge and learning style. Good teachers anticipate that what works with some students may not work with others, and that students learn at different rates. These teachers prepare several alternative approaches. When students don't respond to one approach, another is tried; when the students grasp something, the teacher goes on to the next level. An effective teacher might make hundreds of decisions in an ordinary 5 hour school day. At the end of a lesson unit s/he evaluates the effectiveness of the methods used in terms by testing how much each student has learned in comparison to where they started. Answers to the "test" can be oral, written or even acted out--the form of assessment is adjusted to the students. Results of the assessment feed into planning for the next unit.

This kind of planning stands in stark contrast to the "education planning" done by international agencies and ministries of education. That planning is triggered by concern about "failure" to meet some predetermined standard. For example, a country's students score below international averages on PISA. Having identified a failure to meet standards, the planner compares his/her system's inputs or processes to those of more "successful" systems. The inputs and processes that worked elsewhere are transposed to the failing system. In effect, the planner assumes that education systems all face the same problems, so that what works in one place should work in another. What is called planning is actually programming, that is, the specification of the steps to be taken to achieve a predetermined objective. Programming makes most sense when a single objective can be identified, and when the path toward the objective is clearly marked. It makes sense, for example, in factories with uniform quality of raw materials and workers trained in repetitive actions. (Even in these circumstances, incidentally, a number of finished products are of poor quality.) It makes sense too in classrooms in which all students are similar in ability, interests and prior knowledge.

What we have here are two distinct approaches to thinking now about how to act in the future (that is, how to plan). The "education planning" I was first taught 50 years ago assumed that it is possible to know now what will determine the future. Although the contexts for which we offered plans were widely different, we used the mantra of "ceteris paribus" [all other things being equal] to justify recommending to developing countries initially what was accepted practice in the North, (and later what research in the North said were effective practices). We ignored the wide cultural and economic differences that exist between countries (and even wider differences between individuals). Our objective was not to learn what would work best in another context--the intent was to transfer knowledge, not to acquire it.

After 50 years the major objective of that planning-as-programming, to provide access to schooling for all children, largely has been achieved. Most countries now provide almost all their children access to an institution called school increasingly similar to that found in the early-industrialized nations. Programming may after all have been the appropriate planning for that kind of reproduction.

On the other hand, the schooling systems that emerged increasingly are seen as an obstacle to realizing the opportunities and resolving the problems of the 21st century (ironically, in the North as

well as the South). Planning-as-programming was successful in transferring some of the knowledge that contributed to the early development of the North, but in the process we shouldered poor countries with the enormous burden of maintaining schools effective in a previous age, and learned little about alternative ways to educate.

Planning-as-programming requires simple algorithms; conventional statistics could not represent the contingencies teachers face in every lesson. This was not for lack of research; thousands of studies on teaching have been done over the years. But they mainly were qualitative studies, overly rich in detail, seeming lacking in "rigor." They were ignored outside of universities and by most development planners. So planning for teachers focused first on getting the warm bodies in place, and then in a second stage on assuring they had the right credentials to teach.

Ministries of education were equally wed to a single model of how schools and teachers should be organized. Nowhere anyone in any ministry of education I knew ever asked about what actually was happening in school classrooms. Nor was there any discussion of how teachers were taught or what they learned in teacher training institutions. Nowhere was there discussion of how differences among children condition the effectiveness of different teaching practices. So planning (and certainly my planning) was about teachers (as warm bodies), not about teaching.

The globalization of education has continued that tradition. "Best practices" promoted by international groups such as McKinsey, the World Bank and OECD focus on teachers rather than on teaching. Their evidential base is inputs and test scores, not what takes place in classrooms and how students learn what they do. Although we know a great deal about learning and about teaching, little of that knowledge has yet been incorporated into the large-scale, one-size-fits-all recommendations of international actors. The global reports (perhaps in their conviction that there is one best way to "teach") downplay diversity, ignoring evidence that teaching practices that are effective for one child may not work for another, and that what works at one level of learning is less effective at another.

Because not all learning comes from teachers, over time I learned about learning, and from that about the variety of forms of teaching and their relative effects. It has been humbling to realize the meagre value of the "planning" I promoted in the first 30 years of my career. My sense of guilt is assuaged only by realizing that the generations that came after me persist in the same limited understanding of the nature of learning and teaching.

Teaching about Learning and Learning about Teaching

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Key words: learning; learning outcomes; teachers; Post-2015; education quality.

Summary: Simply measuring learning outcomes does not automatically lead to improved learning or better education systems. This article explores why some discussants in the post-2015 global goals debate might think that it does.

I worked for an NGO in South Africa in the 1980s called Learn and Teach[1]. It was an adult literacy organisation inspired by Freire and based on the insight that understanding the interconnections between learning and teaching is fundamental to good pedagogy. This made intuitive good sense then as it has all my life. So it is strange, 30 years on, to witness a global debate on the post-2015 education goal in which there is a tendency to talk about learning as if it were disconnected from teaching, detached from teachers, different from education and somehow recently discovered. How did we get here and what is going on?

Of course there is a global crisis in education that involves learning. It has a number of features at least of which two are relevant here: many education systems fail to deliver basic education skills for low-income learners; and the education quality most parents want has become a privilege relatively few can afford. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) finally focused world attention on the universal completion of primary education and the number of children out of school halved relatively rapidly by about 2005 (UNESCO, 2013). However, all the available data shows that the increase in school access did not result in the learning that, undoubtedly, was expected; in fact, the pressure from high enrolments on classrooms and systems may even have had a worsening effect on education quality. There are still an estimated 57 million primary-age children out of school; their crisis remains one of access and of course for them education access means learning.

The Education For All (EFA) goals carry forward a long-standing global commitment to quality education from Jomtien in 1990, which was confirmed in Dakar in 2000. This commitment is fundamental and was always going to be harder to achieve than simply getting children into school. It is disingenuous to talk of the crisis in education quality as if it has only just been discovered; and crucially, doing so avoids the need to work out why urgent action to improve learning was not taken before. The MDGs, after all, provided what EFA after Jomtien could not, a centrifuge for global governance: high-level mechanisms for organising and regulating essentially independent social relations and national interests. These processes are aligned with powerful interests and are as far removed from the reality of local delivery as they are from direct democracy. They reflect the prevailing neo-liberal preferences of governments in developed economies for top-down managerial approaches and marketised solutions for the social sector. Simon McGrath, writing in NORRAG, points to how these assumptions underpin the HLP Report, which for him is a "reworking of the MDG compromise between neo-liberalism and human rights" (McGrath, 2013).

It should be no surprise that the concerns about persisting poor education outcomes in low-income countries that emerged at the global governance level in the mid-2000s gave rise to narrowly-imagined, data-driven solutions such as EGRA and EGMA – the prominent early grade reading and mathematics assessments, funded by USAID. The LMTF (Learning Metrics Task Force), driven by special donor-interests, is focused on improving measurement, not learning. It must know that quality outcomes depend on quality teachers, quality tools and quality learning environments that are safe and secure for students and that the fundamental requirement for improving learning outcomes, therefore, is a national resolve to fix the education system. This includes providing adequate support for teachers. There is no *deus ex machina* [or magic bullet] to help governments, donors, and international agencies escape this reality.

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1 The associated Learn and Teach Magazine, which spun-off as a separate venture in 1983 and lasted a decade, is enjoying a small Facebook revival and can be seen here: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Learn-and-Teach-Magazine/101548616581452

Business management theory, already concerned in the mid-1980s by the effects of a narrow focus on achieving targets on overall quality (Edwards Deming, 1986), moved on from management by objectives (MBO) to systems thinking and ideas about business process management. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) debate suggests global governance is stuck in the narrow logics of the old MBO mantra: what-gets-measured-gets-done. It is essential that the key agencies, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the World Bank and UNICEF that bridge global governance concerns with on-the-ground reality, retain a commitment to supporting education systems more comprehensively.

A working paper for the Centre for Global Development (CGD) by former World Bank Economists, and funded by the Hewlett Foundation, presented a case in 2006 for a Millennium Learning Goal instead of the Millennium Development Goal for UPE (Filmer, Hasan and Pritchett, 2006). It pointed out that the MDG focus on school completion spawns bureaucratic accountability for quantity only; it argues that the goal should be about learning and that indicators should be based on age cohorts rather than school grades. In her critique, Angeline Barrett (2011) welcomes the emphasis on student learning by economists concerned with education and economic growth (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007) but echoes the warning of educators that narrow, learning-outcome targets lead inevitably to teaching-to-the-test, and ultimately undermine quality in education. She argues instead for targets centered on the teaching-learning processes and for a Post-2015 global goal that aims to get "all children everywhere to participate in learning that is inclusive, relevant and democratic" (Barrett, 2011) with indicators that are set nationally rather than globally. This places the emphasis on the ground in schools and classrooms. The CGD paper does not mention teachers and comprehends no link between teaching and learning; it mentions teacher qualifications only to dismiss them as an input "thought to be associated with quality" (Filmer et al., 2006: 9).

The dislocated emphasis on learning and learning outcomes in the current discourse around the Post-2015 global goals de-emphasises the systemic associations with education inputs and processes that are integral to ideas such as quality assurance, education quality, education access, education equity, or pedagogy, which unites teaching and learning. This dislocation may appeal to donors in the grip of financial austerity, the global testing industry or IT companies looking for economies of scale, or national governments focused on measurement, and not on reforming whole systems. It should not appeal to pupils, parents or teachers.

For Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley, it is no surprise to learn that "statistically, teaching is the strongest influence within schools on student achievement…There are examples of education excellence without accountability, or common standards, or digital technology. But there are no instances of educational excellence without high-quality teachers and teaching" (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009).

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE GMR 2013/4

Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All – What the EFA Global Monitoring Report has to Offer

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Summary: This presents an overview of the role of the EFA Global Monitoring Report in influencing policy change, calling for a combined voice to promote a global education framework after 2015.

After a year of intense work, it is always with great excitement – and trepidation – that the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) team waits for reactions to the latest edition. It would not be an exaggeration to say that we were overwhelmed with the feedback the report received after its launch in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 29 January 2014. Achieving 2,000 media articles in around 100 countries immediately after the launch, and making it on to the headline news on the BBC, we could be pleased that the messages were reaching wide audiences.

Writing this piece for *NORRAG News* gives me the opportunity to reflect on the purposes of the report, and what it can achieve. Written from scratch in a period of less than a year (with other time spent on graphic design, checking proofs, printing and so on), such a Report cannot hope to prepare new research. But it can – and should – present evidence from available, rigorous research in ways that provide a compelling message to policymakers that they urgently need to take action to achieve the education goals they set themselves in 2000.

We know that policymakers rarely have time to read research published in academic journals or books (and, let's be frank, even if they tried, some of this research is rather impenetrable!). So the job of the Report is to make the research accessible to them, in the hope that they will draw on evidence to inform their policymaking. One of the features of the Report is that it should present innovative data analysis to act as a wake-up call and alert policymakers to the need for change – such as that 250 million children are not learning the basics.

As with every edition, this year's Report on teaching and learning involved extensive reviewing of the literature (far beyond what can be hoped to be referenced even in the 470 pages of the Report), consultations with experts and practitioners – including in this case with teachers and teacher unions. This then gets digested into messages that the Report team hopes policymakers will hear and act upon. Indeed, we have growing experience that policymakers around the world are taking notice of the report's messages, including in countries with some of the largest numbers of children out of school and which also suffer from poor quality of education, such as Ethiopia, Nigeria and Pakistan.

The 2013/4 Report makes the case that good quality teachers are at the heart at of a good quality education system, but that the most disadvantaged children are most likely to be missing out. To correct this, the Report sets out 10 recommendations – ranging from the need to fill teacher gaps, provide teachers with adequate, relevant training before and throughout their careers, ensure balanced deployment of teachers, adopt competitive career and structures, improve teacher governance, and equip teachers with innovative curricula. These clearly-presented, evidence-based messages should provide those in the education community with ample ammunition on why teachers should be a stronger focus than presented in the High Level Panel's report on post-2015, for example.

The GMR team is as aware as others of the long history of research on teachers that support these findings, including by contributors to this issue of *NORRAG News*. How can a Report hope to add to the knowledge of such experienced researchers? One way that this Report has done so is in putting the spotlight on the most disadvantaged learners, which sadly much of the research on teachers fails to do. Another is that there is a tendency of some research, in particular promoted by some of the major development agencies, to blame teachers for the failure in education, for example because they are absent from the classroom. The careful review of available evidence that is presented in

the GMR makes clear that it is ultimately the responsibility of policymakers to address the problems in the system, including by setting the right incentives for teachers.

Of course, no report can expect to cover everything – nor should it attempt to do so, as this would merely dilute its messages. The focus of the 2013/4 GMR on the fact that millions of children are not learning the basics, and that these are primarily children from the poorest households, living in rural areas, and likely to include girls and children with disabilities, is a strategic one – these are the children who otherwise would not have a voice. And without the chance to learn the basics, it is extremely unlikely that they are going to benefit from other skills that education systems should offer, such as transferable skills of critical thinking and problem-solving.

Each report is more than its theme alone. At its heart is an assessment of progress towards each of the six Education For All goals. And this year's report makes sobering reading: none of the goals are expected to be met by 2015, some by a wide margin. The Report also shows that, if current trends are to continue, the poorest girls in sub-Saharan Africa will all be literate only by 2072.

I hope that collaboration with key partners, including those in the NORRAG network, will lead to a combined strong voice as we promote a global education framework after 2015, drawing on the evidence that each GMR has provided in its monitoring of education progress over the years.

Education, Teaching and Developmental Outcomes – any New Chemistry?

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Key words: GMR; education; teachers; development

Summary: Whilst the latest GMR builds an impressive case for education's role in development, there is still too much a sense of a simple equation – quality education leads to wider developmental benefits – that gives little insight into the complex chemistry of how various elements (most notably teachers) react, under what conditions and with which resultant by-products.

Both the first and the eleventh Global Monitoring Reports contain chapters that look at the links between education and development. What has changed in this analysis and where does teaching fit in?

The first GMR opens with a chapter entitled "Education for all is development". In six pages, this reviews the current state of the art regarding the relationship between education and development. In turn, it considers education as a right, education as a capability and education as an investment. It argues each of these carefully, noting methodological, theoretical and practical issues, but reaffirms the centrality of education for development.

The parallel discussion in the eleventh GMR reflects the huge evolution in these reports. Its 43 page chapter on "Education transforms lives" is indicative of a far slicker advocacy approach. The title itself sets out a far sexier proposition than the opening chapter of GMR I and its pages are packed with headings boasting equally strong claims, supported by a wealth of infographics.

However, what is excluded and included is also noteworthy. There is no reference whatsoever to Amartya Sen or to the capabilities approach, and even the right-based language is rather muted. Instead, the emphasis is firmly on education's instrumental effects – a wider benefits-of-learning account. This begins with jobs, growth, poverty and prosperity but continues to talk about healthier lives, healthier societies, environmental sustainability and gender empowerment. These are all important themes but the shift in focus and tone is striking.

Another crucial shift, highly pertinent to the overall theme of GMR XI, is that a quality education is required to deliver on these wider benefits. As the introductory paragraph on p.142 insists: "To unlock the wider benefits of education, all children need access to both primary and lower secondary education of good quality." The notion of education quality appears another 15 times in the chapter. This stress on quality is something that has become much more apparent as the GMR process has unfurled in the past 12 years- indeed, it is one of the most important contributions that the GMR has made to thinking about education and development.

However, revisiting these 15 references to quality, I am left wondering what quality education means and what it has to do with teachers. Clearly there is a link- part three of GMR XI insists on the benefits for learning that come from better teachers; and quality is clearly understood in large part as better test results. The report is strong on both of these issues.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that many of the wider benefits being claimed for education require a much more complex reading of what schooling, teaching and learning involve, and how these react with other elements in societies, economies, cultures and polities. How teachers catalyse gender empowerment or environmental sustainability, for instance, are complex equations on which the report remains silent. What can be done about current constraints that limit teachers' capacity to build transformative education? Do the real transformations have to take place beyond schooling? Whilst the latest GMR builds an impressive case for education's role in development, there is still too much a sense of a simple equation – quality education leads to wider developmental benefits – that gives little insight into the complex chemistry of how various elements react, under what conditions and with which resultant by-products.

The 2013/14 Global Monitoring Report: Putting Teaching and Learning at the Centre of the Post-2015 Education and Development Agenda

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Key words: educational quality, teaching, learning

Summary: This article suggests that educational quality should be understood in terms of the quality of student learning, which depends to a great extent on the quality of teaching. It argues that changing and improving the practice of existing teachers will probably be the most effective strategy to enhance student learning and, hence, the quality of education.

The 2013/14 GMR concludes with ten recommendations under the heading, "Unlocking teachers' potential to solve the learning crisis", which include, among others, attracting the best candidates to teaching, training teachers to meet the needs of all children, retaining the best teachers, and equipping teachers with innovative curricula to improve learning.

It is likely that the education-related goals in the post-2015 development agenda will include a commitment to quality education for all. Educational quality should of course be understood first and last in terms of the quality of student learning, which depends to a great extent on the quality of teaching. Key questions at the start of the post-2015 educational development period will thus have to do with what enhances learning outcomes most effectively. The 2013/14 GMR has clearly oriented itself towards the post-2015 education and development agenda, and is putting teaching and learning at the centre of that agenda. That is good, because teachers have a critically important role. Certainly, factors associated with the socio-economic background of students are hugely important in determining educational outcomes. But, next to SES-related influences, factors closely related to teachers and teaching are far more important than what has probably been recognized.

In the classrooms of the best teachers, students learn at twice the rate that they do in the classrooms of average teachers: they learn in six months what students taught by average teachers take a year to learn. And in the classrooms of the least effective teachers, the same learning will take two years. Moreover, in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, students from disadvantaged backgrounds learn just as much as those from advantaged backgrounds, and those with behavioural difficulties learn just as much as those without.

John Hattie's work says it all. His book, *Visible Learning*, synthesizes over 900 meta-analyses relating to learning achievement – 15 years' research and synthesis of over 50,000 studies; a sample size of millions of students; more than 146,000 factors assessed. Hattie concluded that "most innovations that are introduced in schools improve achievement by about 0.40 of a standard deviation". He thus used an improvement of 0.40 standard deviations as the standard by which to judge the size of learning effects. He found that factors related to socio-economic background have an effect-size of 0.57. Note the importance of factors related closely to the teacher in the following list of factors, ranked according to effect size in standard deviations.

Effect-sizes of selected factors that enhance learning most effectively (Hattie, 2009)

Teacher provision of formative evaluation	0.90
Classroom behavioural factors	0.80
Teacher clarity	0.75
Feedback	0.73
Teacher-student relationships	0.72
Meta-cognitive strategies	0.69
Student prior achievement	0.67
Teacher professional development	0.62
Teaching strategies	0.60

Direct instruction	0.59
Home environment	0.57
Home socio-economic status	0.57
Teacher setting of goals	0.56
Peer-tutoring	0.55
Classroom management	0.52

The importance of teachers providing feedback on their learning to students

Effective feedback provided by teachers to their students is crucial. For Hattie, it means "providing information how and why the child understands and misunderstands, and what directions the student must take to improve". It implies that the best teachers will make every effort to assess and evaluate their students' understanding, in order that they might understand the constructions their students have made in their learning, so that they might then match their next teaching act to this understanding.

Do structural innovations serve to enhance learning?

Most structural innovations aimed at improving learning, such as financial resources, physical attributes such as the quality of facilities, school policies, streaming according to ability groups, and the like, do not have a sizeable effect on student learning. If such structural innovations do work, it is through the core effects of feedback, goal-setting, and actual teaching.

There is, for example, a linear relationship between class size and achievement from the hundreds down to classes of about 25; but it is only when class size gets smaller than about 15 that exponential increases in achievement result. The conclusion to draw from this change in the relationship from linear to exponential is that smaller class sizes in and of themselves do not necessarily produce better results: very much smaller classes obviously make it much more possible for teachers to provide more and better quality feedback, which is what improves learning. Class size is mediated through teacher feedback.

This is likely to be the case for other factors such as introducing computers into the classroom, pre-scribing more homework, managing the classroom more effectively.

How, then, do we improve teacher quality?

In countries such as Finland, Japan and Singapore, one strategy involves highly selective recruitment into the profession: this is possible because of the high status of teachers in those countries. For other countries, long-term strategies to raise the status of the profession are important, but the consequent effects on learning will take decades to realize.

Should we replace poor teachers with better ones?

Trying to improve teacher quality by replacing poor teachers with new teachers of higher quality will take time and resources, and the impact will be felt only years hence. Eric Hanushek has shown that if the lowest performing teachers could be replaced by average teachers every year, it would take 30 years for this strategy to have an impact on teacher quality. And the net impact would probably be in the order of just two percentage points on PISA.

Changing and improving the practice of existing teachers will probably be the most effective strategy. But, the focus of professional development should not primarily be on enhancing teachers' disciplinary content knowledge: while it is essential, teacher subject knowledge is only a small part of teacher quality – possibly as little as 10% in primary schools, and no more than 30% in secondary schools. More important is changing teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, and changing what they do in classrooms. It is about continual professional development focused on the continuous improvement of teachers' classroom practice.

To help teachers change what they do in classrooms, they need the flexibility and the professional autonomy to exercise their judgment in adopting ideas that suit their personal style; to take small but continuous steps in changing their practice; to be supported in their efforts to change their practice; and to be accountable for improving their practice.

This can be done through the establishment of teacher-learning communities in schools, where

teachers support each other in the development of their classroom practice. Importantly, the school principal needs to provide leadership in the creation of a culture of and the space for continuous professional development, and in motivating teachers' commitment to improve.

Recommended reading

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Democratizing Learning Gains: Lessons from the GMR 2013/2014

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Key words: Global learning crisis; foundation skills; learning for all; learning gains and learning deficits.

Summary: The EFA efforts have succeeded in bringing children to schools. However, many children fail to learn the foundation skills, leading to a global learning crisis. The learning deficits are unequally distributed and are concentrated in poorly resourced localities, among children from disadvantaged groups, among those who speak minority languages and those who hail from immigrant families. Based on the empirical evidence, this piece argues that learning deficits can be reduced through public policy and targeted interventions. Such specifically designed programmes to promote equity in learning are in effect a process of expanding democracy in any society.

From schooling to learning for all

Democratic societies are essentially more egalitarian and inclusive than other societies. While respecting the will of the majority, they claim to protect the fundamental rights of individuals and minority groups too. Education is a universal human right and also a means of achieving other human rights. Therefore efforts to achieve education for all (EFA) are an extension of democratic principles at the individual level. Furthermore, studies claim to show that mass education not only accelerates transition to democracy but also that it can seek to guarantee maintenance of democratic values and practices.

From an economic point of view, investment in education is very rewarding given its contribution to national income and individual earnings. From this standpoint, education claims to transform human beings into productive assets – human capital - promoting faster national development. Since human beings are the most equally distributed of all resources, it is expected that education will ensure a more equitable distribution of income and wealth in a society, provided educational opportunities are equally shared. Unfortunately, this is not the case in most instances.

Studies on the distribution of educational opportunities indicate that they are in fact very unequally shared and also that they act as an important source of widening economic and social inequalities. Indeed, the past two decades have experienced a seemingly contradictory scenario of transition of a large number of countries to democracy, increasing access to educational opportunities, and, yet, widening inequalities.

The new evidence suggests that mere access to education and to school is less strongly related to individual earnings, income distribution and economic growth than measurable cognitive skills acquired by children while they are in school. This implies that quality does matter in education, and that the extension of educational opportunities becomes democratic when quality education is assured to all. Following this understanding, global initiatives prioritized a move from schooling for all to learning for all, and from EFA to quality education for all.

The global learning crisis and its manifestations

The EFA GMR reports show that countries have succeeded in bringing children to schools. However, evidence of the extent of learning taking place in the classroom is very disturbing and discouraging. Children fail to learn what they are supposed to learn even when they continue to stay in schools. The GMR 2013/2014 characterizes this phenomenon as a manifestation of a *global learning crisis* (GMR 2013/14, p. 191).

How does the learning crisis affect different groups of people? While 40 per cent of the primary school children worldwide are not learning the basics in reading and mathematics, they are distributed unequally, particularly affecting the poor in the developing countries. For example, in North America and Western Europe, nearly 96 per cent of the primary school children attain the minimum level of learning benchmark. However, in South and West Asia only one-third of the children attain the basic learning benchmark and in Sub-Saharan Africa the same share is only 20 per cent.

The learning deficit is also unequally distributed between regions and among different socio-economic groups within a country. The children living in wealthy regions do better than those from poorer regions. Similarly, children in urban areas learn more than their counterparts in the rural areas. In the developed countries the poorer children learn less than the rich children. The children from rich families in poor countries on an average learn more than those from poor families. The girls from poor families are more disadvantaged in this regard than boys from similar background.

The learning deficits at the primary level are transmitted to subsequent levels of education. They have a cumulative effect leading to underperformance and eventual dropping out of poor performing children.

Strategies for democratizing gains in learning

An extension of democratic principles to ensure learning for all is a necessary condition to develop a more egalitarian society. The challenge is to overcome the learning crisis. There are countries such as Japan, Finland, Singapore, and South Korea where children from poor socio-economic backgrounds perform well in schools.

In developing countries, the challenge of improving learning while expanding access is compounded by the fact that many of the new entrants are from marginalized households and are first generation learners. However, even among the poor countries there are instances of countries achieving the twin goals of expansion and quality improvement. For example, the GMR report shows that in countries such as Kenya and Tanzania increased enrolment and enhanced levels of learning go hand in hand. In fact in Kenya, an additional 1.5 million children learned the basics between 2000 and 2007. In Mexico student performance above bench mark increased from 33 to 50 per cent between 2003 and 2009. These gains in learner achievement are shared more or less equally by students from rich and poor families.

These experiences indicate that learning deficits can be reduced through public policy and targeted interventions. How do we target those accounting for learning deficits? For example, in Mexico, targeted programmes for students who were lagging behind helped achieve gains in learning. The National Development Council in Mexico gives spe-

cial funds, learning materials, and teacher support to schools which have been consistently underperforming. Similarly, in Indonesia, focus on better management of poorly endowed schools and improved supply of trained teachers to them, helped achieve substantial qualitative output.

The real question, especially in developing countries, is how to provide complementary basic education to children for catching up on foundation skills which account for learning deficits. The intervention strategies need to focus on providing unequal inputs to produce more equal learning outcomes. Providing essential facilities to schools to create conducive learning conditions in the classrooms is a necessary first step towards making gains in learning among the deprived groups. The reality is that, more often than not, children from the poorly endowed areas also experience a lack of school resources and the schools remain poorly equipped. They thus become doubly disadvantaged.

The teacher, perhaps, is the most important educational resource in poorly endowed areas. Teachers who are qualified and trained do make a difference in such situations. Therefore, policies related to teacher development and deployment play an important role in democratizing learning and ensuring learning gains among those accounting for learning deficits. Experience however shows that many of the groups which need special attention are also those deprived of quality teachers. An analysis of the distribution of teachers, across regions, within any country, indicates an urban bias in teacher deployment. The best qualified teachers are increasingly posted in urban areas and in good facility schools.

It is equally important that improving learning should not be the sole responsibility of public authorities. A regular engagement with teachers, students and parents at the school level and consultations with teacher representatives and other stake holders in policy formulation will help accelerate the process of gains in learning. In other words, democratizing learning should be realized through a democratic process of decision-making involving the participation of the most important players, namely, the teachers.

Teaching, Learning, Communicating: Language Choice in the African Classroom

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Key words: Language of instruction; African classrooms; teacher training

Summary: Most classroom teachers in Africa operate in educational systems that discard local language use as irrelevant; as a result, their classroom language practices prevent real communication and real learning. Formal teacher training in Africa should be producing competent, innovative teachers who readily use the local language as the marvelous communicative tool that it can be.

Teachers: holders of the knowledge of power. They mediate the knowledge that leads to economic achievement for the successful student; they convey skills and attitudes that shape a child's thinking and productivity for years to come.

So are teachers seen in many parts of Africa, most particularly in those rural communities lucky enough to boast a primary school. And indeed, the myriad of hard-working, innovative, dedicated teachers found across the continent merit every complimentary and admiring opinion.

But hundreds of thousands of these teachers suffer a serious pedagogical handicap: those whose classroom language practices prevent real communication and real learning on the part of their pupils, because the language of instruction is not understood by the children. It is not always the teachers' fault. Most are operating in educational systems that discard local language use as irrelevant, ignoring the growing research evidence that African children - like anybody else - simply do not learn well in a language they don't speak. (Why such research is even needed is a good question; a Dutch friend of mine once commented that majority-language speaking European parents would never put up with their children being taught in a language other than their own.)

Despite both research evidence and plain common sense, using the local language as an effective medium of instruction is not on the list of skills typically taught in African teacher training institutions.

To the contrary, in fact: in some countries, teacher trainees are explicitly taught that a *really* good teacher doesn't have to use the language that the child speaks, but can somehow get curricular context across in a foreign (international) language. In this view, only the least imaginative and skilled teachers have to resort to speaking the children's language in order to get them to learn.

What on earth is this about? Where in any country of the global North are teachers expected to consistently convey complex learning content in a language unknown to the students? Yet in millions of primary classrooms across the African continent, every day of the school year, teachers can be found valiantly struggling to communicate the rudiments of reading, maths or history to a class of silent and confused pupils. To call these kids "learners" is to cheapen and insult them, their teachers, and the learning process itself.

So ironically, the best teachers in local language-medium classrooms are often local teachers who have had no formal training at all. Although they may know little about learning objectives and classroom management, they are at least free of the prejudice against using the child's own language as a medium of instruction. They use the local language naturally, and build on the learners' home knowledge to scaffold the acquisition of new information. Often they are more gentle and supportive of their little learners as well – possibly because they are spared the frustration and shame of dealing with pupils who don't understand and cannot learn as they should.

In an ideal world, formal teacher training in Africa would produce competent, innovative teachers who readily use the local language as the marvelous communicative tool that it can be. But turning this ideal into reality will require a thorough rethink of the anti-African language educational beliefs and practices that currently reign in classrooms and teacher training institutions across the continent.

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Education Transforms Lives: Thoughts on Purpose

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Key words: Educational Purpose and Values; Situated Teaching; Teaching as Cultural Practice

Summary: Teaching is not a neutral, but a situated activity whose purpose stems from the dominant cultural values in which it takes place. So, rather than assuming universality, it is better to recognise the views on educational purpose within the EFA GMR as broad aspirations and allow space for local mediation.

There is much to suggest that the form of teaching is particular to the societies and education systems in which it takes place (for example, Osborn et al. 2003). Since 2007, as part of an international research team with a North European focus, I have been comparing how socio-political value positions translate into acts of teaching in different circumstances (Kelly et al., 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). In contexts where teachers juggle between a diversity of demands, those which are most valued have most influence. Prevailing value systems are important in adding weight to some policy imperatives and their associated teaching goals over others. The teaching which results is also shaped by the contexts and settings in which it takes place.

Increasingly, however, education policy making is underpinned by shared 'common sense' assumptions of linearity and cultural neutrality (Adams, 2008); teaching is treated as if it is in a causal relation with student performance, and good teaching is often reduced to 'what works' in improving student test scores. But test scores provide a partial indication of success. More sophisticated responses might link notions of success to views of purpose: whether we have been successful depends on what we were trying to do.

In mathematics education Paul Ernest (1991) provides a useful categorisation of five education perspectives on overall purpose related to underpinning values and assumptions. His work maps explicit value positions to particular teaching approaches. Some, he suggests, argue that the economic imperative is most significant; curriculum

and teaching focus on helping students acquire transferable skills, and outcomes are measured using standardised tests coupled to employer-friendly forms of certification. Others identify the basic skills needed to improve students' quality of life more broadly, but fail to look beyond these. A third tradition seeks to nurture individuals' development and support them in constructing robust views of how the world works and their place in it, whilst another introduces learners to powerful ways in which others have understood and made sense of the world and the human condition. Ernest's final approach seeks to empower individuals to forward their own interests so they can lead what they consider to be good lives, whilst also showing due regard for the interests and well-being of others. I am not suggesting Ernest's analysis is either exhaustive or conclusive, but have argued (Kelly, 2006) that the balance of such value positions in different contexts affords different notions of good practice and expert teaching, and that in reality teachers' work is torn between trying to meet several, possibly contradictory, purposes at the same time (Kelly et al., 2013a).

Seen in this light, the recent *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013-14* offers a particular perspective on educational purpose but casts this as universal, where basic skills and economic and political imperatives are (and many would say rightly) privileged along with reference to the progressive concern of increasing students' active involvement in their own education. Measurable standardised test results are emphasised as immediate educational outcomes, albeit linked to longer term health and economic benefits, but cultural and intercultural educational aims are less prominent. My concern here is that, whatever its advantages, any narrowness of emphasis on culture and on assessment can only restrict the extent to which teaching practice is: (1) shaped by local cultural practices and ways of knowing; or (2) thereby centred on local problems and immediate, authentic needs.

Typologies such as Ernest's are useful in reminding policy makers of the many purposes of education. All are important and we should therefore be wary

of approaches that limit possibilities and narrow perspectives. We must accept national and local differences, not only in the balance and weight of educational goals which pertain to different contexts, but also in how practice addressing those goals is shaped by the particular circumstances in which it takes place. Whilst shared aspirations can reveal possibilities and raise expectations, assuming these can be realised through a narrow view of teaching and evaluation can only serve to restrict local interpretations addressing local needs.

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Have we Really Supported and Encouraged Teachers in Africa?

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Summary: The EFA GMR 2013/4 appears to blame teachers for the poor quality of education, but their actual living and working conditions should also be considered. Rather than just focusing on quantitative projections and estimates, a more introspective approach is also essential in understanding educational outcomes.

Teachers in Africa have been in the forefront of criticisms whenever educational problems arise especially in terms of quality. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 tends to highlight poorly behaving teachers as if the vast majority of teachers in developing countries are lacking capacity and not motivated enough. However, do we understand the actual living and working conditions of teachers? Do we know the reasons why they sometimes have to perform badly? The Report does not describe the realities of teachers' lives. There are particular and often understandable reasons behind such behaviors.

The evidence the Report attempts to exhibit appears to come from the results of quantitative rather than qualitative studies including case studies. It often states what percentage of teachers or children are such and such, or tends to make an estimate of generally negative scenario for the future, without looking at the individual level. The quantitative approach offers clear-cut rules and estimates, but it is not good at understanding individuals.

I have been conducting research in primary education in rural Kenya for more than 15 years through ethnography. I was "living" with teachers as I interviewed them. The impression I had in the beginning is quite different from what I have at present. This may suggest that we sometimes misunderstand scenarios because only visible things are seen at first. It is true that there are some teachers who do not teach and do not come to school regularly. On the other hand, there are so many teachers who are committed to their vocation in spite of difficult circumstances; they support their students' learning regardless of being paid well or not.

Teachers make an effort because they are very concerned with their children's lives. Thus, children understand the significance of schooling for their own futures. Children are not passive beings, as is sometimes assumed. They often strive to achieve good grades and good outcomes, despite their difficulties.

But the Report of 2013/4 seems to follow quite a simplistic storyline: the quality of education is not good because teachers have poor knowledge and are not committed to teach. Therefore, we need to provide more training to fill the knowledge gap and to get them motivated. Furthermore, there are many successful projects provided by development partners. They are, of course, willing to tell success stories and to sell good practices. These should be acknowledged, but even if they are successful, there are of course some limitations. The Report, however, just introduces the cases one by one without being critical about such project outputs.

What is lacking may not be knowledge or additional training for teachers. What is necessary for us today is to change our mindset and to become more aware of teaching environments rather than blaming teachers and placing an extra burden on them. I think we had better start understanding and acknowledging how teachers work in demanding situations.

I would like to know the reactions to the Report of disenfranchised teachers who have been working so hard every day. Are they encouraged and motivated to teach by what has been discussed in the Report?

One last thought about the very well-known Japanese teachers' study groups: The teachers unions have never played an important role in Japan in terms of quality improvement. Rather, it is said that the quality of Japanese primary and secondary education has been maintained by voluntary study groups of teachers.

Teachers and Teaching: What We Have Learned in 50 Years

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Key words: Teachers in developing countries; Teacher policy; Education assistance to teachers

Summary: Teacher professionalism has proven in the past to be an essential element in the sustainability of an education system under financial and political stress. However, some current teacher policies may create crippling inefficiencies and be counterproductive to educational quality.

Teachers have been recognized as critical for decades. For example, in a study of Ugandan school achievement in 1971 the quality of teachers was found to have a profound influence on the achievement of their pupils. Two characteristics were identified specifically: the quality of the English language ability and the level of their curriculum content knowledge (Heyneman, 1975). After a period of fiscal famine in the education sector and the collapse of Idi Amin's government, the same schools were re-visited. In terms of physical facilities they had never been well-endowed, but after the ten-year famine the schools had been stripped bare of anything they had previously owned. Books were gone; copy machines broken; desks had succumbed to weather and insects. What had not disappeared were the teachers. There they were, day after day. What they lacked in materials, they made up with additional time, memory and diligence. Without government pay for over a year, they had been compensated in kind by grateful parents. Through the diligence of the teachers that school achievement, without materials, had actually improved over what it had been ten years earlier (Heyneman, 1983). Similarly, after the economic collapse in the 1990s, in the Russian Federation, there the teachers were again, some so poor that they could not afford the bus fare home and instead had to sleep in their offices (Heyneman, 1997; 1998). There is no doubt that teachers are critical.

But there is another story too. Public school teachers are generally paid with a single salary scale which does not allow teachers with scarce skills or higher performance to be rewarded differently. Governments struggle to cover the cost of teacher pensions, preventing newly-trained teachers from being hired because resources are not sufficient to cover both current and additional obligations. Often teachers are trained at public expense but then cannot be hired as teachers. This wastes the public investment in higher education. And students, seeing a possibility of gaining higher education free of private cost, choose to be trained as teachers without actually wanting to be teachers (Heyneman and Stern, 2012; Heyneman and Stern, 2013). Because the public schools are so often over-crowded, teachers become discouraged and often stay home instead of teaching. And parents, even poor parents, are sufficiently rational to calculate that having their children in school doing little or nothing is a wasted investment; hence they opt for low fee private schools instead of keeping their children in 'tuition-free' public education. Private schools, expanding rapidly, often use untrained teachers; yet they can outperform public schools in terms of school achievement. This is the story that we have learned (Heyneman and Stern, 2014).

Now the question is about the future. Will governments, in cooperation with development assistance agencies, experiment with teacher policies to address some of these rigidities? Is it possible that the institutional handicaps, obvious to most stakeholders, can be acknowledged openly? Is it possible that teacher associations, which have often argued for maintaining the status quo, can be marshaled as allies to overcome the barriers to school quality? The stakes are important. No matter how much effort and energy are allocated to identifying the problems of learning in the post-2015 agenda, these efforts are meaningless unless the institutional barriers within the teaching profession can be broken.

Three principles should drive our attention. The first is labor market flexibility. Teachers need to be paid more, but selectively. Those with particularly scarce skills, those who agree to teach in hard-to-staff locations, and those whose performance is consistently higher, should be rewarded very well. Teachers should be upgraded constantly, and re-licensed on the basis of their upgraded performance. Teacher pensions should be jointly sup-

ported by professional associations, governments and individual teachers. Teacher training should be free of private cost, but the public's investment should be recovered through periods of internship.

The second is being 'technology ready'. Technologies of teaching and learning, including the use of cell phones, are changing rapidly and the costs are now such that even in low income countries these technologies apply. Teacher performance should be integrated with the abilities of teachers to use these technologies effectively.

The third is technology-monitored. Traditionally teaching is an autonomous activity. Each classroom is distant and distinct; schools and teacher attendance are rarely monitored. This allows maximum opportunity for non-participation. Teacher-monitoring technologies are available which would allow the public the confidence that professional teachers were present and available when they should be (Moses, 2014). These elements should not be seen as draconian, but, rather, a normal means of assuring quality. And quality is what education is all about.

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Four GMR Strategies to Provide the Best Teachers: What's Missing?

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Key words: GMR; Quality of education; Teaching workforce strategies; Teacher training; Continuing professional development; Teacher leadership

Summary: The most recent EFA Global Monitoring Report for 2013 highlights the need for countries to concentrate on the supply and quality of their teaching force if they are to ensure access to quality education for all children, and proposes four strategies for doing to. This article points to two crucial factors needing more emphasis than the GMR gives them if these strategies are to succeed - the importance of continuing professional development for teachers, and the need to recognise and release the latent leadership potential of teachers themselves.

The 2013/4 EFA GMR focuses, appropriately enough, on teaching and learning, given that this is what education is all about. It paints a rather gloomy picture of the current state of the teaching workforce in many countries – there are not enough teachers, they are poorly trained, lack essential teaching skills, sometimes lack basic education themselves, are underpaid, undervalued, often unmotivated, get little effective support from the authorities, are often subject to insensitive and arbitrary policy decisions....

The GMR prescribes a relatively familiar four point strategy for improving teaching: (1) **recruit** (enough better educated and motivated individuals to become teachers), (2) **train** (them properly), (3) **allocate** (them to the schools where they are most needed), (4) **retain** (them in the system by paying them properly and giving them good career prospects). It analyses these four areas, and gives examples of the often imaginative practical responses which are being made in many places to address specific issues. It lists ten key reforms, based on this four-point strategy, which policy makers should adopt in order to secure equitable learning for all.

So, are the four strategies enough?

Certainly, if the recommendations are all translated into action they will make a big difference. As always, the devil is in the detail, but there are two issues which stand out in particular for me, one which is highlighted in the report, and one which is not mentioned at all.

The first issue is the effectiveness of teacher training. It's surprising that such a small proportion of the global education aid budget (2%) should be dedicated to such a crucial element, and this is a statistic which should definitely prompt a reappraisal of priorities among governments and donor agencies. For a profession which is all about learning, it's also surprising how slow the policy world has been to embrace the concept of continuous learning.

Certainly, initial teacher training is a key priority for improvement, because it is often too theoretical, with not enough good practical instruction and not enough time spent in schools actually learning the skills of teaching. There is no doubt that initial training programs need desperately to be reformed so that trainee teachers are better equipped to teach.

But why stop there?

Initial training cannot possibly cover everything, especially where the trainees start with a low base of skills and education themselves. For this, ongoing programs of teacher development are needed. All the evidence from high performing countries where such programs are the norm is that they are particularly effective in the first few years of teaching, and that they foster expectations of long term continuous improvement in the teaching workforce. The challenge for lower performing systems is to develop a continuous professional development (CPD) strategy which builds effectively on the initial training, and which is both practical and affordable. The immediate need, in many cases, will be to consolidate teachers' own basic

subject knowledge and improve their classroom practice. This does not have to involve formal courses; self-managed learning programs tend to be more effective if they are supported by intensive mentoring and guidance – but it does need to be well structured and well focussed, so that the professional development is purposeful and relevant. Governments and donor agencies need to collaborate in developing such strategies, and then back them with their resourcing priorities, for example by doubling the proportion of the overall education aid budget which is spent on teacher training.

My second issue is actually linked to the first, and it concerns teachers' leadership of their own profession. We desperately need to free ourselves from the somewhat paternalistic mind-set which looks at the system from above and treats teachers as the passive recipients of whatever standards, training and accountability regimes are handed down by policy makers. Teachers are people – mostly very intelligent and motivated people - who are likely to know a lot about their own professional learning needs. Moreover, there are excellent teachers even in the poorest performing systems who can lead others. This equates to a huge and very powerful resource for improving the profession as a whole, if used effectively.

According to McKinsey and others, it is systems which are moving from good to great, or great to excellent, which are characterised by self-improving professional learning communities. Before that point, the assumption appears to be that teachers should be treated more as children than as adults. But it is of course a fallacy to think that teachers in less well developed systems cannot learn from other teachers within their own system, or that such learning is not a crucial element in the development of the system.

If ongoing professional development really is crucial to improving the quality of teachers, as I argue above, then the role of teacher leadership cannot be ignored. A model in which teachers learn from their more experienced and effective peers is both more respectful and more economical in the longer term. It is crucial to identify the good practitioners, listen to their advice, encourage them to lead others and provide them with the resources to do so effectively. The teacher unions will have a role to play in this, as will local communities. The point is that, if we are looking for a massive improvement in the global teaching force, we must not neglect the leadership capacity which already exists within it.

Critical Thinking for Development: Representations in the GMR

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Summary: It is heartening to see the emphasis on critical thinking as a vital learning objective within this year's GMR, but a lack of clarity around the term - and a lack of acknowledgement of how teacher beliefs can hinder pedagogical change – are likely to limit the transformative potential of articulating such a vision within the EFA agenda.

One of the clear themes running through this year's Global Monitoring Report (GMR) is the need for children everywhere to acquire so-called 'transferable skills', including "critical thinking, problem-solving, advocacy and conflict-resolution" (pp. 36), alongside 'foundational skills', such as literacy and numeracy. It is heartening to see this emphasis, as, so often, the wording of international policy documents implies that our attention should be focused exclusively on helping children to reach certain minimum learning thresholds, rather than helping them to gain the wide range of cognitive and non-cognitive abilities that they will need to truly flourish in all aspects of their lives.

Given my own work, which positions critical thinking as crucial for both human and economic development around the world, I was particularly pleased to see the prominence of critical thinking within this year's GMR. Although it has been mentioned in past reports, this was the first time that I've seen an explicit attempt within the GMR to outline how education can both encourage and hinder the development of critical thinking. The GMR 2005 included a short list of "desirable practices" (pp. 153), but this year's report is much clearer about what sorts of practices need to be encouraged in order to foster critical thinking (e.g. learner-centred pedagogy requiring active student participation and involving both group work and reflective elements; relevant and integrated curricula, which are adapted to the local context and include reference to real-life situations; etc.) – and it is much more explicit about the barriers to implementing such approaches (e.g. assessment practices that incentivise rote learning and mem-

orisation; traditional methods of teaching that rely on lecturing and repetition; limited training for teachers in more innovative pedagogical methods). Although some of these individual concerns have been raised in past reports, they have tended to be mentioned in passing, rather than being privileged as a core concern of the education and development agenda. It is also refreshing to see critical thinking treated as a core learning objective, rather than being discussed as a 'skill' that young people can acquire once they enter the workforce.

However, despite these positive changes, there remain some serious concerns about how critical thinking is represented within the GMR, particularly given the role that the GMR plays in influencing the education policy agenda in many low-income contexts.

First and foremost, there is a severe lack of clarity around the meaning of the term 'critical thinking'. Within the same document, we see assertions that critical thinking (alongside other 'transferable skills') is necessary for "political participation" (pp. 185), for participation in "the knowledge economy" (pp. 246) and for "global citizenship" (pp. 295). In the 2011/12 GMR, we saw yet another view of critical thinking as being a necessary foil to radicalism. I don't actually disagree with any of these individual assertions, but I worry that there is a danger in discussing critical thinking without defining what we mean by it. If we don't know what we mean by critical thinking, how do we know if there is consensus around its importance? The commissioned study by Amadio (2013), referenced on page 295 of the GMR, found that critical thinking was emphasised in the curriculum frameworks and policy documents of about half of the 88 countries analysed in the study. This number is actually quite low. Does this suggest that there are differences of opinion around the desirability of emphasising such skills within education systems? Or does it simply imply that countries may differ in the prominence given to critical thinking within their national education agendas? Even if everybody were to agree that critical thinking was important, how could we possibly assess whether students across contexts are, in fact, gaining such skills – and, if they are not, how we could better support them – without any

agreement around what critical thinking is?

Second, although there is ample discussion around the importance of teacher training, one fundamentally important issue receives no mention in the GMR – and that is the pervasive influence and importance of teachers' pre-understandings and perceptions of education. There is an acknowledgement that teachers tend to teach as they were taught, but there is no discussion of why that tends to be the case. Although it is true that modeling has a lot to do with it (if you've never seen somebody teach in a participatory way, it's difficult to attempt to do so yourself!), it is also crucial to acknowledge that teachers exercise agency within their classrooms. Every teacher has a teaching philosophy, even if he or she has never articulated it, and that philosophy is linked to deeply-rooted ideas about what education is and what teaching should be. Changing a teacher's deeply-held beliefs around education cannot be accomplished through the imposition of top-down policies, as it is a natural human tendency to adapt disorienting ideas to one's pre-existing frameworks and understandings. Teachers are not simply lacking in capacity and in need of "equipping" with tools, as the GMR's key strategies seem to suggest. Rather, they are active agents, who are being asked to alter some of the most fundamental aspects of their professional identity. This requires both thoughtful and careful teacher training, which respects teacher integrity by outlining the rationale and motivations for particular pedagogical practices, and ongoing support, to help teachers cope with feelings of disorientation and resistance from colleagues and students. There are, of course, resource implications to the provision of such in-depth teacher training and ongoing support, but, without such provision, it is highly unlikely that we will see any change in pedagogical practice in the majority of schools around the world. Surely it is important to highlight such concerns, even if (or perhaps particularly because) there are resource implications?

Encouraging students around the world to develop the ability to think critically about both local and global concerns is a vital learning objective that deserves strong support and attention from the international development community. But, such a lofty goal will never be reached without clarity and consensus around what we're trying to achieve and an acknowledgement of how deeply-held beliefs might hinder our progress.

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Managing Shadow Education for Public Good

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Summary: Private supplementary tutoring, widely known as shadow education, has become a major phenomenon in low-income, middle-income and high-income countries. It can have positive dimensions, but may also undermine the EFA goals by diverting resources from regular schooling and imposing hidden costs. These factors require closer attention to the phenomenon, with better data and improvements in regulations.

Recent decades have brought significant growth of private supplementary tutoring. For example a 2008 survey in Ghana found that 48% of households were paying additional fees for tutoring of primary school students; and in West Bengal, India, a 2012 survey found that 73% of rural children aged 6-14 were receiving private tuition (as tutoring is called in that country). Proportions are also high – and growing – in other parts of Africa and South Asia, as well as in many Arab states and in East Asia.

Private supplementary tutoring is widely called shadow education because it mimics regular education. As the curriculum changes in regular schooling, so it changes in the shadow; and as the regular school system expands, so does the shadow. A 2012 NORRAG NEWSBite (Bray 2012) pointed out that shadow education can undermine the EFA goals by diverting resources from public systems of education and by imposing pressures on families that cannot easily afford the costs.

The 2013/4 issue of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* included a section entitled "Private tutoring versus classroom teaching: protecting the poorest" (UNESCO 2014: 271-272). The Report noted that:

> Private tuition, if unchecked or uncontrolled, can be a detriment to learning outcomes, especially for the poorest students who are unable to afford it. Whatever perspective policy-makers may have on private tuition, management policies are required to ensure that teachers teach the assigned number of hours and cover the whole curriculum so that private tutoring does not displace classroom teaching.

This statement and the associated remarks comprised the clearest recognition to date in the *Global Monitoring Reports* of the need to address shadow education. The phenomenon had been mentioned in previous reports (UNESCO 2007: 151; 2008: 172), but only in passing.

The 2013/4 report recognised that teachers in some countries deliberately cut the curriculum in the regular school hours in order to promote demand for their services in supplementary private lessons. Teachers in other countries are prohibited from providing private supplementary lessons to their own students, but they may still tutor other students and put more effort into this private-sector work than into their mainstream duties. And teachers who do not themselves provide tutoring may assume that their students can get extra help from supplementary lessons and thus put less effort into their regular classes than they would otherwise.

These patterns require more attention. Governments need better data on the scale and nature of tutoring provided not only by teachers but also by private tuition companies. They also need better regulations. The *2013/4 Global Monitoring Report* focused on regulations for teachers, noting (p.271) that complete banning of tutoring is likely to be impractical but that strategies should at least be in place "to prevent tutoring of pupils by teachers who are responsible for teaching them in their daily classes" (p.272). Governments may also review the regulations under which private companies operate, to protect consumers and encourage a relationship between public and private sectors that is symbiotic rather than undermining of the EFA agenda.

A recent publication (Bray & Kwo 2014) analyses regulations in the Asian region and contains examples of good practice that might be emulated in other parts of the world. Many governments

require tutoring companies to be registered and to heed minimum standards in safety, though they commonly prefer to leave matters of curriculum and fees to market forces. Some governments prohibit teachers from offering extra private lessons, but others governments permit it under specified conditions. Proactive governments can encourage partnerships between parents, teachers and tutoring providers so that they can work together rather than in dissonance. Teachers' unions and community bodies may be among the allies in such initiatives.

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The Many Spaces of Learning: Private Tutoring and Post-2015 Education For All

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Key words: Public school; private tutoring; educational space; Cambodia

Summary: This article argues a post-2015 Education For All agenda must include multiple spaces of education that cannot be reduced to just public or private education. The absence of these hybrid spaces has consequences for where and how education officials at the country level direct their attention.

An honest review of the Education For All (EFA) initiative begins in the mirror. The biggest failure of learning over the past 25 years hasn't come from students, as the *2013 Global Monitoring Report* (GMR) suggests, but rather from the "experts" who make up the education-for-development industry. Until recently, experts and scholars—including the present authors—have been reluctant to broaden our conceptualizations of education to include anything beyond public, mainstream schooling or its counterpart, private, low-fee schooling, even as the reality of education for students has changed.

EFA and the associated goals were developed and have been used to track and draw attention to the progress of countries in educating their populations. Emphasis has been almost entirely restricted to children and adolescents at the primary level within public and—more recently—low-fee schooling (GMR, 2013, pp. 272-275). Yet, as we will briefly discuss, these targets do not now adequately reflect or capture essential educational spaces that have increased since EFA was first created. The reality of education today is that multiple, complex, and overlapping learning spaces have emerged that cannot be reduced to static notions of public or private education. Indeed, multiple forms of semi-private and semi-public schooling have now been institutionalized within and beyond the boundaries of what has historically been considered "public" education. You might say that the "learning crisis"—if there is one—is our current inability or unwillingness to see these diverse spaces of learning as meaningful and with

real implications for equity. Moreover, the absence of these spaces in our understanding of education has important consequences for where and how education officials at the country level direct their attention, a point to which we will return shortly.

In our own research—which focuses on education in Cambodia—we learned the hard way that there exist hybrid spaces of learning beyond mainstream school. At the outset, we adopted the labels promoted and utilized by other scholars and by the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS). Whereas the former have found evidence of a fee-based shadow system, the latter has focused almost exclusively on what occurs during the traditional school day (i.e., mainstream schooling). We later learned, however, that the terms "shadow" and "mainstream" miss the diversity and overlapping nature of the spaces of education found in Cambodia as students progress through primary and secondary school.

Primary students, for example, go to "mainstream" school—financed by a mixture of government, international, and household funds—for four hours and then must navigate a complex landscape of other schooling opportunities, often inside the very spaces of "mainstream" schooling and taught by "public" schoolteachers. The most popular non-mainstream schooling opportunity takes the form of what can be called "normal private tutoring." This is a fee-based system of private tutoring taught by "public" schoolteachers after, but sometimes during, "mainstream" school hours and covers the national curriculum designed by MoEYS. It is nearly impossible to tell the difference between "normal private tutoring" and "mainstream" schooling, save for the lack of school uniforms in the former space. That said, some teachers provide more one-on-one attention and the opportunity to practise more exemplary problems during "normal private tutoring" than they do in "mainstream" schooling. The larger point, however, is that this space has become normalized and necessary to such an extent that many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provide scholarships to students from poor families in order to participate

in it. Nevertheless, children from poor families are often excluded from "normal private tutoring" because of cost or time constraints.

Outside the space of "mainstream" schooling, but dependent on it, there is also "special private tutoring." "Public" schoolteachers also teach this type of tutoring, but classes take place at home in groups no larger than five students and for a much higher fee than "normal private tutoring." "Public" schoolteachers in this space act more like a private tutor than a teacher of large classes. Separately, even when students are on vacation between grades from "mainstream" school, they have the opportunity to attend "holiday private tutoring" in order to begin the national curriculum of the next grade with their future "public" schoolteacher. It is thus difficult to discern where the "shadow" system begins and the "mainstream" system ends, given the extent to which private tutoring has crept into—and become necessary for success in—what is thought of as traditional "public" schooling.

Beyond tutoring by a student's "mainstream" schoolteacher during or after the official school year, there are also myriad spaces of "private" schooling that offer education in a variety of subjects, such as computer skills or English, in addition to examination preparation. These are not only "shadow" spaces that complement, supplement, or at times supplant mainstream schooling. They are also an additional, fee-based space of learning that students must navigate and must decide whether or not to attend. Outside of these "public" and "private" spaces of schooling, moreover, there exist diverse spaces of learning inside pagoda schools, NGO schools, and missionary schools, all offering different educational opportunities for children and adults at no or low fee. By not drawing attention to this range of non-mainstream knowledge delivery options—which admittedly differ across contexts within and outside Cambodia and are not captured accurately by the term "public," "private," "low-fee" or "shadow education"—any post-2015 educational agenda necessarily ignores the various and integral learning spaces that currently comprise students' educational experiences around the world today.

There are multiple side effects to consider when the global education agenda overlooks non-mainstream learning spaces. We'll focus on two. First, placing emphasis exclusively on the "mainstream" system puts pressure on governments to fake the numbers. When global attention is on "mainstream" schooling, national governments logically

follow suit, particularly when funding is linked to achieving EFA and the development goals. Governments have a real incentive to make sure national statistics look good—or perhaps bad in some cases, depending on the funding that is sought.

Taking Cambodia as an example, it is clear that one contested number is the primary Net Enrollment Rate (NER), or the percentage of primary school aged children (6-11 years old) enrolled in school out of the total number of primary school aged children in the country. The official statistics reported by MoEYS in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) indicate that the total number of 6-11 year old children who are out-of-school decreased from 104,778 pupils in 2008/09 to 38,086 pupils in 2012/13. This corresponds to an increase in the NER for the primary level from 94.4 percent to 97.9 percent, as of the 2012/13 school year. These numbers look good when viewed from the perspective of EFA: more primary school-aged children are enrolling in primary school each year. However, the number of overage students who start first grade each year is larger than the number of 6-11 year old children out of school. For instance, in 2009/10 there were 93,007 children aged 6-11 out of school (but not necessarily overage); however, in 2010/11, 94,755 overage children started first grade. These numbers, which were taken from the EMIS, can only work if tens of thousands of children older than 11 enrolled in first grade for the first time during 2010/11—a possible but highly unlikely scenario. Moreover, other ministries, which also collect data on education but which do not provide the information used for EFA targets, paint starkly different pictures of NER. The Ministry of Planning, for instance, which uses household surveys and commune council (i.e., subnational) databases, indicates the NER is 85 percent, not the official 98 percent according to MoEYS (which uses school-level statistics). When the focus is on "mainstream" schooling alone, ministries of education are incentivized to doctor the numbers in order to avoid the public shame that comes with the increasingly popular international league tables that document progress toward EFA goals.

Second, when "mainstream" schooling is the main focus of EFA, governments can justifiably take a *laissez faire* approach to other spaces of education. Indeed, in Cambodia, for example, despite a failed attempt by the MoEYS at banning "shadow" education and repeated calls from civil society and some international organizations for government action on this issue, MoEYS currently

ignores the presence and effects of various forms of private tutoring. By not regulating, addressing, or even discussing anything other than "mainstream" schooling, the government allows inequality to persist in, through, and because of unregulated spaces like private tutoring. And as we have seen in Cambodia, navigating and affording these spaces then become key obstacles for students in completing a basic education (grades 1-9). This is particularly the case during the transition from primary (grades 1-6) to lower (grades 7-9) and upper (grades 10-12) secondary school, where private tutoring is almost always required in order for students to pass both the monthly exams given by teachers and the sixth and ninth grade national exams given by MoEYS. If students cannot pass (or otherwise purchase a passing score on) these various tests, the possibility of advancing to the next grade reduces dramatically.

The EFA's static conceptualization of schooling as "public" or "private" education limits development experts from seeing other, dynamic spaces of learning and how those spaces relate to "mainstream" education. In the post-2015 context, greater attention should be dedicated to understanding the hybrid spaces through which private tutoring is combining with and altering what has traditionally been labeled "public" education. One way to ensure greater attention to these spaces—by both development professionals and ministry officials—is to include them in the global education agenda, along with the development of associated indicators to track their various forms, prevalence, and effects over time.

Contract Teachers

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Summary: This article provides a summary of a recent Systematic Review which aimed to understand whether contract teachers are a cost-effective intervention to address teacher shortages and improve learning outcomes. Following stringent procedures, a set of 17 quantitative and qualitative studies were arrived at for in-depth review. On the whole, it was concluded that contract teachers are generally more effective in improving student outcomes than regular teachers. Having said that, the research did indicate that these findings are often context-specific. This is coupled with the fact that all of the studies that look into the question of relative efficiency of contract teachers state categorically that they appear to be a more cost-effective means of imparting learning. The review identified the need for more research in this area particularly in some developing country contexts where the evidence is especially scarce.

Contract teachers have been increasingly used in large parts of Africa, South Asia and Latin America in the last few decades to address rising student numbers by financially constrained governments. While the nature of contracts differ, the basic premise is that by hiring teachers on 'fixed-term' contracts and usually at a fraction of what regular, civil-service teachers are paid, governments hope to achieve efficiency and equity. But are contract and para-teachers a cost effective intervention to address teacher shortages and improve learning outcomes?

A Systematic Review [Are contract teachers and para-teachers a cost-effective intervention to address teacher shortage and improve learning outcomes?] by the authors shortlisted 17 studies for in-depth review after stringent quality assurance procedures to ensure only studies that met pre-determined guidelines were included. A hierarchy of evidence was used to evaluate the validity of the studies.

Contract teachers are often appointed to schools with fewer resources in more remote areas and often serve more disadvantaged children; so any valid estimate of the contract teacher effect must take account of the wider social and economic context in which these teachers are employed, and also the potential non-random matching of contract teachers to particular children/schools on the basis of unobserved characteristics of both the teachers and the students. It is therefore very important to control for the observed and unobserved student, school and teacher characteristics in a study that aims to estimate true contract teacher effects.

The weight of evidence provided by these studies shows that contract teachers are generally more effective in improving student outcomes than regular teachers, although the research also indicates that these findings are often context-specific and conducted at a sub-national level, limiting the generalizability of their findings. Secondly, all the reviewed studies find that contract teachers are a more cost effective means of imparting learning, since their costs are significantly lower than those for civil-service teachers. However, more evidence is needed. Similarly, rigorous evidence is limited on whether contract teachers help alleviate teacher shortages, since theoretically one would expect this not to be questionable as contract teachers policy is mainly instigated to overcome the teacher shortage problem.

The research that has been analyzed in this Systematic Review can help guide policy makers in several ways. From a policy perspective, research suggests that there is a need to devise policies and contracts that encourage more teacher effort. This can only occur if the incentives and disincentives are aligned within the contracts and effectively enforced. For example, the threat of dismissal has been identified as a key motivating

factor among contract teachers. However, if this threat is not credible, the incentive to exert effort to ensure contract renewal disappears. It is also important to note that contracts 'as they are' will only go so far in raising teacher effort as the evidence has shown that all teachers' effort (even that of contract teachers) is low on an absolute basis. Particularly as some studies note that those contract teachers who have more than one tenure period exert less effort in subsequent tenure periods. This points to performance-related renewal and the need for contract policy to be amended to combine the probationary, nonrenewal aspect of contract terms with better salaries and benefits. Some researchers argue that explicit and implicit incentives for teachers are based on end-line performance of the group of students, rather than value added over time. If evaluations of a teacher's performance were on a value-added basis, teachers might be happier to work with initially lower-achieving students. This could provide some guidance to policy makers in designing effective policies.

One concern in proposing the expansion of contract teachers is that although it may be beneficial in the short run, in the long term it could potentially create a two tier system and the concern that this may lead to demand for regularization of these teachers which in itself would defeat the purpose of hiring them in the first place. However if their progression to regularization was performance-related, this could alleviate the above concerns and help integrate the two teacher types. There is a need to revisit the entire issue because if the system of using contract teachers is merely a by-way to regular appointments, the education system may end up with a large number of non-professional teachers who will have the same weak performance incentives as the current regular teachers.

Low motivation and low attendance rates of regular teachers have been cited as a key factor contributing to poor student outcomes. It is important for policy makers to recognize that the same factors that generate low effort among regular teachers (such as missing facilities and deficiencies in infrastructure etc.) are contributory factors in lowering not only student learning but will also negatively impact on the effort levels of contract teachers.

This Systematic Review can also provide guidance for key areas for future research. Firstly, broadening the evidence base to cover a more represen-

tative geographical area especially poorest countries. Additionally, while superficial attempts have been made to address the questions of whether contract teachers are effective at eliminating teacher shortages and whether they are cost effective, more robust and in-depth analyses are needed. More longer-term rigorous data are needed not only on what happens upon placing contract teachers in education systems but also following up on these teachers and in particular examining the impact they have on students if and when they are given civil service status.

Research indicates that while, globally, several countries have initiated contract teacher programmes, few have given consideration to and implemented systems whereby effective impact evaluations can be carried out. Research on this can provide guidance to policy makers not only to evaluate the policies that they themselves have implemented but can also provide them international best practice from other contract teacher policy reforms.

Further reading

The Systematic Review referred to in this article can be accessed here:

http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/systematicreviews/Parateachers2013Kingdon.pdf

What the EFA Global Monitoring Report Does Not Say About How the Most Knowledgeable Teachers Learn To Teach?

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Key words: teacher preparation; mathematics knowledge; mathematics pedagogy knowledge; neoliberal policy

Summary: Emphasizing the impact of teachers on pupil learning is vital for reaching the EFA goals. But equally if not more important is to have a better understanding of how highly knowledgeable teachers are prepared. This short contribution seeks to answer this question and calls for an open discussion of how the intrusion of market approaches into teacher preparation, if unchecked, may end up destroying the profession.

The EFA-GMR report purports to supply evidence of progress toward important development goals. This year the title of the report tells us that the focus is on teachers and learning (UNESCO, 2014). While the report is actually about many other aspects of the EFA goals with connections to teaching and learning sprinkled throughout the report, one part out of three is dedicated to teachers, and three chapters out of seven focus on teaching. One chapter looks particularly at providing the best teachers (chapter 6) and it discusses the usual four policy aspects regarding teachers: recruitment, preparation, deployment and retention. A partial review of the literature was done (it would have been helpful to know the criteria to include the studies that were used as evidence for the recommendations given in the report). While it is generally agreed that teacher-related policy deals with all the aspects of the recruitment, preparation, deployment and retention, the most challenging and important aspect concerning teaching quality is indisputably teacher preparation.

In recent years a number of policy initiatives are sprouting up around the world claiming to be the solution to preparing teachers; yet few of these so called innovations are based on solid evidence that could be generalized as a number of reviews of research attest. These highly problematic policy trends, which actually threaten to destroy teacher education programs and consequently to decrease teacher quality, are ignored by this report. The assumption is made that the solution to teachers learning to teach and to producing high quality teachers is relatively straightforward.

Given that the preparation of teachers is a complex and much contested issue, and is repeatedly touted as the solution to improving teaching (and learning) quality I will dedicate this brief reflection to this aspect only. I propose that an important question that the report did not fully answer is: *what are the conditions that contribute to the production of highly knowledgeable teachers able to help all children learn?* Because teaching knowledge includes a number of aspects such as the knowledge of the subject teachers are expected to teach, the pedagogy for teaching those subjects, the knowledge of the curriculum, students and their community, to mention only a few, and teaching occurs within multiple contexts (communities, programs, schools, classrooms, individual experiences), programs designed to prepare teachers are by definition highly varied. An important task is then to attempt to learn from such variation concerning the preparation of future primary and secondary teachers. I draw primarily from results obtained in the TEDS-M study (Tatto et al., 2012) which was designed to measure the knowledge outcomes (particularly mathematics) of teacher education among future primary and secondary teachers in 17 countries. At the end I raise deep felt concerns among the teacher community having to do with emergent policy trends in teacher preparation and its effects (sometimes devastating) on future teacher quality. I argue that these developments should have been highlighted and discussed in the GMR report.

TEDS-M uncovered evidence concerning the kinds of opportunities to learn to teach provided to teachers across a diversity of contexts and the implications of this evidence for the provision of highly knowledgeable mathematics teachers for the most disadvantaged sectors. The TEDS-M study is the first study that begins to illuminate the confused policy initiatives directed at "innovative" teacher preparation. The TEDS-M study provides generalizable insights because it used representative samples of primary and secondary teacher education programs in 17 countries

to answer three key challenges having to do with policies that support future teachers learning, the opportunities to learn to teach provided to future teachers, and most importantly the breadth and depth of knowledge that future teachers acquire after their preparation.

What can be learned from the ways in which teacher education programs are designed and implemented across the countries participating in this study? A concurrent review of the TEDS-M and TIMSS results makes evident that countries whose pupils do well in the TIMSS assessment also have teacher education programs in higher education institutions (HEI) that are able to produce future primary and secondary teachers with high levels of mathematics and mathematics pedagogy. All countries in the study prepared the majority of their teachers in teacher education programs within HEIs. Not only do the most successful countries at preparing primary and secondary have rigorous selection standards for entry and graduation, but also they provide in depth opportunities to learn mathematics and mathematics pedagogy for their future teachers (e.g., geometry, continuity and functions, probability and statistics, the mathematics of the school curriculum such as number, measurement and geometry, and function, probability and calculus; and importantly the pedagogy to teach this specialist knowledge).

Those institutions whose graduates demonstrated higher levels of knowledge in the TEDS-M assessments followed an inquiry-oriented approach to teacher preparation (e.g., i*n addition to getting a right answer in mathematics, it is important to understand why the answer is correct*, and *teachers should allow pupils to figure out their own ways to solve a mathematical problem*) as opposed to a procedural approach to teaching the subject (e.g., holding the view that *mathematics is a collection of rules and procedures that prescribe how to solve a problem* and that *mathematics involves the remembering and application of definitions, formulas, mathematical facts and procedures*). An inquiry approach to teacher preparation helped future teachers acquire the ability to apply and reason mathematically, and to implement the school curriculum, to plan, to evaluate students' work correctly, and to analyze students' errors, to successfully address more complex mathematics learning, to successfully understand or interpret students' thinking, and to successfully engage and teach more complex concepts. Thus it is clear that acquiring a good level knowledge of the discipline is not enough, and that intensive preparation with-

in teacher preparation programs leads to higher levels of comprehension of the subject and of the learning of strategies to in turn teach the subject.

In sum TEDS-M revealed common features shared among successful programs such as emphasis on content and pedagogical-content knowledge, strong links between theory and practice, and an inquiry orientation. In addition, rigorous selection and graduation requirements, and careful induction into the profession added to the strength of program design. However current teacher education policy in a number of countries continues to be influenced more by ideology, politics and tradition than by evidence of what works as shown by rigorous research.

The TEDS-M study was designed to measure the knowledge outcomes of teacher education and is thus limited in how much it can tell us about the effects of high quality teacher preparation on initial teaching practice. A new study which builds on TEDS-M, called FIRSTMATH is now in the field trial stage. This new study, based at Michigan State University, funded by the US National Science Foundation, and working with colleagues from 15 countries (including three US states), is exploring what factors--including but not limited to pre-service teacher education--influence the initial development of high quality mathematics secondary teachers.

In conclusion -

- Successful countries rely on pre-service teacher education programs to prepare future teachers

- Different designs of teacher preparation result in different outcomes

  - Selection and graduation criteria are important

  - Specialization in the discipline and preparation in learning how to teach the discipline produces highly knowledgeable teachers

  - Exposure to challenging mathematics content at university level is important

  - Deep understanding of the school curriculum and how to teach it is provided by teacher preparation programs is important.

- Guided school practice closely with teacher education programs monitoring of school mentoring is important.

- Emphasis on how to apply what is learned in teacher preparation to teach a wide range of students including disadvantaged students received lower levels of emphasis compared with other opportunities to learn to teach in most programs across the countries studied.

- There is an urgent need for teacher preparation programs around the world to provide opportunities for teachers to learn to teach diverse students. *The preparation for teachers of disadvantaged students requires more (not less) teacher preparation.* The introduction of market approaches which are supported by neoliberal policies promising quick and easy fixes for teacher preparation must be carefully scrutinized as should emerging policies that are designed to undermine high quality research-based teacher education.

- Learning to teach is complex hard work. It is highly contextualized; it is a developmental process because it requires learning how to teach knowledge and how to teach thinking. It is also currently a highly contested arena for a variety of political and business interests.

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The Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 and its Repercussion on Malaysian Higher Education

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Summary: The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) talks about the poor education system in Malaysia; this is a negative indictment with wide scale repercussions for the country's higher education agenda. This report, while it is not unexpected, now calls for real-time action to manage challenges to quality education, particularly those that concern policies and implementation.

The recent global tragedy of MH370 seems to have shifted the spotlight from another national tragedy – the findings from the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) which highlighted Malaysia's poor education system. The GMR news raised eyebrows though it did not get the prominence it would have been given. Perhaps due to the focus on the MH370 tragedy or political expedience, considering that education is a very political subject in Malaysia. What is even more ironic is that this report comes after a statement from the Ministry of Education not long ago that Malaysia has a world-class education system which rivals that of the developed nations.

Was the report unexpected? Numerous World Bank reports in the past had highlighted the ticking time-bomb of poor quality of education. The main challenge to quality education is the lack of capable, strategic and objective leadership in education. Other ills that plague the education system include the lack of skills promoting higher order thinking largely contributed by the curriculum and inappropriate teacher training schemes. The Minister of International Trade and industry, himself a past Minister of Higher Education, voiced concerns on the issue of substandard education quality that negatively impacts on foreign investment through the lack of suitably qualified workforce.

The quality of the graduate workforce is a reflection of the quality of early and pre-university education. Numerous schemes are in place to train and re-train graduates, the success of which is very unconvincing due to lack of accountability and poor implementation. This is mainly due to the fact that though there is so much to be gained potentially from such schemes, many participants only want a ride on the gravy train. But what is even more disturbing is the foreseeable impact on Malaysia's vision to become a regional hub of education. With close to 90,000 foreign tertiary level students, two-thirds of these in the highly-competitive full fee-paying private sector, the GMR will be a damning piece of report. The private higher education sector had remained attractive to foreign university partners and students largely due to the perceived quality of education. This perception may now change and with growing options in the region, Malaysia must be vigilant and be mindful of its response to the GMR.

The saving grace for Malaysia is that, after Singapore, it has one of the best regional infrastructures for supporting transnational education. The GMR is a wake-up call for national leaders. It is time to focus on implementing rather than brainstorming. In other words, it is time for action. These actions to improve quality of education should begin by keeping race, religion and politics out of education. The true form of meritocracy as opposed to race-based meritocracy should underline all efforts if a reversal of the GMR findings is to be effected.

A Teachable Moment amidst the Learning Crisis

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Key words: teachers; teacher policy; quality

Summary: The learning crisis from the teaching profession's standpoint is as much about dismantling, de-professionalizing and defunding public education as anything else. It is also a crisis in priority setting amidst distractions and competing agendas.

Barack Obama's former chief of staff, Rahm Emmanuel, once said that we should "not let a crisis go to waste."[1] Although this was meant in reaction to the global economic crisis and the opportunity to re-evaluate the choices that led to a global recession, I find it helpful when critically reflecting on the role of teachers in the eye of the 'learning crisis'.

For decades, national and global teachers' organizations have been warning about the negative effect that de-professionalization – witnessed by a systematic increase in the number of untrained, unsupported teachers without appropriate resources in overcrowded classrooms - would have on the quality of the teaching and learning. Yet, for the past years the IFIs and others have worked hard to make the argument for cheaper teachers or "content deliverers" with less preparation, less status and greater accountability for results. Others, like the proponents of the ' 15 million dollar X Prize for the teacher-less school' [2] are seeking to convince governments to take the high amount of recurrent expenditure on salaries and reinvest it in technological delivery platforms or vouchers for low-fee, for profit private schools with labor flexibility and high stakes testing. Certainly, looking at how one frames the crisis will tell you much about what one stands to gain from the crisis, especially when the evaluation, monitoring and intervention "solutions" are often marketed from the same interested parties who convene these now ubiquitous global innovation conferences and car show circuits.

The real crisis lies in the steady deconstruction and defunding of public education systems, and the GMR provides us with powerful evidence of exactly this. Firstly, governments across the global North are failing to meet their funding commitments to education, and where they do make investments, they benefit the privileged at the expense of the most marginalised, effectively widening inequalities. Secondly, governments have not adequately developed and implemented (read: funded) comprehensive teacher policies. In many developing countries teachers work on precarious contracts, earn salaries well below the minimum wage and lack the fundamental qualifications, skills, support and learning materials to teach. Too often, teaching and learning takes place in unsafe and unhealthy environments, which in many contexts means overcrowded classrooms and poor sanitary facilities. Is it any wonder that the OECD Background Paper for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession[3] and EFA GMR 2013/4 agreed on the importance of recruiting, training, supporting, deploying and collaborating with teachers and their organizations to ensure effective teaching and learning takes place? Particularly for marginalized groups. It is important to note that many of these teacher policy recommendations were laid out in the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendations on the Status of the Teaching Profession.[4]

If countries are to make further headway on education and development up to and beyond 2015, they must address access, equity and quality simultaneously. This requires an holistic approach to education, focusing on what goes into a system ('inputs' such as equitably-distributed resources, qualified teachers, relevant curricula and appropriate facilities, materials and class sizes), the processes of teaching and learning, and the outcomes of these processes. The GMR offers valuable evidence of what teachers and educators globally have been campaigning for: they claim that sustainable quality education for all will not be achieved without

1   http://www.politicsdaily.com/2010/09/02/rahm-emanuels-misguided-mantra-no-crisis-should-go-to-waste/

2 http://www.xprize.org/prize-development/learning

3   http://www.oecd.org/site/eduistp2012/49850576.pdf

4   http://www.ilo.org/global/industries-and-sectors/education/WCMS_162256/lang--en/index.htm

appropriate investments in teachers' competences and motivation through training, continuous professional development, decent working conditions and matched by the appropriate tools and environments necessary for teaching and learning. To best learn from and address this crisis may mean not to be too focused on what is manufactured and marketed by think tanks and edubusinesses, but rather on the evidence pointed out by the GMR that these other elements are distracting us from focusing on - coherent policy, political commitment and long-term, sustainable, financing.

Universal Primary Education By 2015: Are Children Learning in Schools? Who is Failing these Children?

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Key words: Education for All; Education in Africa; Learning Outcomes; Functional Literacy Skills

Summary: This paper discussed challenges of attaining the learning outcomes for pupils in schools with reference to the findings of World Vision Uganda baseline study. Indeed findings revealed that boys and girls go to school but they do not attain reading and numeracy skills. Socio-economic, cultural, educational and political factors continue to affect the learning outcomes.

Since the 1990s Governments have made commitments to Education for All (EFA). However, based on the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, achievements made over the years should be critically assessed: (a) are all children enrolled in schools; and, (b) are children acquiring functional literacy skills? So far various reports do not reveal results worth celebrating as the 2015 deadline is approaching. It is therefore crucial at this point to assess the question of accessing education and the actual learning outcomes in schools. For instance, the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14 talks of a "*learning crisis*". It states that currently almost 250 million children do not have the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. According to the UNESCO report, one in four young people in developing countries are unable to read a sentence. It warns that despite improved access, poor quality education has left a "*legacy of illiteracy*" more widespread than previously believed and suggests that a further 175 million young people lack even basic literacy skills (UNESCO, 2014).

The World Vision Uganda Pader Improved Education Phase II Baseline Study (Munthali, 2013) which was conducted in 10 schools in Northern Uganda is a good example of a country that is not achieving adequate learning outcomes among pupils. For instance, findings revealed that "*only 1 boy out of 136 pupils (65 boys and 71 girls) could read and comprehend at least 60 words per minute in his/her mother tongue*". Basically children go to school but they fail to attain minimum learning standards of reading simple sentences. It is

surprising that factors which emerged from the baseline study are well known. Yet the Government of Uganda and donor agencies appear not to have paid much attention on the actual learning outcomes in schools. Nevertheless, results are related to educational, socio-cultural, political and socio-economic factors. For instance, schools lack adequate trained teachers, female teachers, teachers for special needs children, and many teachers are demotivated. It was clear that the school management systems are weak as there was no evidence of minutes showing the implementation process of the School Management Committees (SMCs) and the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) action plans. Moreover, the inspection and monitoring by District Education Office is weak. Inspection of schools was not carried out as required by the Ministry of Education partly because of insufficient budget and scarcity of school inspectors in Pader District.

In a word, Government and teachers are indeed failing children. First of all the Government should invest more in ensuring that teachers are adequately trained and oriented on the new curriculum. Secondly, the Government should be on top of inspecting schools and providing all necessary support to address all factors affecting children's education. For example the Government should invest more on providing resources at District Education Offices for inspecting of schools. Without inspection, schools will continue to produce illiterate children despite years of schooling.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report notes that governments and donor agencies should respond to the crisis of a lack of the learning outcomes to achieve good quality education for all. This includes introducing strategies by policy makers by recruiting new trained teachers and ensuring retention by providing adequate infrastructure and better services to attract teachers in harsh working conditions. Indeed this relates to Northern Uganda where teachers are working under hard conditions as the result of war which affected the education system. Another useful GMR recommendation is that governments should recruit teachers locally and provide them with ongoing training to improve

their learning. The Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi presents a good example of recruiting female teachers locally by training and mentoring local secondary school leavers and deploying teachers locally. The EFA report ends by noting that "*to end the learning crisis all countries rich or poor have to make sure every child has access to a well-trained and motivated teacher*". This is a tall order!

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GLOBAL REPORTS AND PROCESSES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Quality of Teaching Matters Most: What is the Next Big Challenge?

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Key words: Teaching; Education; transformation

Summary: The Quality of teaching matters most: what is the next big challenge?

In 2007, Mona Mourshed and I published "*How the World's Best-Performing Education Systems Come Out on Top*" (McKinsey 2007). There were a number of key lessons but the central one was both simple and profound – the quality of teaching matters more than anything else.

Since then this insight – which was a reinforcement on the basis of international benchmarking of what was already plain in the school effectiveness literature – has powerfully influenced education ministers.

From Punjab to Poland and Malaysia to Massachusetts policymakers are reexamining their approaches to attracting, recruiting, retaining and continuously developing the teaching profession.

There is no quick fix in bringing these changes about. Whereas in some countries – such as Vietnam, Singapore or Finland – teaching is seen as a highly prized profession, in many others it is necessary to change the culture as well as the policy. This takes time but there are good examples also of making progress.

In England, Teach First – the British equivalent of Teach for America – is now the biggest recruiter of graduates from Oxford and Cambridge. Over 60 percent of those who join the teaching profession through this route stay beyond the two-year commitment.

Meanwhile Teach for All has taken the model of Teach for America and Teach First and adapted and refined it for dozens of countries now including India, Estonia and Chile.

The quality of professional development is improving too. Professor Tom Kane of Harvard Graduate School of Education, for example, is experiment-ing with video analysis of lessons, enabling expert coaches, who might be remote, to offer detailed commentary on sequences of teaching. Increasing numbers of schools around the world are adopting this kind of method. Professional development of this granular kind is likely to be as transformative for teachers as it has been for top sports people.

Meanwhile systems have also understood that one key to retaining good teachers is the quality of school leadership. No one in any line of work wants to work in a badly led organisation. If the school culture falls apart, teaching becomes a nightmare. By contrast, if the school culture is positive, aspirational and collaborative then teachers grow and develop and reap the joys of working with inspired students. In places such as Singapore, Australia and Ontario the benefits of systematic leadership development are overwhelmingly clear. In the U.S. where the role of principal has traditionally been ambiguous, charter chains such as Uncommon Schools and organisations such as New Leaders for the New Schools are showing the way.

In all these respects developments in education policy since 2007 are encouraging. However, the gains at best remain incremental. The big challenge lies ahead – finding the means of transforming learning outcomes and achieving dramatically improved performance through combining – as Michael Fullan and Katelyn Donnelly have argued so convincingly in "*Alive in the Swamp*" (NESTA 2013) – system change, pedagogical change and the application of technology. At present there are emerging experiments that show signs of what might be to come; success at scale remains elusive. Some system somewhere will put this together soon, or may be just stumble upon it, and then we will see the future.

Reflections on the Learning Metrics Task Force

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Key words: Learning; assessment; outcomes

Summary: The global Learning Metrics Task Force, by narrowly focusing on assessment, risks producing some unintended consequences that could undermine rather than improve learning outcomes.

Over the past two years I have been an active member of the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), a high-profile international effort whose overarching objective was "*to create a shift in the global conversation on education from a focus on access to access plus learning*". As I re-read the LMTF reports (see www.brookings.edu/learningmetrics), I found myself critically reflecting on what we produced.

Some **positive contributions** are clear. The task force helped to challenge the view that global education goals have been largely met (50 million more children are in school compared to 2000 – DESA, 2013). By highlighting the shockingly poor learning outcomes achieved in many countries (250 million children are in school but not learning – EFA GMR, 2012), the LMTF has helped to refresh the case for a focus on education post 2015. LMTF also moved the debate on from a focus on narrow literacy and numeracy outcomes (e.g every child should read by second grade, as advocated by some agencies – see for example RTI[1], one of the leading American research institutes) by highlighting **seven broad domains of learning**: physical well-being, social and emotional, culture and the arts, literacy and communication, learning approaches and cognition, numeracy and maths, science and technology.

The LMTF should also be welcomed for its **focus on equity**, recognising that the inequalities within countries (e.g. by sex, urban or rural residence, socio-economic status, mother tongue, ethnicity, citizenship status, disabilities or emergency situations) are often masked by national level data

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1 http://www.rti.org/page.cfm/Teaching_amp_Learning

(which are not disaggregated sufficiently in national reports to the United Nations, e.g. the EFA GMR (2013)). Similarly the attention placed on **supporting country education assessment systems** is important as it suggests that there is not a one-size fits all solution and that diverse countries will have different priorities for effectively improving assessment and learning (depending on what they have in place already).

The LMTF report claims that "*the **education community has reached a consensus** on the skills and competencies that are important …. and a small set of indicators that are feasible and desirable to track at the global level*". This is an over-statement. Whilst there may be consensus on the importance of learning (which has always been the case for educators, see the EFA Framework – WEF, 2000) it is particularly wrong to claim consensus on a small set of indicators and the desirability of global tracking. These issues remain highly contentious because they are seen as likely to lead to the imposition of standardised assessments and a culture of testing across the world.

Perhaps the biggest problem with LMTF was that whilst the overarching objective and aims were "*make recommendations for common goals to improve learning*", its **focus in practice was purely on measuring and assessing learning, not actually improving learning**. Crucially no systematic effort was made to establish the connections between measuring learning and improving learning or to acknowledge the fact that improved statistics do not inherently contribute to improved learning!

The LMTF proposes **seven areas of measurement for global tracking** (titled as: learning for all, age of learning, reading, numeracy, readiness to learn, *citizen of the world* and breadth of learning opportunities). Tracking each of these would involve using a composite of different indicators and some major challenges (how do you measure what it means to be a "citizen of the world" in a standardised way in Benin, Bolivia and Britain?). If elaborated this would end up with a global imposition of dozens of indicators - in significant ten-

sion with the focus on supporting country systems that operate in diverse contexts. This may benefit large-scale private providers of textbooks and tests but learners will be the losers: facing assessments that are culturally inappropriate.

Importantly, the LMTF failed to acknowledge that obsessive "teaching to the test" can actively undermine learning. It can destroy the joy of learning and mean learners are driven to pass a test without developing transferable or practical skills. The more focus given to testing the more likely it is that things that cannot be easily tested (e.g. social and emotional outcomes or values) will be overlooked (Popham, 1999).

To seriously link assessment to improved learning we need a massive investment in **formative assessment by teachers** themselves. Sadly, LMTF added its loud voice to the **resounding silence on teachers**. There is no analysis of the present threats to the teaching profession and no analysis of the crucial role that teachers play in assessing and improving learning. Indeed the impression is given that talking about teachers is to focus on "inputs" when we should now be solely focused on "outcomes" - without seeing the self-evident connections between these!

LMTF has raised some important issues but as we move towards setting a post-2015 development goal on education we need to have a much broader and more systematic process to build consensus on the future priorities. We need a holistic goal with indicators that will balance quality inputs, quality processes and a broad range of quality outcomes (Education International, 2013).

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Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Global Learning Metrics and Learning for All in Sub-Saharan African Countries

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Key words: TVET; Global Learning Metrics; Sub Saharan Africa; Learning; Post-2015 agenda

Summary: As the post-2015 agenda is being set, it is important to stress the need for systems level integration of TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as into the global learning metrics such that teachers of TVET are oriented towards providing quality learning required of the 21st century workforce.

Introduction

Facilitating learning for the workplace is at the crux of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa countries. TVET has been acknowledged by most governments and international development agencies as being capable of providing the needed workforce for Sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, TVET being part of the third goal of education for all has been the most neglected by most countries (EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2013/4). The reasons for the neglect of TVET range from systemic isolation, low reputation, lack of political will for proper funding, and inadequate measuring instruments. It is pertinent to note that the 2013/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report has few mentions of TVET, in part, confirming the enormous isolation of teaching and learning of workplace skills in the EFA (education for all) initiatives. The neglect of TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa is also manifested in the dearth of relevant statistics, and an army of unskilled and unemployable youth resulting from low quality learning. The 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report attested that progress on access has improved but that the quality of learning is still low. In response to the issue of quality learning, UNESCO through its Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Centre for Universal Education (CUE) at the Brookings Institution has developed the global learning metrics (GLM). The proposed GLM has seven domains and corresponding sub-domains of learning, beginning in early childhood and extending through the transition to work and life namely, Physical well-being, Social and emotional, Culture and the arts, Literacy and communication,

Learning approaches and cognition, Numeracy and mathematics, Science and technology (LMTF, 2013).

Challenges to GLM, TVET and Learning for All in Sub-Saharan African Countries

The Global Learning Metrics (GLM) promises to add value to the educational efforts of Sub-Saharan Africa countries. Its timing within the period of agenda-setting for the post-MDG, 2015 programme is entirely appropriate. Unfortunately, the GLM does not explicitly include TVET but includes science & technology at the post primary level. Such exclusion will create a real integration challenge for TVET since policy makers and administrators may not relate GLM readily to TVET. This further confirms the need for global integration of TVET into the mainstream educational systems. TVET has a technology component in most trades and it is offered at post-primary level and thus should be explicitly provided for in GLM. GLM will serve as a ready guide for experts to develop intervention programmes for the TVET program design, implementation and assessment of learning. The formal and non-formal types of TVET are already well structured and have had sustained relationship with international educational systems in terms of transferability of credits and recognition of certificates.

These challenges in integrating GLM into TVET can hardly be met by the present crop of TVET teachers without targeted interventions on how to effectively facilitate learning, measure it and teach for lifelong learning. In addition, the TVET teacher education programmes have to be revised in order to be responsive to the demands of GLM such that the next generation of teachers would be able to attain the 21st century objectives of education and meet the post-2015 development goals. Newer contents on emotional intelligence, intercultural education, and computer skills are imperatives. Such agencies as UNESCO-UNEVOC can lend their voice and influence towards quality learning rather than just increased access to TVET.

Furthermore, many Sub-Saharan African countries have several issues relating to integrating TVET into the mainstream education systems. Learning for all is incomplete if any aspect of education is not strategically provided for. Inadequate integration as well as isolation of TVET is reducing the cluster of learning experiences available to students and contributing to the low reputation of the discipline. Students enrolled in TVET programmes have serious issues in transferring credits earned from different institutions. This situation certainly affects students' morale and adversely affects the returns on investing in TVET programmes. It should be noted that there are substantial differences and antecedents in the educational landscape of Sub-Saharan African countries. Governments are still influenced by their colonial histories and patterns of continued collaboration; and their TVET programmes are mostly modelled after these different Western models and hence until quite recently there has been no harmonized regional vocational qualification framework. In the event that there is harmonization of the TVET programmes in these different economic regions, teachers would have the additional challenge of ensuring that learning in one country would be of workplace relevance in another.

Conclusion

The teacher is pivotal to the facilitation of learning in TVET programmes. Thus there should be increased commitments by governments and development agencies on TVET teacher education as well as continuing professional development programmes. Examples abound where TVET teachers do not go for any continuing professional development programmes between initial recruitment and retirement. In an era of rapid changes in technology, these teachers are doing a disservice to the aspiration of learning for all. Governments as well as development agencies should match words with funds and maximise the harmonisation of TVET procurement of instructional materials. For example, receiving equipment marked in metric and imperial systems from two donors for the same TVET system is likely going to cause instructional issues even if it seems convenient to the donors. Improving the quality of learning and teaching should be pivotal in taking decisions on effective implementation of TVET programmes. In the final analysis, efforts should be made toward TVET integration into the GLM and systems level mainstreaming of TVET in sub-Saharan Africa.

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CULTURES AND CONTEXTS OF TEACHING

Ten Questions for Proving the Ability of Good Educators to Understand Poor Teaching/Learning

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Key words: Teaching profession; Teacher education; Method, skills and practice; Initial and in-service training

Summary: A group of NORRAG's members with expertise in 'teacher practice in developing countries' has reported that teachers are teaching as their trainers behave (during their initial teaching training) rather than as they told them to teach. This article presents ten questions that may help teachers to keep improving their professional performance through self-critical evaluations of their own practice

Education change has been ineffective because "students are not learning, or not learning enough". Fortunately, specific questions have been able to introduce effective change in education in a couple of years. In this situation, the questions allowed us to look at relevant education problems from a new perspective. Unfortunately, it is not easy to reach agreement on the magnitude of these problems in a given social context. However, the questions described in this contribution may illustrate possible issues that can trigger effective change.

Five unambiguous issues were analysed through the Chilean mass media 20 years ago and generated positive changes in three areas. These are that in 1994-1996 the average teacher salary increased to 1.7 times the national per capita average income; the school year increased from 600 to 1000 hours per year; and most schools received computers and got access to internet. On the other hand, funds allocated for the other two issues were mismanaged. Textbooks were never tested in students and US$20 million for improving (traditional, frontal, passive, memorising) initial teacher training were allocated to projects that only generated cosmetic changes (such as names of courses, time trainees spend in schools and infrastructure).

It is necessary to understand clearly and with certainty a relevant education problem for formulating any very precise question. For example, it should be difficult for the reader of NN50 (who we assume is a good educator) to imagine the problems of being illiterate or living in a shantytown. Few members of the NORRAG group have had the experience of being an illiterate person or living in a slum settlement. Education authorities in developing countries have a similar difficulty to imagine the learning processes that take place in poor schools, because most of them (and their children) attended private schools and had excellent early stimulation at home.

Therefore, with Noel McGinn and a group of NORRAG's members - who profess that one of their areas of disciplinary interest and expertise is 'teacher education', we explored teaching processes in different types of schools (see Schiefelbein and McGinn, 2013) and we got some hints about why some groups of students were not learning, or not learning enough.

The survey data suggest questions that would be useful to take into account for designing effective educational policies that would allow students to learn to use printed information to function in a modern society and to develop one's knowledge and potential. For example, to start looking at an essential aspect of the writing (and reading) process of learning, the question is: How many pages of creative writing does the average primary student write in the school year?

If the figure is less than 20 to 30 pages in a year (as we found in the survey of teaching practices), factors limiting Creative Writing Class Work & Homework can be explored. For example, the amount of pages that the student writes in the year may be limited by lack of teachers' time for checking homework or by poor ways to check it in class. Given that the more contact children have with books, the better readers they become, another relevant question is: What is the percentage of classrooms that have a shelf with some books that the students take and read?

To appreciate the essential teaching problems the question may be more general: which is the main variable of John Carroll's model that is limiting students' learning. This question can be completed by asking about the percentage of 4th or 5th grade classes working in small groups at least once per week or the percentage of class time the teacher uses to introduce content and explain the key topics.

Previous knowledge is a key constraint upon learning but is frequently forgotten. Its present impact can be estimated by asking: How many words make up the vocabulary of an average seven year old enrolled in a rural, urban-marginal or fee-paying private school? Every child with a reduced vocabulary needs a good teacher, especially in the early grades. The question to test the allocation of teachers in each school is: To which grade does the average school assign its "best teacher for teaching to read"?

To verify teachers' knowledge about key research findings on classroom processes a good question is: Are there objective estimates of the impact of teacher expectation on student learning? Another relevant question is: How accurate has the measure of such impact been? For exploring awareness of recent research focused on reading, the question is: What is the minimum speed (in words per minute) that it should take to read a 12-word sentence (for the brain to have time to process the message)?

Accurate data about the classroom teaching processes are the basis for identifying teaching problems and eventually designing effective strategies for improving students' learning. The right strategy may be long term (for example improving initial teacher training), midterm (for example testing of textbooks) or short term (for example allocation of best teachers to early grades or work in small groups). However, there is no silver bullet to solve all problems of an educational system.

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Re-envisioning Research on Teachers' Work in the South

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Key words: teachers' work; complexity; instability; exceptionality

Summary: Contemporary research suggests that teachers in post-apartheid South Africa work in situations of uncertainty, complexity and instability. The research gaze, we argue, should shift from context descriptions to reconstituted work conditions.

Approximately twenty-five years ago, teaching in South Africa was a relatively stable profession. Teachers were trained with the certainty of knowing exactly what was required, who was being taught, what knowledge and skills mattered, what policies were in operation and how the system functioned. They went into schools, and knew the kinds of work that they were expected to perform. In post-apartheid South Africa, the scenario of relative certainty in education has changed to chronic instability. Political machination has disturbed historical practices and many teachers continue to compare what was then to what is now. Nostalgia about the past has resulted in a teaching cadre that is unhappy, unsure, and lacking confidence, partly because it is difficult to cope with change, but more likely because the workplace, roles, and functions have been subverted and reconstituted, causing alienation within the profession, and the rupturing of teacher identities.

Over time, and with changes in the political landscape, how teachers' work is conceptualized, activated and performed has also changed. Indeed, their roles have been re-scripted to coincide with frequently changing curriculum policies, political incoherence, and lofty community expectations. The cumulative impact is uncertainty about the nature of teachers' work: what Morrow (2007) refers to as the material elements of teachers' work which cannot be explicitly described. Similarly, in relation to skills and knowledge, Eraut (1994) used the iceberg metaphor to convey the idea that tacit knowledge is not readily available and visible; what lies beneath is larger and, perhaps, more important than that which is explicit.

An unforgiving state of education in most parts of South Africa is, undoubtedly, also part of the problem relating to the emergence of scathing descriptions of teachers and the work they do. In the words of Bloch (2010) education is in a "toxic" state. The problems are both structural and systemic. Many attempts have been made, including a policy fetish driving incessant curriculum restructuring and a plethora of teacher development programmes, to improve teaching and learning in schools. These have had limited success in scattered pockets and, in other instances, existing complexities and complications are deepening. Teachers are crucial to a functional system and there is much evidence that those who work in schools are unhappy, resulting in unacceptable attrition rates of early career teachers (Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012).

The challenge is how to prepare teachers for the complexities and challenges they face in an educational landscape that has increased teachers' work in the classroom without a concomitant increase in levels of fulfilment or discernible impact on student success. The new performativity discourse presumes a linear relationship between well-established educational infrastructure, professionally trained teachers and quality of outcomes. It does not take into account the different levels of complexity in which new policies emerge in post-colonial societies. It also does not adequately account for the unequal educational contexts that South Africa inherited from apartheid (Amin & Ramrathan 2009).

A myriad of quality enhancement interventions and evaluations sponsored by the state, NGOs and corporates have failed to interrupt the cycle of underperformance. Consistently, these initiatives have reinforced with sickening regularity, a familiar deficit discourse without illuminating the conditions and prescripts for vestiges of functionality. What we know about teachers' work is crafted and framed within this deficit discourse. We endeavor to understand academic excellence by researching student failure. We lavish valuable resources and intellectual energy on studying dysfunctional educational contexts with the naïve optimism that the gaze will provide answers to what works.

We cannot and should not abandon the gaze on dysfunctionality, but we desperately need to shift the gaze to researching exceptionality (Dhunpath, 2013) – to those institutions that have triumphed against historical disadvantage and contextual impediments – not to romanticize and glorify the exceptional, but to expose teachers to alternative realities and new opportunities - to turn the pervasive pedagogy of despair to a pedagogy of possibility.

A redefined gaze also means that teachers can no longer be passive subjects of enquiry. They have to become active participants in and of their enquiry in ways that make them relevant, coherent with the shifting landscape of education, imbued with competencies to cope with uncertainty, complexity and diversity. Research on teachers' work can no longer be an intellectual curiosity and the preserve of academics and researchers. Research institutes and agencies that conceptualise and fund empirical work on teachers and teaching environments would do well to concede this and embrace it as an imperative.

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New Pedagogy, Old Practice: Conflicts of Culture in Teaching and Learning

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Summary: Teaching in contexts like Tanzania often resembles the transmission of a sacred text, with curriculum content being transcribed and repeated verbatim. This pedagogy is remarkably resistant to change. Are over-ambitious curricula partly to blame for entrenching a culture of rote learning?

Working as a teacher and in teacher training in Tanzania at the turn of the millennium, I was struck by the resilience of the incumbent culture of teaching and learning in the face of an onslaught of teacher training, new curricular materials and other interventions all promoting the adoption of "participatory teaching methodology". Teachers would enthusiastically participate in training activities involving groups working on different training exercises at the same time. But when I asked them informally if they would consider using this method in class, they laughed and said that it would be impossible, as different students would learn different things.

In my own science classes, I would work together with the students in a participatory way to develop a description or definition of a scientific term; so the wording of the notes I gave would differ from one class to another. But when it came to the exams, any question that included that term would be answered by students from all classes with a common definition, or at least with a set of words that had similar phonetics and intonation to the "correct" definition. The "correct" definition often bore no resemblance to the wording we had used in class, nor was it in the official textbook (which espoused participatory techniques; so did not provide rote definitions). So where did it come from? I eventually uncovered the "yellow pages": hand-written notes passed on from teacher to teacher, student to student, generation to generation. These notes served as the most authoritative text, and were treated with an almost sacred reverence, transcribed and repeated with unquestioning acceptance and without (intentional) alter-

ation. They were written in the format of examination questions and answers. My ad hoc class notes produced through participatory methodology did not pass muster, and students turned to the yellow pages when studying for exams.

In my PhD thesis (Wedgwood, 2007) I speculated that this often tacit, but "sacred text" had gained authority partly as a result of the gap between the aspirations to have a 'modern' education system with 'proper' science and taught in English using 'modern' methodology, and the reality of a system where students and some teachers struggled to understand basic English, and where schools lacked books and equipment. Reliance on a sacred text was in part a survival strategy that enabled students (and teachers) who lacked access to knowledge- due to lack of books, experience and literacy in English, to memorise sentences and phrases that could be reproduced in lessons and examinations. However, transmitting this sacred text had become part of an entrenched underlying culture of teaching and learning that was difficult to shift through teacher training, new textbooks or new teaching and learning materials.

This aspiration-reality gap is epitomised by curricula that race ahead of the rate of learning of the majority of students, and force students and teachers worldwide to revert to reliance on sacred texts: from "this is a pen" to "relativity is the dependence of physical phenomena on the relative motion of the observer and the observed." Learning becomes equated with the ability to reproduce the sacred text rather than the ability to understand, analyse, apply and manipulate new knowledge. The result is that a large proportion of students learn very little (Pritchett and Beatty, 2012).

Attempts to improve learning outcomes in low income countries often look to the top performers in international achievement tests, which are often the most well resourced systems in the world. Whilst valuable lessons can be learned from these top performers, attempts to transplant their practices and pedagogies directly into low-income contexts may be doomed to failure if they do not address the underlying cultures of teaching and

learning. At worst, transplanting new pedagogies can widen the aspiration-reality gap even further, perpetuating the conservative culture of teaching and learning that the new pedagogies were designed to overcome.

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Teacher Reform in Indonesia: Success or Failure?

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Summary: In 2005, partly in response to the desire to "re-professionalise" its teaching profession, Indonesia adopted a Teacher and Lecturer Law which provided a comprehensive, clearly defined package of reforms of teacher management and development mechanisms and institutions. Although the additional education required by teachers to become certified under the Law resulted in some positive student outcomes, the fact of certification and the doubling of income that accompanied it did not. A number of quality assurance mechanisms meant to support this process are only now being put in place which, when fully functioning, have the potential to realise some of the original goals of the Law.

In all regions of the world, the role of the teacher in providing an education of good quality is considered increasingly critical. It is the teacher who must use more student-centred, active teaching-learning techniques to deliver a relevant curriculum; who, in the context of ever more powerful calls for decentralised, school-based management, must promote community support for the school; who must demonstrate both strong ethical principles and good practice; and, ultimately, who must motivate students, ensure their health and safety, and help them learn what they want to – and need to – learn.

These varied roles for teachers are especially important in Indonesia. With close to three million teachers – from kindergarten through academic and vocational secondary education; in public, private, and Islamic schools; and with both civil service and temporary contract status – Indonesia has one of the largest and most diverse cadres of teachers in the world. How it is attempting to "re-professionalise" the teaching profession by reforming its teacher management and development system and the teacher education institutions and processes which produce its teachers – and the kind of impact this reform has been having

on the quality of education and on the outcomes of its learners -- are therefore of great importance to the nation's future development.

Indonesia's answer to these challenges was the pioneering Teacher and Lecturer Law No. 14 of 2005 which laid out the roles and responsibilities of teachers as well as the strategies needed to improve their quality and welfare in support of the earlier Education Law of 2003. The Teacher Law, as it is known, outlined the competencies required of teachers in four areas (pedagogic, personal, social, and professional) and their incorporation into national teacher standards, the role of various Ministry units and agencies in helping teachers reach these competencies, the teacher certification process and the qualification required for such certification, and the conditions under which teachers could receive special and professional allowances.

A key reform was the requirement that all teachers must be officially "certified". The resulting certification process mandated the completion of a four-year degree with a post-graduate professional qualification in the practical pedagogy of the subject to be taught. Successful teachers received a professional allowance to double their income.

The Law also raised important issues concerning teacher management and development which required further consideration: continuous professional development and its link to promotion and salary increments, teacher performance appraisal, and the role of principals in instructional leadership. In other words, the Teacher Law provided a comprehensive, clearly defined package of reforms that established an ambitious agenda for improving the national education system.

The World Bank Office in Jakarta, with the Ministry of Education and Culture, subsequently coordinated a wide range of research projects and program support activities that describe and analyse the design, implementation, and impact of this agenda (Chang et al., 2013). One was an intensive analysis of teaching methods and student outcomes in 8th grade mathematics based on classrooms involved

in two subsequent TIMSS studies. An impact assessment of student learning outcomes as a result of the certification program supported many of the conclusions of the TIMSS. The conclusions of these analyses included the following:

- The students of certified teachers did not have better learning outcomes than students of non-certified teachers, showing that certification alone, and the doubling of income that went with it, had not generally improved teacher quality. This was largely due to the fact that in the early years of the reform, due to political considerations, certification for many teachers was based not on the original design of competency testing but rather on the assessment of teacher-assembled portfolios of their experience. In addition, virtually all teachers who had to take extra training beyond the portfolio passed the subsequent competency test; in other words, almost all teachers in the certification queue were successful. (Although the portfolio process has now been abandoned in favour of competency testing for all, most applicants still succeed in the certification process.)

- There was also no difference in the subject matter and pedagogy assessment scores of certified and uncertified teachers, indicating that this process itself did not increase competency or differentiate teachers in terms of quality.

- However, the studies did show a strong relationship between teacher knowledge (in both subject matter and pedagogy) and student learning outcomes. This was due largely to the requirement that all teachers obtain a four-year degree before certification. In other words, additional training did improve quality; certification and additional income did not.

- The attraction of certification and a higher income has resulted in a large increase in the number and quality of secondary school graduates entering teacher education faculties in Indonesian universities.

- The wide range of quality assurance mechanisms meant to be an integral part of the reform – the development of teacher competency standards, better systems of recruiting and training head teachers and supervisors, and a systematic process of teacher induc-

tion, mentoring, probation, and performance appraisal – is only now being put in place rather than earlier in the process where it would have been more useful. The expectation is that when these mechanisms are operating as planned, the efficiency and effectiveness of the teacher reform process will increase.

- Finally, the cost of the teacher reform (especially payment of the professional allowance) has burgeoned – and will continue to do so -- and thus significant cost-saving strategies will be needed, especially in regard to greater efficiency in the deployment of teachers.

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Schooling and Teaching versus Learning. The Challenge of Education in South Sudan

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Key words: South Sudan; teachers; learning

Summary: The time meant for learning in primary schools of South Sudan is wasted. Teachers spend most of the time meant for teaching on marking learners' books; and learners, if at all present, spend the time meant for learning on copying meaningless text from chalkboard to copybooks. Who is at fault?

In the recent years, governments, donors, development partners, teachers and most of the world's parents have been advocating for children to be enrolled in school, but is that enough? What if children are enrolled, but not learning?

In the modern South Sudan, late enrolment, no enrolment, and school drop-outs are common, and penalties for non-attendance are not imposed on parents and guardians. For every hundred primary-age children, only 62 get enrolled in school. Out of those 62 children, 21 drop-out before they reach grade 2, and only 17 stay at school till grade 8. How many of those 17 children that reach grade 8 learn relevant skills for the South Sudan labour market nobody measures, but many claim that it is few (RSS, 2012).

The teacher challenge in South Sudan is great and starts with an inadequate number of teachers. There is a need for about 35,000 primary school teachers, but only 13,261 teachers are trained. Those who are currently working as teachers (28,029 teachers and untrained teachers) are poorly paid and often paid with delays (RSS, 2012). Paradoxically, teachers are unable to meet the cost of educating their own children; so they seek additional employment. This contributes to teacher absence, and to teacher demotivation to enter the classroom (World Bank, 2012).

Only few teachers who report for duty spend their time in classroom and teaching. Most sit in the staffroom or under a mango tree marking learners' books. Those teachers who are in the classrooms spend most of their time copying text from textbooks to the chalkboard and tasking learners to memorise the text by copying it to their copy-books which are then collected for marking, on which teachers are reported to spend up to 15 hours a week (GESS, 2014).

Recent distribution of free textbooks and supplementary readers lowering the student-textbook ratio from 60:1 to circa 2:1 did not help in changing the classroom practice, as teachers prefer to keep the textbooks safe in the storerooms rather than expose them to the dusty hands of learners (DFID, 2013). It is not easy for teachers to realise the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the teaching process they offer to the learners as nobody challenges the current practice or models more effective learning approaches.

Fellow teachers are not tasked to observe and provide feedback to each-other, and head-teachers spend much of their time in their offices dealing with paper-work, receiving visitors and reporting statistical data to school supervisors (GESS, 2014).

School supervisors, often without any teaching experience, at most offer schools a liaison service rather than a pedagogical challenge. Their main job seems to be delivery of circulars to schools, collecting EMIS data and reporting it to the higher levels of the local government.

Local government, with capacity of up to five men, tries to manage the education delivery to some 60 schools in their locality, all without vehicles, limited operational budget, and with overwhelming amounts of paper-work and demands from development partners and upper-levels of the government (GESS, 2013).

Upper levels of the government hardly have any understanding of what it is like to be a teacher, who works with some 80 learners at a time, without suitable teaching and learning materials and often on an empty stomach; and therefore chooses to deal with daily office challenges (which include lack of transport, lack of electricity, bureaucracy, lack of communication, paper-work and managing

visitors), rather than making education available to learners. By the end of the working day, the time of the government is spent on dealing with paper, the time of the teacher is spent on marking papers, and the time of the learner is spent on copying words to paper. The time for learning the power of words to challenge, innovate and transform is exchanged for time for mere schooling (GESS, 2014a).

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Are Global Politics at Odds with Local Needs? A Case for Teacher Voice in Debates About Teaching and Learning

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Key words: MDGs; post-2015 development agenda; teachers; learning; education quality; education reform

Summary: As the post-2015 development agenda considers global goals for education quality, teachers have moved to the center of a debate around teaching and learning policies. Teachers themselves, however, are often excluded from the conversations in which key policy decisions are made. This exclusion at both the national and international level divorces education policies from local realities, preventing the achievement of learning for all. Teachers and educators must reclaim the conversation on education by engaging in the political process to influence national and global reform agendas.

As the MDGs are set to expire, the international community has placed education high on the priority list for a post-2015 development agenda. While the current push for "Education for All" has been tied to education access, it's clear that post-2015 education goals will address issues of quality. This shift in discourse and policy priorities has engaged multilateral institutions, donors, policymakers, national actors, and local educators—all with competing interests—in a globalized process of negotiating what it means for children to learn while they are in school. As global discourse shifts, teachers have moved to the center of a heated policy debate about what leads to student learning and how that learning should be measured. Yet their voices are largely absent from this debate.

In order to understand teacher voices on the international policy stage, it's important to first consider education policymaking at the country level. National governments are already undergoing ambitious educational reforms as part of their own development agendas. In most cases, extensive strategic planning processes have been implemented to reach a set number of policy priorities for reform efforts. As decisions are made at the national level, teachers themselves are rarely consulted and, when involved, are unlikely to have the

political power to influence final policy decisions. Thus national policies are often divorced from local realities, especially as they pertain to classroom-level barriers to teaching and learning.

International policy priorities—particularly as enacted by donor agencies—often narrow these reform agendas even further, pressuring countries to funnel limited resources to the achievement (and measurement) of globally defined goals. These goals and metrics are often even more divorced from local realities. Countries should have the autonomy to make decisions about desired educational outcomes, to identify the characteristics of quality teaching and learning, and to define the ways in which teaching and learning processes should be measured. Despite efforts to be inclusive, however, dialogues to shape the post-2015 development agenda often reach the country-level having already made key decisions. These decisions build a framework within which national policymakers must fit their own reform priorities.

Even in cases where national policymakers feel ownership in the post-2015 process, voices represented in these consultations are limited. The voices of top decision-makers and experts, rather than those at the frontline of education practice, have access to the conversation. The "real story" of educational cultures and contexts is thus obscured by the exclusion of teacher voices at two distinct levels of negotiation: national and international policymaking.

Education cannot be removed from its political location within societies around the world. Teaching-and-Learning is as much about the development of citizens as it is about academic development; it is an inherently political process. As such, educators must contest the ways in which global and national politics are at odds with local needs, thus reclaiming the conversation on education in order to truly achieve shared visions of education quality and learning for all.

Teachers at Risk: The Faltering Confucian Trinity of King, Teacher, and Father in Korea

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Key words: Korean teachers; neo-liberalism

Summary: Centuries old esteem for teachers in Korea has been threatened particularly due to recent challenges from neo-liberal market-oriented trends in education reform. Although the pressure from the state and the market is somewhat weakened since the new government took up office one year ago, Korean teachers are facing a difficult task of re-inventing the past pride and prestige bestowed upon the vocation of teaching.

Confucius (551-479, BC), the great philosopher of ancient China, emphasized the foremost importance of joyous learning, filial piety, and loyalty to the king. It had incarnated in medieval Korea the teaching about the trinity of king, teacher, and father, meaning each of them to be equally respected and loved. The tradition persists even today as all of the Korean teachers, parents, and society are aware of it, and it is frequently quoted in public speeches, talks, and writings. No typical Korean student would complete his or her school years without hearing at least once about the Trinity from teachers or parents. Definitely, the Trinity helps in achieving the highest salary level for Korean teachers of any in OECD member countries, achieving one of the highest scores in OECD PISA by their dedicated teaching, obtaining the high level diplomas, such as MAs, protecting a lifetime employment until the mandated retirement age at 62. Thus, the best quality young minds are consistently attracted to the teaching profession.

In November 2013 the Ministry of Education announced a policy proposal to introduce a choice of reduced office hours for teachers. The gist of the plan is that a teacher can retain his or her regular teacher status, neither a part time nor a temporary employment, until retirement while working at reduced hours, such as some 20 hours a week with rearranged salary scale negotiated with school management. Needless to say, like any other previous proposals for school reform in Korea, the plan provoked heated debates about the pros and cons. Arguably, the MOE expects to utilize the time slots and the money saved from the reduced work plan to hire new entrants so as to mitigate the political and social pressure of youth unemployment that now is one of the prime concerns of the government and the ruling party. Also, the mounting demand from working mothers to have more time for child care seems to be one of the undercurrents of the proposed policy.

Among the opposing voices raised high, one articulates that the plan is against the caring nature of teaching profession. It says that teachers should stay in school long enough to maintain educational and emotional contacts with children, assist their school life, guide their learning and growing, and etc. Like a father or a king, a teacher should care for his or her beloved subjects. In one respect, that repercussion seems to illustrate an anti-neo-liberal sentiment of teachers. Indeed, during the previous government which had very much emphasized applying market principles to school reforms, teachers had an uneasy time coping with the "humiliating" teacher evaluation policy, opposing the increase of part-time irregular employment, competing with private tutors in cramming institutes, and the like. Resentment still runs high against the neo-liberal economic policy that regards teachers as ordinary workers in the labor market.

By and large, across many countries, neo-liberal frenzy in the name of education reform seems to have dwindled. But in Korea specters of the neo-liberal threat are still lingering particularly among teachers who believed that they were hurt in self esteem and morale by these reckless teacher policies. It is understandable that Korean teachers are alerted by the specter, but it will not be likely that the Trinity will be completely restored as it had been a norm centuries before. Simply, too many things have been changed from that era, - perhaps crossing the bridge of no return. Still, Korean teachers should re-invent the proud vocation of teaching by posing a balance among the school, the state, and the market.

Proverbs and Cultures of Teaching and Learning

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Key words: Proverbs about teaching; cultures and contexts

Summary: Proverbs and axioms provide us with another window into how teachers are perceived in different cultures. They capture views about teachers that may not be part of formal teacher training syllabi, but are nevertheless insightful.

There are two different kinds of understandings about teaching evident in this issue of NORRAG News. First is the powerful evidence from John Hattie after examining half-a-million studies of what makes a difference to pupils in education. He concludes 'excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influencer of achievement' (Roberts, 2014:33). The second is that there is a wide variety of cultures and contexts of teaching. Very powerful here, and much harder to measure, is, for example, the conviction by the teacher that he or she believed you had it in you to make it. The impact and experience of this belief by the teacher in the student's ability to do well are critical to any notion of teacher excellence. This belief is reinforced by many sayings and axioms about teaching.

'You only need to have a single teacher who believes in you for there to be a major impact on your education thereafter' (1). This is not an axiom, but perhaps it captures the experience of many, many pupils, explaining which subject/s they excel in, what field they pursue in university, and even what kind of job they aspire to.

In a very strong form it appears in the Chinese proverb: 'Even if someone is your teacher for only a day, you should regard him like your father for the rest of your life'. In other words, the relationship of pupil to teacher is very special, almost unique.

The same very powerful special relationship is captured in the frequently quoted 'trinity' of 'King, Teacher and Father' in South Korea (B. Chung, this issue). Even if the trinity is not as strong today, it continues to appear in speeches and writing. Almost no student could finish school without hearing it.

The trinity is clearly male-dominated, and the emphasis is on the need to offer respect, including to the teacher. Thus, again in South Korea, this is captured by the saying: 'Don't even step on the shadow of your teacher when accompanying him but following some steps behind him'. (ibid). This may parallel the use of the term 'dominie' for teacher in Scotland in earlier years. The term comes from the Latin, meaning 'lord' or 'master'.

In Laos, the teachers extend this respect to the children, and they in turn take on responsibility as seen here: 'It is interesting to note that the children are addressed formally, as 'miss' or 'master' and that they behave as 'school' children e.g. starting the lesson even when the teacher isn't there, explaining to the weaker children and sharing books etc' (Emblen, this issue).

There are other sayings that emphasise the non-cognitive dimensions of commitment, dedication, or vocation, in the original sense of the word (calling). Thus the proverb: 'A good teacher is like a candle-it consumes itself to light the way for others' has an almost religious feel to it. So too does the Chinese verb: 'Teachers are engineers of human souls'.[1] This recognition that the teacher's personal commitment to the children or students is crucial to learning may help to explain the parental interest, in some countries, in religious schools and universities. The notion that the teacher has, almost like a monk or a nun, chosen to take on a life of poverty may help to explain the meaning behind the very striking South Korean saying: 'Dogs even do not eat teachers' dung, because it has nothing in it for nutrition'. This has been explained by Chung in terms of traditional teacher self-sacrifice: 'When the old saying was formed, I think, it included an aspect of teachers' life, a stoic abstinence of material well-being, refraining from having good or luxurious meals, a stingy habit of doing things meticulously, and the like'[2].

Reflecting on these sayings, and on other popular convictions such as the very widespread teacher

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1 Li Wei, also a contributor to NN50, has sent me a number of Chinese proverbs about teachers.

2 Bong-Gun Chung to KK, 27th April 2014.

belief in parts of East Asia that pupil effort will result in achievement, we can perhaps suggest that in addition to the eminently sensible ten recommendations carried by the GMR 2013/4 for unlocking teacher potential, we add 'Understand better the different cultures and contexts of teaching'. The present ten recommendations are prefaced by these verbs: 'fill', 'attract', 'train', 'prepare', 'get', 'use', 'improve', 'equip', 'develop', and 'provide'. What may be missing are verbs such as 'understand', 'analyse', 'listen', and 'research'.

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Gendered Cultures of Teaching and Achievement in Sultanate of Oman

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Key words: Education achievement; Gender difference; Assessment

Summary: The gender difference in education achievement has become an international phenomenon. The Sultanate of Oman is one of the countries which faces this challenge. Girls on average consistently outscore boys on all measures of students' achievement and the size of the average difference is substantial by almost all estimates (Ministry of Education, 2010). Boys' underachievement has had its impact on enrolment in higher education and the change in the composition of skills' supply in labour market. A comprehensive well-designed study needs to be conducted to identify the nature and factors behind this gender gap in educational achievement.

The gender difference in education achievement has become an international phenomenon. Gibb, Fergusson & Horwood (2008) pointed out that over the last decade there has been evidence of a gender gap in educational achievement in a number of developed countries. Educational statistics have indicated that females are out-performing males at all levels of the school system, attaining more school and post-school qualifications, and attending university in higher numbers.

There have been a large number of explanations for the origins of gender differences in education achievement. The higher rate of under achievement in males can be explained by gender differences in classroom behaviours with males being more prone to disruptive and inattentive classroom behaviours that appear to impede learning and lead to an educational disadvantage (Fergusson & Horwood 1997). Gibb, Fergusson, & Horwood (2008) refer to an explanation by Delamont which claims that teaching and schooling have become feminized, which has led to a lack of male teachers to act as academic role models for boys, a lack of toughness in discipline, a rejection of competition, and a bias towards feminism in curriculum materials.

The Sultanate of Oman is one of the countries that faces the challenge of gender differences in educational achievement. In line with the EFA goals, the Omani Government is committed to equal opportunities for education access by providing education for all children, by confirming every child's right to education, and by providing free access to schooling for all children. This equal opportunity for boys and girls has resulted in women making up the majority of the teaching force, and women also hold many senior positions like ministers, directors generals, and professors in the universities as well as members of Parliament.

Like other countries, Oman's education system is composed of basic and post-basic levels. Basic education is made up of cycle one (grades 1- 4) and cycle two (grades 5-10), and is designed to provide unified grade 1-10 programs for all school–age children to improve learning outcomes through the curriculum and text books. The boys and girls are separated in cycle two. The post-basic education (grades 11-12) system is designed to prepare students for life after school; to enter higher education or for entry into the labour market.

At both cycles of basic education, boys and girls have high general enrolment rates (GER) of close to 100 percent. At the post-basic education level, however, boys have a higher GER. The students flow rates through the system are similar for boys and girls. The entry rate to grade 1 and completion of grade 4 are approximately the same for boys and girls. The transition rate between the levels of education is also the same for boys and girls. The gender disparity index (GPI) reached about (99) in basic education and (92) in post-basic education in 2008/009 (Ministry of Education, 2010). Although the boys and girls have equal opportunities and similar enrolment rates, girls on average consistently outscore boys on all measures of student achievement. The size of the average difference is substantial by almost all comparisons (Ministry of Education, 2010).

In the school leaving examination (General Education Diploma) in 2012-2013, the results for candidates show that the pass rate for girls (83 percent) was almost twice that of boys (43 percent). The Ministry of Education carried out a national assessment among a sample of students from grades 4, 7 and 10 between 2007 and 2008. In all these grades the girls outperformed boys in all subjects by very substantial margins (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Oman also participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2007 and 2011. In 2007, girls outperformed boys in Mathematics by 54 points, the largest differences between genders among the 48 participant countries. In science, girls outperformed boys by 61 points, making Oman the country with the third largest score differences between girls and boys (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Another source to measure students learning achievement is teacher rating. The teachers tend to award girls higher rating in both cycles (1 and 2) of basic education. For example in 2008/2009 the percentage of girls getting an A or B rating was greater than boys by 14 percentage points - both in mathematics and science (Ministry of Education, 2010).

This under-achievement for boys has impacts on enrolment in higher education. Females are more than males among new students in higher education, among enrolled students in higher education, and among higher education graduates. Females comprise 59 percent of the total new student intake, 56 percent of total enrolled students in higher education institutions, and 57 percent of graduates from higher education (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011).

Boys' under-achievement is a multidimensional problem, which extends beyond the education system. One of its impacts is to change the composition of skills supply for the labour market. The jobs requiring high skills will be occupied by females while the low skilled jobs will go to males. At the same time there are jobs which require high skills but are not preferred by females, like working in the oil fields in the desert. This leads to a shortage in the supply of high skilled labour force.

Looking at some of the factors that are associated with gender differences in educational achievement internationally, it seems they do not apply in the case of Oman. For example, the teaching and schooling are not feminized in Oman. In grade 5 to 12 the girls and boys have separate schools and the teachers in boys' school are all male. It seems that one of the factors behind the boys' underachievement is that girls tend to use their time outside of school more constructively than boys, for example by reading for enjoyment or doing homework (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The boys' underachievement represents one of the major threats to education quality in the Sultanate of Oman and in the long term may undermine national competitiveness and productivity (Ministry of Education, 2010). Unfortunately, there is a lack of research in Oman to find out the factors behind the boy's underachievement; so a comprehensive well-designed study needs to be conducted to identify the nature and factors behind the gender gap in educational achievement in Oman.

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Issues and Challenges in Educational Reform Efforts in Malaysia: The Case of an *Orang Asli* Cluster School

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Key words: Clusters of Excellence Policy; Orang Asli School; Decentralization; Malaysia

Summary: Malaysia continues to introduce educational innovations to improve the quality of education. The Clusters of Excellence Policy (CoEP) is one such effort. This paper discusses the issues and challenges of implementing the policy at an *Orang Asli* school in Malaysia.

By the year 2020, Malaysia aspires to become a fully developed and industrialised nation based on its own model. Towards this end, education is seen as a vehicle to transition the nation from an industrial economy to a knowledge-based one. Over the last five decades, major educational policy shifts have been witnessed in Malaysia. This is reflected in the various education development plans such as the Education Development Master Plan (EDMP) 2006-2010 and the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 which drew on many sources of input from the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, and results from PISA and TIMSS to achieve parity with the global development of education. One of the many educational innovations towards improving the quality of education of the nation outlined in these education blueprints is the establishment of the 'clusters of excellent schools' with the aim of accelerating "excellence in educational institutions by building on niche areas in academic disciplines, co-curricular and sports" so that they can become models for benchmarking (MoEM, 2009, p. 50). The discussion here focuses on the development and implementation of this programme at an *Orang Asli* school in Malaysia.

The clusters of excellent schools or the Clusters of Excellence Policy (CoEP) was mooted by the former Education Minister, Hishamuddin Hussein in 2006. To date, there are a total of 170 schools under this programme. Each school is provided with a special funding of RM500,000 (USD150,000) and a certain degree of autonomy to develop, advance and sustain their niche areas. The *Orang Asli* school studied here was established on a 299-hectares aborigines' reserved land in a remote area in the southern part of West Malaysia. It is populated by about 300 people from 65 families. Traditionally, the aborigines engaged in various forms of forest utilisation activities. But as a result of their resettlement, most are now wage earners involved in permanent agriculture such as rubber, oil palm, cocoa and fruit trees (Noor, 2012). There is only one primary school here with a total of 53 students. They are under the care of 17 teachers (yes, really) and 3 non-academic staff. The school has identified three niche areas: English language, aquatic and *Orang Asli* traditional culture and herbal medicines.

The impact of the funding can be seen in terms of activities carried out in each niche area. For instance, some of the money was used to improve the language laboratory to provide students with other options of learning English. Similarly, through the special allocation, students were able to practise swimming at a public swimming pool in town twice every fortnight. The money also allowed the school to purchase materials that helped transform the school's backyard into a comprehensive herbal medicine garden. There was also a marked increase in the percentage of passes in English language Primary School Assessment Test (UPSR) from 0% before the school was included in the Clusters of Excellence to 42.86% a year later (Noor, 2012).

Technically, the CoEP paints a promising picture in that it allows schools to be flexible in the areas of school management, human resource management, financial and physical management, the management and implementation of curriculum, and the management and implementation of extra-curricular activities. However, the *Orang Asli* school faces difficulties in the implementation of the CoEP as although it is given a certain degree of autonomy, it is required to adhere to the Education Act of 1996, rules and regulations governing the Malaysian civil servants, Financial Procedure Act of 1957, and various other circulars distributed periodically. Furthermore, the complexity of procedures and redundancy of processes in purchasing equipment, requesting specialist teachers and sending reports to various agencies within the

Ministry of Education also make it difficult for the school to reap the full benefits of being included in the clusters of excellent schools. For instance, although the CoEP intends to provide 'cluster schools' with the power to 'hire and fire', in reality, the authority with such power has been (and still is) the Commission of Education Service (Government of Malaysia, 1996). To date, there have been no changes made in the legislation to allow for these practices to be devolved to schools.

The government of Malaysia should be commended for its continuous efforts to improve the nation's system of education. To a certain extent, the CoEP enables schools to further enhance their academic and co-curricular excellence through the allocation of a substantial amount of financial assistance, and through the increased autonomy encouraged by the project. However, it can be seen that the implementation of the CoEP has not been without significant problems. Firstly, there need to be clearer guidelines provided by the MoEM relating to financial management, the hiring of teachers and school enrolments. Secondly, improved clarity relating to such guidelines and to the cluster concept itself is essential and, according to Fullan (2007), this is often a perennial problem in the change process. Thirdly, ongoing monitoring and improvement of the CoEP is also needed to ensure that all those involved in this initiative stay focused on the task at hand. The current practice where schools submit standardised reports to the Ministry is inadequate for monitoring the implementation process and for broader project improvement purposes. Fourthly, policy-making processes in Malaysia largely take place within the MoEM, a federal government ministry. This reflects a bureaucratic top-down system dominated by the federal government level. Because not many stakeholders were involved in the policy-making process, effective knowledge sharing, utilisation and creation could not take place. On a broader level, despite a movement toward decentralisation in CoEP, the Malaysian education system remains centralised, with authority heavily concentrated at the MoEM. This means that in practice there is little transfer of authority from the centre to the schools. Hence, the Ministry needs to address these issues if it hopes to achieve its target of improving the quality of education through the CoEP.

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Teacher, Student and Cultural Tradition: Reflection on Shanghai's PISA Success

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Summary: Teachers and students are the main actors in education. The roles played by teachers and their influence on students as well as students' own involvement in learning are key factors in the success of education. And traditional values may also be a key factor of the success of education.

Shanghai's success in PISA, both in 2009 and 2012, has captured world attention. It seems that everyone is interested in the phenomenon, and is trying to find out and explain the reasons behind the success. As a teacher in education, I would like to present my reflections on Shanghai's success.

The Teacher

The teacher enjoys a high social status in China. "Even if someone is your teacher for only one day, you should regard him like your father for the rest of your life" is a saying that has been widely accepted among students for generations in China. In ancient China, one stable and available way of changing one's social status was to take the Keju, a key civil examination for selecting future officials for the government, which could result in advancement of a successful individual and wealth for their family. "Officialdom is the natural outlet for good scholars" has also been held as an article of faith, among ordinary people, for thousands of years in China. And teachers, in ancient China in particular, were a scarce channel for providing quality education for the future success of any individual and their family and consequently they have enjoyed a high social status ever since.

To maintain the social status and hence quality of teaching, teachers also need to improve themselves. "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers" (McKinsey & Co, 2007). And "the most important school-related factor in student learning---is teaching" (Bob Schwartz, Harvard GSE, 2010). Hence, to be highly professional is evidently a necessity. There are ways to be a knowledgeable and professional teacher. One important way is, of course, individual achievements based on self-study and self-cultivation as a way of self-improvement. However, group study and group research as a special way of improving the quality of the teachers in China also cannot be ignored. It is in this atmosphere of group study and group research that new ideas of teaching and even innovative access to quality teaching have been found and shared. And consequently students have obviously become beneficiaries of the improved quality of learning.

Student

Diligence (or effort) has been always considered to be of great importance. "Genius is nothing but labor and diligence" and "only those who endure most can go to the highest level" are beliefs highly and widely recognized in China. "If you work at it hard enough, you can grind an iron rod into a needle" says a popular axiom. Which means steady efforts can work miracles. It's a proverb that has always been an incentive in Chinese education. Self-motivation led by a sense of diligence rather than any other factors has functioned effectively. Consequently high intensity of study contents has been expected by both teachers and students; and supplementary approaches to improve the quality of study have been implemented. Thus a solid foundation of knowledge-based acquisition has been laid.

Cultural Tradition

Social hierarchy was not very strict in ancient China and it is not even now. Everyone was allowed to squeeze into the higher echelons of society as long as they worked hard enough and satisfied the requirements and expectations of their teachers. The *Keju* system in ancient China actually opened

a door for the poor to change their destiny. People believe that "diligent study at one's early age can lead to future success in the imperial civil examination. Ministers or generals do not need to be born of distinguished ancestries". Anyone who passes the imperial civil examinations at the highest level (*Dian Shi*) will not only receive a blossoming sprig of osmanthus from the moon goddess, Chang-E (a legend), but could even marry a daughter of the emperor (which did happen). This could lead to a total change of one's destiny, one's social status and those of one's family even if one came from the bottom of the society. All these beliefs still work in current China. The conviction that "Knowledge can change one's destiny" has been a fact, not an illusion. That is why the saying goes, especially in ancient China, that "in books you may find houses made of gold and beautiful girls as your future wives". As a matter of fact all these values and beliefs have been shared for generations by people in China. As a whole they become an impetus for one's future development. Education and its achievements are of course not an exception.

The above analysis does not mean that basic education in Shanghai is perfect. As a matter of fact, further development of the quality of teachers is urgently demanded. The sense of fostering of creativity and critical thinking are seriously placed in front of educators. How to balance the acquisition of knowledge and the fostering of the ability for future development and adaptation of social demand is high on the agenda.

World-Class Teacher Education for the Post-2015 Agenda? Critical Reflections on the Shanghai Miracle

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Key words: Post-2015 Agenda; Teacher Education; Educational Reform; International Development; China

Summary: As a country with the largest system of education in the world, China has initiated a series of national policies to improve its teacher education system since the 1990s. Lessons reflected from China's case shed new light on the post-2015 discourse, not only for developing countries but for developed societies where there is a quest for excellence and accountability of teacher education in a global age.

Shanghai students have astonished the world again with their superb scores across all domains in the latest PISA results. Although caution is needed in interpreting the Shanghai Miracle, worldwide attention has been drawn to the question of how Chinese teachers, the largest teaching force in the world, have been professionalized in ways that can make their students so competitive globally. In her recent visit to Shanghai, the UK Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare, Elizabeth Truss, witnessed that Chinese teachers are "more effective" than their British counterparts. The fuller picture of Chinese teachers is surely beyond that.

China used to be a very poor country over most of the last century, due to age-long civil and anti-colonial wars and political turmoil. After 1978, it adopted an open-door policy to develop its economy, and by 2010 it had become the world's second largest economy. The secret behind the realization of China's dream, if there is any, heavily relies on its educational achievements, especially in building up a stable, strong and committed teaching force, from which at least three invaluable lessons can be derived for the post-2015 agenda.

First of all, China's modernity was significantly facilitated earlier in the 20th century, with an independent teacher education infrastructure set up separately in its national system of education. This tradition has been carried on over time, and currently there are dozens of specialized teacher education institutions (TEIs) all over the huge country. This infrastructure has provided a stable supply of teachers – in terms of the huge number needed for educating more than 146 million students.

Secondly, over the last few decades various national initiatives have been launched by the Chinese government to reform TEIs and nurture world-class teachers. Central to these policies is the wide concern in the country about how the quality of its teaching force – and more broadly of its basic education system – can be improved and further enhanced by reforming the specialized TEI infrastructure. TEIs' obvious disadvantage is their inability to provide more comprehensive, interdisciplinary programs for teacher education, compared with those offered by comprehensive universities. The decade-long reform has transformed TEIs into an open, hybrid system, which accommodates various programs of teacher education, offered by both specialized 'normal' universities and comprehensive universities. In this way, China has succeeded in making its teaching force strong.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, China has a long history of respecting teachers since Confucius, a master-teacher extremely active 2,500 years ago. Chinese teachers tend to be very passionate about and committed to their learners. Over this long history they have sacrificed themselves for their students, and been tested in many difficult times, even in the Cultural Revolution when their students turned against them. In other words, the Shanghai Miracle is partly the result of the huge sacrifice offered by Chinese teachers, whose cultural roots – their Chinese-ness – are mysteriously encoded in Confucian genes!

These lessons are of course highly relevant to other developing countries, most of which used to, like China, suffer many similar domestic and international problems for development, and are facing the same globalization process. While many of them may not have had a long cultural tradition of respecting education, such a value can be still

nurtured in various ways under different contexts. Additionally, the lessons from China also shed new light on teacher education reform in developed countries, such as the U.S. where there have been chronic problems, e.g., of teacher shortage and quality.

China is not resting on its laurels, but is planning the further development of teacher excellence. This could be very challenging but it is part of its thinking for the post-2015 education agenda. While Shanghai students have demonstrated their excellence in recent PISA results, there continue to be unequal, unbalanced and undesirable learning outcomes between girls and boys, among various schools in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and in different regions across the country. Optimists will have noted that these are to be dealt with by renovating TEIs, coupled with other national strategies. In other words, continuing teacher education reform is already on China's agenda for the post-2015 development.

MDGs and Sexually Transmitted Grades (STGs): Student Perceptions of Teacher Expectations in Benin

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Summary: This piece analyzes the contradictions between merit-based grades and what students in Benin call STGs (sexually transmitted grades), or passing grades in exchange for sexual favors. Both female and male students express distrust in the educational system, and are pushing for professors to be held accountable for their actions.

In many ways Benin could be held up as a "success story" for EFA and the MDGs; it has gone from having one of the lowest rates of enrollment at all levels in 1990 to projections that it will be the country in sub-Saharan Africa with the second highest number of university students per 100,000 inhabitants by the year 2015. In light of findings that completion of secondary education has been "shown to contribute more strongly than primary school attendance to the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the human rights of women and girls" (UN Women), one might hope that these higher numbers will positively impact on gender equality in Benin. Unfortunately, however, the increase in the number of females attending schools has been accompanied by an increase in sexual harassment by teachers and professors. The prevalence of so-called "Sexually Transmitted Grades" or STGs threatens the notion of merit-based grades and creates an unfavorable learning environment for students.

In Benin, beginning in primary school and lasting throughout university, sexual harassment from teachers and professors is a daily reality for female students. Indeed, the situation echoes that discussed in the 2014 EFA GMR (UNESCO, 2014) which states that gender-based violence "is a major barrier to the achievement of quality and equality in education" (p.269). Legislation adopted in Benin in 2003 condemning sexual harassment has been difficult to enforce, despite sanctions for perpetrators of sexual violence in schools including fines of up to 1,000,000 FCFA and two years in jail. The law condemns repercussions for any student who reports sexual harassment; yet the majority of students that I interviewed during my research at a public university in Benin in 2010 had little to no confidence in the law. The Benin Country Report on Human Rights Practices explains lax enforcements of these laws due to "law enforcement agents' and prosecutors' lack of legal knowledge and necessary skills to pursue such cases and victims' fear of social stigma", concluding that "sexual harassment remains common, especially of female students by their male teachers" (US Department of State 2012: 13). As the EFA GMR points out, "in order to take action against teachers involved in violence or abuse of pupils, it is critical to ensure that reporting procedures are transparent and child-friendly" (UNESCO, 2014: 270). UN Commission on the Status of Women, too, urges for targeted measures to provide a learning environment free from sexual harassment, including penalties for all forms of harassment and violence against girls.

While students speak of widespread sexual harassment by their professors, it is impossible to know just how common it is because there are no official figures released by the University. In my study, although nearly all students agreed that it occurred, only one student said that it had happened to her. Grace (pseudonym) explained, "I don't know if I would call it marginalization, but the professors just don't let the girls succeed. I've lived it. But if you don't give them success, you don't pass. It's difficult, it's really difficult. You feel threatened, at school, at university, it happens everywhere." One of her classmates agreed, "They blackmail you. If you are a girl, and you are a good worker, the professor is going to really like you. He'll put a note on your homework, but you know if you were male, the professor wouldn't bother you like that." When students describe the interest of professors in female students as sexual harassment, or even as "threatening" or "menacing" it discourages them from actively participating in the learning environment.

The tendency among professors to pursue rela-

tionships with female students has affected the entire student body on campus. Males and females feel that they are subject to blackmail on the part of their professors[1]. Some students feel that because the females had something that the professors desired, they have unfair advantages over males, regardless of whether the advances are wanted or unwanted. It seems that whenever students are able to attain good grades without working hard for them, those students are subject to criticisms from others. However, the motivation to work hard may be dampened if female students feel that good marks and speaking out in class put them at risk of being "discovered" by their professors. In the case of overcrowded auditoriums, females used strategies such as sitting toward the back, not speaking up in class, and not showing their true capabilities. Others simply leave school rather than face sexual harassment from their professors. Unfortunately, these strategies also reinforce a prevailing viewpoint among male students that female students "can't handle it" at university, and that there are many subjects that are too difficult for females. Unless measures are taken to address sexual harassment on campus, a social hierarchy based on biological sex will remain and quality education will be elusive. Simply increasing access to the university is not enough.

This piece is based on a chapter in my 2012 dissertation titled "You who have been to school, what have you become?": An ethnographic study of university life in Benin

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1 Some students told me that professors would harass a male student if he was dating a female student that the professor was interested in, withholding grades until the couple stopped dating.

Sneaks and Whistle-blowers: Tales from the Classroom of Educational Cultures and Contexts

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Key words: Education; Training; Students; School-children; Whistle-blowers; Children's Literature

Summary: School students are extremely reluctant to report misdemeanours – and even more serious offences – to their teachers. This code of the classroom appears to be based upon solidarity and shared consciousness rather than shyness or fear, supporting the view that schoolchildren should not be regarded as future workers but as 'students'.

The proverb 'Don't Tell Tales out of School' originated among children. To tell tales out of school was to sneak – to try to keep on good terms with the teacher by betraying other children. One of Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes runs:

Tell-tale-tit,

Your tongue shall be split,

And all the dogs in the town

Shall have a little bit.

This code of the classroom has great longevity: its existence is portrayed in children's literature from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* onwards – indeed Quintilian in *The Education of an Orator* describes a similar convention existing in classical Rome. In *This Boy*, a very moving account of former UK Education Minister Alan Johnson's childhood, he talks of "the great unwritten rule: thou shalt never grass to a teacher". In the event, Alan breaks that rule, the bully was very effectively dealt with and the bullying ceased.] Similarly, schoolchildren's codes of honour are depicted (and sometimes contested) in numerous films from *The Green Years*, through *The Guinea Pig* and *If*, to *Dead Poets' Society* and the many remakes of *Goodbye, Mr Chips*.

As part of my preparation for a presentation to a local discussion group in Wales, I probed youngsters' attitudes towards tale-telling and school-based whistle-blowing. Given permission to meet with a small group of teenagers in both a UK and a school in a developing country – three boys and three girls in each case – I probed their views and practices regarding sneaking. It was agreed that no-one else would be present, that all contributions would be anonymous, that the names and locations of the two schools would not be revealed, and – apart from my taking written notes – that nothing would be recorded. Lively and, to all appearances, frank discussions ensued in each case.

Similarities between the attitudes of the UK and the overseas students were extensive. For example, all six in each of the two groups said 'no' in answer to:

• "If you saw another student cheating in an exam, would you report him/her to your teacher?"

• "If you saw another student stealing a book from the school library, would you report him/her to your teacher?"; and

• "If you saw another student smoking a cigarette on school property, would you report him/her to your teacher?"

While all twelve readily agreed that cheating, stealing and smoking (on school property) were 'wrong', they were equally clear that, to them, telling the teachers was also inappropriate. 'Students' were on one side, it appeared, and 'teachers' on the other (uncannily reminiscent of the 'bosses' versus 'workers' paradigm in some critiques of capitalism).

I followed up their answers to those three questions with:

• "Was this because you'd be afraid of being dealt with by the other student?"; and

• "What would you do about it?"

All insisted that fear of retaliation was not a factor. In the UK "getting a reputation as a snitch" was mentioned; amongst the overseas students there was some feeling that "it isn't really my business"

although they might talk to "…his family if we knew them". Both trios of girls suggested that they might, in a group, talk to the student involved. "We wouldn't threaten to report him as he'd never believe us" was a common theme within both groups.

I then asked:

• "If you were bullied by an older student, would you report him/her to your teacher?"

Opinions varied, with the girls saying that they might do so but the boys – with one exception – insisting that they wouldn't. They would talk with fellow students, possibly but not necessarily with family members. But even with something as serious as this, taking the issue to a teacher is seen as a kind of disloyalty to the group – classroom solidarity definitely exists, both in the UK and overseas. With regard to these and other questions, religion was relevant in the developing country school but not at all in the UK; internet bullying was seen as rife in the UK but not overseas.

I then asked this sensitive question very carefully:

• "If a teacher tried to have sex with a student in your class, what would you do about it?"

This gave rise to considerable and very open discussion with no unanimity emerging. The ages of both teacher and student were considered relevant – consensual relations between a young teacher and a Year 12 student were regarded as acceptable by the overseas but not by the UK students. The initial assumption was 'male teacher and female student' but when this was questioned, attitudes became less sure. But even here, the idea of telling a teacher – or a head teacher – was resisted, although the idea of male/male relationships was more horrifying to the overseas group than were teacher/pupil ones and an anonymous reporting to the police was mentioned.

In previous NORRAG publications (for example in NORRAG News 48 and in NORRAG's blog, NORRAG NEWSBite) I have emphasised that schoolchildren see themselves, not as embryonic engineers or foetal physicists, but as 'students'. This limited fieldwork in relation to sneaks and whistle-blowers supports these claims.

I have strenuously advocated also that:

"…Education should be for its own sake. Marketplace values must never colonise the classroom. Schooling should be fun – an underwriting of enthusiasms, a jovial drawing out of that which lies within, a celebration of the unquenchable human spirit".

That it was feasible to facilitate open and thoughtful discussions on these matters in schools several thousand miles apart, and that the twelve participants reported that they appreciated the opportunity, is a small illustration of that general point: I make no more of it than that. Although I do suggest that not only the findings but also the process through which they evolved are relevant to the consideration of the global politics of teaching and learning within the context of educational cultures and contexts.

Unlocking Educational Quality through Teacher Wellbeing & Professional Support in Zimbabwe's Schools

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Key words: Teachers; Zimbabwe

Summary: As the Education For All (EFA) deadline approaches, it has become abundantly clear that the international community will fail to reach this goal, not only in terms of access but also in terms of what is happening *inside* the classroom. According to the latest EFA Global Monitoring Report, of the 250 million children without basic literacy and numeracy skills, 130 million are actually *in* school. In this article, we discuss preliminary findings and reflections from a research and teacher training visit to a school in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe, undertaken in January and February 2014. This visit served as the first phase of a multi-phase teacher training project in the country. We provide a brief example of what this global learning crisis looks like at the local level, and argue that teacher wellbeing and in-service professional support have to play a significant role in what is being termed the post-2015 development framework.

Background

Zimbabwe was long held up as a best practice example in 'how to do education' by many in Southern Africa. After all, this was the country with the highest literacy levels in the region, rising from 63 per cent at independence in 1980 to over 90 per cent in 2002 (Census, 2002). In the mid-1990s Zimbabwe would boast of near universal primary education enrolment (Musarurwa & Chimhenga, 2011). When a collective community mindset that investments should be made in schooling for all is added to these achievements, it becomes clear why Zimbabwe was considered a postcolonial educational success story (Chikoko, 2009). However, the collapse of the economy in the late 1990s resulted in catastrophic consequences for citizens, as education and health systems began deteriorating (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011). In 2007-8, following a period of severe political and economic unrest, an estimated 20,000 qualified teachers drained from the education system (UNICEF 2011; MoESAC 2012). By 2010, many of these abandoned teaching posts were filled by un- or under-qual-

ified teachers, meaning that today close to one fifth of the primary teaching work force lacks the necessary teacher education qualifications (MoE-SAC 2012). Confronted with a desperate situation, Zimbabweans are now working together to repair, through policy and practice, the once thriving country. Here we give readers a snapshot of one under-resourced Zimbabwean school to provide local, qualitative evidence of both the challenges and the strengths involved in unlocking educational quality in the Zimbabwean context.

A crisis in learning

Sabi Star Primary School (SSPS is a pseudonym) is an under-resourced Government school. It was founded with the support of the village community by the current principal in 2003. Before this, local children had to walk over 5km to the nearest school, meaning they would delay enrolment and some would not go at all. Those who did attend were negatively impacted by hunger and exhaustion. While local children now have access to school, this does not necessarily translate into access to effective schooling. According to SSPS teachers and our analysis of student work, only a small handful of students are likely to pass the Grade 7 exams. Those who fail face severely restricted life choices, a stark illustration of the fact that while they have spent several years at SSPS, they have learned little that is valued in today's society.

Professional support & teacher wellbeing

One of the biggest challenges SSPS faces is a lack of pre-service teacher education and experience amongst staff. Unqualified teachers have no say in where they are posted, meaning they also lack an understanding of the local context. At SSPS all teachers were new; there was a 100% turnover of teachers between 2013 and 2014, of the 8 classroom teachers, 6 were unqualified. Teachers cited lack of affordable accommodation, low salaries

and high cost of living as impacting their wellbeing and ability to do their job. Teachers' lack of pre-service training was compounded by personal feelings of isolation, lack of agency and lack of understanding of the local context. This combination makes educating students with a significantly divergent range of abilities a daunting, and to some degree, impossible task.

The positive flipside to this story is an obvious passion for teaching, a sense of professionalism, and a desire and quickness to learn among the teachers, as evidenced during classroom observations, co-teaching sessions and our workshop series. Further, the principal had placed the trained teachers as 'academic bookends' (Grade 1 and Grade 7) and appointed them Teachers-In-Charge, to provide support and pastoral care to staff and students. Discussions with teachers demonstrated an awareness of differentiation needs and many talked about establishing a remedial support system for struggling students. Also, during one workshop on problem-solving, teachers independently came up with "lack of a reading culture" as a problem and immediately began strategizing how to overcome this issue (Workshop, 31 January 2014).

Conclusion

> I think a good school… it starts from the teachers. If I come from home, I am happy, I have the strength to come to school and do my job, you know, with conditions which are good. Like, if you look at SSPS… we've got a lot of challenges that we [as teachers] have around, so, I think that disturbs the quality of the education.
>
> (Interview, SSPS early years' teacher, 30 January 2014)

What this teacher points out is that quality education is only possible when teacher wellbeing is supported. Her words echo Zimbabwe's Education Sector Plan claims that "Morale and motivation in the teaching profession remain urgent challenges" (MoESAC, 2012, p.xv). MoESAC's work on improving the material conditions for teachers and bolstering formal teacher training opportunities can be supported by targeted local in-service projects such as ours, where unqualified teachers are supported with locally developed training materials, which can positively impact teacher wellbeing and help to unlock educational quality for all. While a

commitment to the post-2015 development framework must be global, the solutions must be based on local level engagement with both the existing capacity and the specific needs to be addressed.

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Reviewing Teachers' Role in Quality Improvement of Open Education in Mainland China

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Key words: Teachers; Quality; Open education; Open University; China

Summary: This article presents four possible reasons related to teachers that might explain the decline of quality open education in Mainland China. It argues that improving the quality of teaching in open education institutions is not only about teachers, but also depends on a favourable context and culture which are good for supporting teachers in such institutions.

There is no doubt that the teachers always play an important role in education and teaching. In Mainland China, both the government and institutions have attached great importance to the role of teachers in quality education from the very beginning of open education. Radio and TV University, the predecessor of Open University of China (OUC), recruited the first group of renowned teachers. These teachers, rich in teaching experience at top universities, were well-educated, highly professional and socially superior. They made a great contribution directly to the high quality of its graduates and Radio and TV University enjoyed an excellent reputation in its early years. However, it must be pointed out that there are some special reasons for that. Radio and TV University was set up by Chinese government as the other leg which enjoyed the same status of *elite higher education.*

During the next thirty years, however, although the government and open education institutions have been working hard to maintain teaching quality, it was not enough to avoid a continuing decline of teaching quality, which in turn undermined the development and reputation of the Radio and TV University. The reasons for the decline are diverse. One of them is the teacher's quality.

Take the OUC - the biggest open education institution in China - as an example. It currently has 94,000 teachers, of which 57,000 are full-time, and 37,000 are part-time. Although this large group tries to improve teaching quality, it still turns out to be unsatisfactory. The reasons behind this phenomenon need explanation.

If we look into the status quo of this group, then we will find out why. Firstly, the education level of teachers is low. An OUC Report (OUC, 2012) shows that of all the 57,000 full-time teachers, only 12% are postgraduates. Secondly, the structure of teachers is hierarchical and lacks good interactions. In the OUC, each course involves four different teacher groups: a chief lecturer (part-time, hired from research universities), a course leader (full-time, at national level), a course coordinator (full-time, at provincial level) and a course tutor (part-time, at city or county level). Although they are responsible for the same course, they rank and function from top to bottom and seldom have communication and collaboration. Besides, the upper groups which have more rights in a course do not always have enough teaching experience, while the lower groups directly facing the student do not have professional background. Thirdly, the on-the-job training for teachers is insufficient. A majority of teachers, regardless of which level they are at, are not familiar with distance education or have corresponding theoretical or practical background before entering into the Open University. Also, they do not have adequate and systematic on-the-job training afterwards. Fourthly, the salary and social status of teachers are not satisfying. Teachers always get lower pay in the Open University than in other colleges or universities. And they do not enjoy high social status and influence like research university teachers. This becomes severer due to the hierarchy structure. The lower the worse; and this affects the passion for working as well as job attractiveness. The interesting thing is those problems mentioned have been taken into consideration by the Open University or government for a long time, but so far have never been solved.

In conclusion, it must be admitted that teachers are critical to the quality improvement of open education. To solve these problems must rely on open education institutions themselves, and their efforts to promote teachers' quality. However, more attention needs to be given to developing a proactive, positive development context or cul-

ture. Problems like inadequate levels of education, insufficient training, low salaries and social status are highly related with the bias, absence of policy, less funding from the government and from the society. In a country which has 10 years of massification of higher education, elitism still occupies people's minds. In a country which has 35 years of promoting open education, closed campus education is still the only choice for excellent quality – in the minds of many. People just do not believe in the quality of open education since it is open to everyone and not just the elite. That is more than somewhat depressing!

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Head Teachers as Central Actors in Glocal Education Politics. A Real Story from Benin

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Key words: Head teacher; school management; glocal education politics; ethnography; Benin

Summary: Using data from a Beninese primary school, I argue for more ethnographic research to help us understand the daily manoeuvres head teachers in the Global South rely on in making schools work at the intersection of global reforms and local contexts.

Why is it that we have so little knowledge of the "street realities of headship" – as Ball (1987: 80) already mentioned in 1987 – while we all agree on head teachers' pivotal role in making schools work? This is not to underestimate the influential work of Wolcott (2003 (1973)), presenting a rich ethnography of a school principal's personal and professional life in the United States, or Ball's own chapter on the "politics of leadership" in England (1987: 80ff.), Harber and Dadey's (1993) analysis of head teachers' roles in Botswana and Ghana, and the case studies from France and Chile compiled by Baudrit and Rich (2013) on the modalities of shared leadership. I am, nevertheless, puzzled by the absence of recent, empirically-grounded studies that shed light on the tension between the global and local (micro)politics of teaching, learning and managing, which head teachers face in their day-to-day work, especially in the Global South. Head teachers are the central actors of *glocal* education politics in *doing* the school at the intersection of global objectives and reforms and local, historically grown, social, cultural, and political contexts. How do they position themselves in this arena? How do they negotiate, translate, appropriate or circumvent reforms coming from the outside, or innovate and spread their own policies and "best practices" (which might be in conflict with official norms)?

Let me give you an example of a "real story" from northern Benin, where I conducted 11 months of ethnographic research in 2012/13 in a public primary school in a village I call *Alafia*. The head teacher is a young man, who started his teaching career 10 years ago. The school in *Alafia* is his first post as a head teacher and I observe him in his second year. He lives in the village with one of his two wives and their three children. However, he does not want to remain head teacher and is inclined to pass the necessary exams in order to become a school inspector. Therefore, he takes good care of his reputation and his political and administrative networks. He is careful not to get too close to the village population as "they are difficult to handle", he tells me. Nevertheless, he is motivated to be remembered by the village population as the head teacher who managed to develop the "incomplete" school that has never been able to offer all six grades due to a lack of teachers and classrooms, into a "complete" school that will eventually correspond to official norms and quality standards. He starts the academic year 2012/13 with two teachers and four classes, held in concrete classrooms built by a donor agency. He finishes the same year with four teachers and six classes, two held in rudimentary mud and straw-buildings, one constructed with financial help from an NGO, the other built by parents. To access government or donor funding for another "real" school building, he has to prove the school's need by providing photos of rudimentary classrooms and lists of pupils' names.

One of the two additional classes, the fourth grade, is not officially authorised, as it consists entirely of grade repeaters, and – following international advice – class repetition has been redefined in Benin from a pedagogical solution into a pedagogical, financial and social problem that should be diminished. Repetition of the first grade is officially forbidden since 2004, but the head teacher explains to me that the 34 repeaters among his 61 first graders are too young and too immature to pass on to second grade. There is no kindergarten or preschool in the village and some children need more time to get accustomed to the school environment and to the language of instruction that is French, he says.

The first grade teacher is a community teacher with no professional training, paid by village parents. Since 2008 the Beninese government has made an effort to train some of the community teachers and outlaw the rest as their lack of pro-

fessional training is seen to correlate with low learning outcomes. The head would like to replace the community teacher with a state-trained and employed teacher, but in the current situation of a shortage of 10.000 teachers in Benin, he cannot rely on the State to send him more teaching staff; he has to "find" the teachers himself. Besides, the parents trust the community teacher, who has been teaching the first grade for four years; they value his experience more than a stranger's diploma. The head teacher is able to keep the community teacher despite the latter's "informal" status thanks to the school inspectors' practice of turning a blind eye to the issue. Manipulating his political and administrative networks, the head teacher manages to "find" two additional teachers, who are teacher trainees at teacher training colleges, willing to pass their obligatory practical year and exam in *Alafia*. One of them arrives in November, the other in December 2012, two months after the official beginning of the school year.

Even though he is responsible for teaching the sixth and final grade of his primary school, the head teacher devotes a big part of his instructional time to bureaucratic tasks that keep the school running despite its shortcomings: he writes requests for new buildings, for teachers, for trainees, he counts pupils, fills in reports for the government or for international donor agencies, he fabricates numbers, hoping that one day the school he manages, the one in front of his eyes, will resemble the one he creates on paper.

When teaching, the head teacher tries to apply the teaching and learning objectives of the competency-based approach introduced in Beninese primary schools (as in so many other West African countries) in the 1990s/2000s. At the same time he is inclined to secure his pupils' success rates in the final exam (on which his career depends to a certain degree) through rigid memorisation and disciplinary measures, contradicting the philosophy of the competency-based approach.

Thus, the examples of a head teacher's workaday life in a Beninese primary school show that his practices are defined by *social* norms that guide his relations with the village population, by *official* norms dictating which practices are sanctioned or approved by the State, and by *practical* norms of what is or is not feasible in a given context (cf. Olivier de Sardan 2014: 407ff.). This case study reveals the merit of a critical analysis of the current situation of teaching and learning that focuses on school actors, on head teachers in particular,

taking into account their complex role as agents of *glocal* education politics, and of their ways of juggling with both local and global constraints, expectations, imaginaries and norms. I hope that my research prompts greater interest in head teachers as actors and schools as sites of qualitative research, for the significant implications it has for education policy in the Global South.

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Teacher Policies. A Perspective from Central America

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Key words: Central America; teacher policies; teacher education.

Summary: A great number of teachers face huge challenges and even adverse conditions in Central American Schools. Policy and institutional weaknesses result in low levels of student learning, especially for the most disadvantaged students. However, recent initiatives – both local and international - have the potential to enrich the post-2015 education agenda, which in turn may benefit national policies.

In Central America, many children enrolled in primary schools have shown low levels of learning outcomes when measured by international tests, as indicated by UNESCO regional studies. Learning indicators tend to be worse for those students with disadvantages related to family income, cultural background, and area of residence. Something different has to be done in future to reduce student learning gaps and increase overall student learning on the basis of effective teacher performance.

It seems widely acknowledged that teacher policies are crucial since poor teaching is one of the main obstacles to improving the education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. On the other hand, successful school systems are expected to select and retain talented and motivated teachers.

Bad news

Many teachers face challenging contexts in Central America. A significant number of classrooms are mixed-age due to the late entrance to primary education and repetition. In addition, students bring to the same classroom diverse family backgrounds, in terms of income and ethnicity. In many cases, teachers may work under adverse conditions like scarcity of educational resources, inconvenient school facilities, insecurity or even violence.

There are weaknesses in terms of teacher policy development, for instance: low quality of initial teacher training, low impact of in-service teacher training, lack of incentives linked to teacher performance, absence of evaluation mechanisms, teacher organizations agenda distant from ensuring quality of education, weak basis for sustainability, etc.

As a result, for a significant number of students, levels of learning are low. Furthermore, student learning gaps among students (within a school or classroom) persist or may increase while students transit from 1st to 6th grade of their primary education. In addition, a significant number of teachers working in Central America schools have low levels of education, poor cultural backgrounds, and weak motivation about their profession.

Good news

There is, however, a renewed concern about improving teacher policy. Initiatives for educational reform have been under way over the last years. Teachers are seen as key players in the educational reform processes. There are policy analysis and debates that highlight the need: (1) for a systemic approach to deal with the teaching profession; (2) to attract good candidates to the profession; (3) for strong teacher training programs and upgrading of teachers' formal education; (4) for high standards for student learning and teacher practices; (5) for adequate incentives and support for teachers; (6) to support teacher education and teaching practices with new Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs); (7) for teacher evaluation to feedback into permanent improvement; (8) for teachers' accountability to families and society; and, (9) for constructive, informed, dialogue among key stakeholders to face conflict. Besides analysis and debate, there are policy decisions, resource allocation and interventions already taking place.

National efforts are stimulated by international initiatives to boost better teacher policies and practices, for example: PREAL's knowledge devel-

opment and dissemination [http://www.preal.org]; the Regional Strategy on Teachers implemented by OREALC/UNESCO with the support of the Center for Education Policy and Practice Studies (CEPPE), Chile [http://www.politicasdocentesalc.com]; the Inter-American Teacher Education Network developed by the Organization of American States [http://www.oas.org/en/iten]; the current extensive studies of the World Bank and IADB aimed at developing sound policies to improve the teaching profession; the implementation of CEDUCAR, a teachers' website implemented by CECC/SICA .

The future

Although the limitations and challenges to ensure good teachers in Central American schools are huge, there is concern – and some good practices- about improving the teaching profession in the region. The ongoing studies, debate and experiences have the potential to enrich the post-2015 education agenda, which in turn could guide educational development at the national level. Teachers are a key aspect of the future agenda: they are expected to have professional responsibility and commitment to reduce learning gaps and enhance overall learning for all children in every classroom.

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Conflicting Discourses in Education Reform in Lao PDR

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Key words: discourse; primary schooling

Summary: The outcome of education reform should be improved schooling for children. In the classrooms in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) that I visited, I saw little in-depth change after teachers' in-service courses. Many reasons are given for the lack of progress in schools [Phraxayavong, V. (2009), ESQAC (2012)] including corruption, the Lao temperament, the restrictive Government, and the poor education of teachers. However, I argue that at least in part it is due to a discourse culture built up between donors and the Government and a lack of reality in addressing the needs of rural schools.

Lao PDR is governed by a socialist Politburo. Donors place strong emphasis on the development of human rights. The Government of Lao (GoL) has endorsed reform of the education system but is concerned to locate changed practice within existing systems and ideologies. Donors avoid areas of possible conflict which leads, in turn, to non-threatening activities.

I talked to players at the centre of education. A Lao national project coordinator for a European donor agency explained to me how the donors worked with Government. The words are his:

> Yeah, I think every donor has in mind that they push the agenda for democracy: every donor has the underlying agenda to push human rights, but in Lao, human rights and democracy are taboo discussion. In many documents it's not mentioned explicitly about democracy and human rights, and so they mention mostly participation, even in terms of child rights. They talk mostly about participation-in-development, to decision making. Participation in Lao is acceptable – um - but it means a guided participation. You have to talk to the representative of the government and of the approved mass organisations. There's no civil society in Lao per se so when we go down - like the village authority level - we can talk to representatives of village, mass organisations, Lao Women's' Union, even the police.

He highlighted the donors' caution in approaching human rights; their strategies to avoid confrontation and a willingness to compromise their own human rights' agendas to gain Government cooperation. The approach was reflected in programme planning.

A primary education sector programme planning document is a legal agreement between donor and Government. It has 19 pages and describes a five-year sector wide intervention. Paragraph 76 describes the benefits the programme will bring. The 'direct benefits' are spelt out, and through a chain of implementation, the document claims, will be magnified. I lay out the promises in brief:

> (in school) Expansion of enrolments and improvements in quality - will lead to - larger percentage of graduates - will lead to - better educated population – will lead to - higher employability, improved productivity and earning capacity - will lead to - poverty reduction and improved social development.

The gap between expectation and realisable outcomes is huge, creating an unreal expectation. Paragraph 77 outlines support to minority ethnic children, who make up some 45% of the population and are a major concern of donors. It records school building, the provision of scholarships, greater recruitment of ethnic minority teachers and disaggregation of data collected for EMIS, all previously and only marginally successful techniques. No provision is made for exploration of more radical approaches for example, mother tongue teaching and positive discrimination. The conservative approach side-lines ideology, culture and principles, leading to education reform as purely technological, that is, offering solutions related to a generalized view of good education rather than culturally grounded.

In rural schools, I was impressed with the teachers' commitment, the good relationship between teachers and children, teachers' considerable knowledge of the children and their families; the local language; local festivals and celebrations and local stories and games. These knowledges were not acknowledged in in-service training. Instead, in nine days, teachers were offered a series of activ-

ities based in a wishy-washy version of a child centred philosophy drawn from an international model of good classroom practice. The course did not acknowledge non-Lao speaking children or teachers who do not understand the language or content of the curriculum. The model is neither confident in itself nor presented sufficiently robustly to bring about the intended change. Nor does it take into account the skills that exist amongst the teachers and the very real constraints they face.

Education as a purely technological issue leads to transmission of pre-set skills, devaluing existing knowledges and ideologies. Courses leave out the important skills of critical analysis and flexibility needed in remote and poor circumstances.

To improve schooling, it is necessary to break out of negative and biased constructs and develop a model of schooling linked less to an international ideology and more rooted in real contexts.

A more subtle review of the ways power is wielded between donors and Government could illuminate the linkages between central discourses and the practical life of schools.

This article gives a very brief account of a very complex system, and I suggest that to move forward, a far clearer understanding of the complexity and dynamics of the entire system is needed, in particular more detailed information about the relationships and networks within the system as a whole.

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Has Universalization of Access to Education Matched Quality in Kenya since 2004?

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Key words: Kenya education; access; quality; challenges

Summary: This article notes that the introduction of free and then free and compulsory education in Kenya, has not been accompanied by a focus on quality and learning.

Education opens doors to progress on a personal, familial and societal level. It provides navigational and manipulative skills for progress and development. In a *NORRAG News* article in 2004 (Boit, 2004), I wrote about "Targeting Quality Education in Kenya in the Face of Universalizing Access". This was an interesting concept because as much as advocacy for universal access to education was rife, there were challenges of interpretation, ownership, inclusivity and capacity. The new government that came into power in the year 2003, mandated free primary education. There were problems of interpretation among the parents who were already reeling under the weight of the cost of education. 'Free' to some parents meant that all costs i.e. uniforms, text books, lunches, tuition and exercise books would be made available by the school. This was because education costs escalated substantially by these extra items. Free education might have been misinterpreted to mean a hugely increased number of schools to match the population attracted by 'free' education, but this was not the case. Many children enrolled in the year 2003 but there few teachers, few books and few schools to meet the increase.

Free and compulsory education was included in the 2010 constitution. This too has raised the concern of interpretation on what is now free in education. Kenyan primary and secondary schools require uniforms. These are costly items for most parents especially in the rural and the urban slum areas. The constitution includes the item compulsory education and yet there are not enough schools to meet the school-going population. A mandatory schooling for a standard one child of seven years would require a school within the radius of two kilometers from the home. This is not the case, even in 2014. The constitution has alluded to the fact that communities should share the cost in the provision of new schools. This requirement laughs in the face of the notion of universalizing access to free education, because many parents cannot afford the costs of building new schools.

Quality of education involves provision of both teaching and learning resources. To date, Kenya has many trained teachers but few have been hired and the enrollment in public schools often outnumbers available teachers. Availability of text books to the student ratio is another challenge to quality education in public primary schools.

Uwezo Kenya, a research team since 2009, has been carrying out studies in the country and the region asking "Are Our Children Learning? Using the English and numeracy tests set for standard two, the *Uwezo* team found that only a third of the children in standard three are able to pass both sets of tests, less than two out of three children in standard four can pass while one tenth in class seven can pass in both tests. The *Uwezo* team has made claims that this study has served to highlight the state of learning in primary schools. On a given day, the report says that 10% of teachers are absent from school (Nairobi 17%, Narok 21%) with a significant number of students also absent (Uwezo, 2012).

According to "Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals 2012" Kenya is among African countries that have increased by 20% or more their net enrollment in primary education (www.uneco.org). But *Uwezo* Kenya has served to demonstrate in the last four years of their research that although significant progress has been made in access to education, quality has not been at all commensurate.

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Education-for-International–Understanding: A kind of Politics Necessary for Teachers in the Era of Globalization

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Summary: If politics is about dividing friends from enemies, in the era of globalization, then the common problems facing human harmonious development in such aspects as the international political and economic order, culture exchange, ecological construction and national contacts, could be the "enemies" in teachers' political views, hindering the peoples around the world from increasingly becoming "friends". The awareness of education-for-international-understanding is the necessary political literacy for any subject teacher, and this will be critical if teachers are to help students develop mature international political views.

The German jurist Carl Schmitt thought that politics is about dividing the enemy and the friend. This is a kind of nationalist view of a political concept. Similarly, the former Chairman of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong, once said, "our politics is how to make our enemies fewer and fewer, and make our comrades more and more. Government with many friends is a good one. On the contrary, if it has many enemies, it is a bad one".

In different times, in different countries and for different interest groups, the concept and connotation of enemy is not the same. This is an issue that teachers cannot avoid and which they have to think about in their teaching process. Their teaching can make students become enemies or friends of international understanding.

If judging enemy and friend is on a position of peaceful living and sustainable development of all countries and people in the world, then Schmidt and Mao Zedong's definitions also are not about pure nationalism; rather they are acceptable. In teachers' politics, the enemy or friend is not limited to individual and groups, country and national group. It can also be specific to good or bad things such as a policy, a point of view, a kind of behavior of different interest groups, and so on.

In this era of globalization, many common problems face the harmonious development of human beings and might potentially be the 'enemies' in teachers' political perspectives. Teachers should teach students to think about them correctly and deal with them scientifically. For example, hegemonism and global power politics, unfairness in global economic order, hegemonic discourse in global cultural communication, pollution in global ecological environment, blind and extreme ethnocentrism or national nihilism or rampant terrorism in the country-to-country or nation-to-nation intercourse, and so on, are not conducive to mutual respect, amity, unity and cooperation, to supporting each other, and to making progress together for all the people in the world. To eliminate these "enemies" more and more thoroughly, would let the people around the world more and more become "friends".

The awareness and the ability in education-for-international-understanding education are an important political literacy that teachers of any subject must possess, and they should be reflected as fully as possible in the teachers' selection of teaching goals and contents. Teachers should help and encourage students to make contact with, learn from, and respect other countries' people and cultures more and more, in order to consider others with equal or even appreciative and supportive mentalities rather than self-glorifying and self-righteous ones, and to judge the disputes in the international affairs with fair, just and global positions rather than intolerant and selfish ones.

NORRAG'S LATEST NEWS

NORRAG and its Objectives: 28 Years on the Road & Many More to Go

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What started as the *Northern Research Review and Advisory Group* (NORRAG), as it was first called in 1985, has evolved into the *Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training*. The acronym remains, but NORRAG's scope has grown and has entered a challenging phase of its history, building on 28 years of sustained dedication by its founders and supporters.

Starting as a small Northern based "family business", NORRAG is now transforming itself into a global network. This transformation process has been going on for some years but had a great boost in 2012-13 thanks to a substantial increase in the support provided by the Swiss Development Cooperation. This includes the professionalization of the organisation; the recruitment of new staff aiming at a progressive generational change; the definition of a novel decentralised knowledge production and dissemination strategy; the development of new thematic areas of work and the diversification of activities and resources thanks to a greater involvement of members and new sponsors; the exploring of institutional partnerships with like minded groups and organisations in the Global South as well as in Europe and the USA and, finally, the enhancement of its governance with the setting up of an NORRAG Advisory Board and the reformulation of NORRAG's mission and objectives.

Our statement of purpose is articulated around the idea of NORRAG as an international multi-stakeholder network that seeks to inform, challenge and, hopefully, influence international education and training policies and cooperation. This mission translates into 3 objectives, which reflect NORRAG's global niche as it has developed over the last decennia, namely:

- To stimulate and disseminate timely, concise, critical analysis and act as an incubator for new ideas

- To serve as a knowledge broker at the interface between research and policy

- To promote North-South and South-South-North cooperation and institutional partnerships

The theory of change notion behind these objectives and the work NORRAG performs broadly rests on our firm belief that by creating and sharing the right multidisciplinary information to and amongst the right stakeholders at the right time, we contribute to creating the conditions for better informed and evidence-based design and implementation of fair and effective education and training policies.

In terms of our first objective, getting the balance right between merely reporting, disseminating and synthesising, on the one hand, and offering an added value by providing an analytical and critical account of a particular development, on the other, is something that has concerned NORRAG from the beginning and which remains at the heart of our work. An enhanced emphasis is being put on serving as an incubator for innovative ideas and approaches and by trying to break down silos between communities and groups of stakeholders. For instance, our new programme on "Conflict and Education" is an illustration of this attempt: By bringing together and crossing insights from the world of conflict and peace-building with the world of education and training, which today are still often separate academic and practitioner silos, new perspectives are emerging and novel approaches can be tested. In this work NORRAG clearly benefits from its strategic location in Geneva and its relations with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Another illustration is provided by the work we have started on the "Global Governance of International Education and Training". By organising a multi-stakeholder workshop in Geneva we seek critically to reflect on shifting trends in the global governance of education, and contribute to and challenge the policy dialogue on global governance arrangements that has been emerging in recent years and that will be shaping the Post-2015 period and its aid architecture. We plan to make this dialogue global with a set of planned debates and discussion sessions in the North and the South, starting in China.

By facilitating knowledge production and sharing between and among its various stakeholders and members – including researchers, practitioners, private sector and policy makers- NORRAG serves as knowledge broker at the interface between re-

search and policy, as our second main objective. In addition, and in line with our efforts to de-compartmentalise communities, we seek to serve as an "unusual convener" by bringing together views and stakeholders that do not normally come together or meet. We not only do this in our workshop and policy seminars but also through our knowledge products, with *NORRAG News* leading the way for 30 odd years and 50 issues.

NORRAG has always been aware that one of its largest challenges is to expand its work and its impact in the "global South", which, of course, is a very diverse and heterogeneous reality. Still many discussions do take place in the North, be it in New York, Geneva or London and often tend to be primarily directed by Northern perspectives and stakes. The debate on the post-2015 development agenda is a good illustration of this, as noted in NORRAG's extensive work on this topic. The voices of the South and South-South perspectives and collaboration are too often, we believe, not visible and promoted enough. Our third objective, henceforth, relates to promoting North-South and South-South-North cooperation and bringing in perspectives from the South.

New partnerships in the global South have been set up in 2013 and a triangular research project has been initiated with our South-African and Argentinian partners on youth employment and skills development. Increased efforts are equally being made to decentralise our knowledge production and dissemination. In February 2014 the Arabic version of *NORRAG News* was launched and this 50th issue of *NORRAG News* will be available in Mandarin as well, from October 2014. The objective here is not merely to provide our knowledge products in different languages but to gradually develop specific and contextualised content for the concerned (language) regions and to move towards an international editorial process in association with our Southern partners. In this context, we are happy to see also that our Blog (http://norrag.wordpress.com/), launched in 2012, has been able to establish itself as a major global reference on international education and training policies and cooperation, with readership not only growing rapidly in the South, such as in India, Kenya or South-Africa, but also with increasing contributions from these countries.

It would not be appropriate to close this account without mentioning a word on the agencies that have supported NORRAG and for which we express our gratitude. Originally supported by Swedish SIDA from 1985, then Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) since 1992, and DFID from the later 1990s up to 2012, NORRAG is currently funded by SDC, with support in kind from NUFFIC (Netherlands). In addition the Open Society Foundations are providing valuable support to NORRAG News and the NORRAG blog since 2014 and The Ministry of Higher Education of the Sultanate of Oman is supporting the new Arabic edition of NORRAG News from February2014 onwards.

Beyond the invaluable funding support, NORRAG thrives on the active participation and engagement of its members and supporters and we are continuously looking for ways to enhance this (as of March 2014 NORRAG has more than 4,000 registered members in more than 160 countries, 45% from the global South). Indeed NORRAG has come a long way during the last 30 years and 50 issues of NORRAG News and we look forward to continuing on our road with you as our members and supporters.

Launch of the Arabic Edition of NORRAG News

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The 9th of February 2014 is a special date in the calendar of NORRAG News. It is the date when the first version of NORRAG News in Arabic was launched. The event took place in the Ministry of Higher Education in Sultanate of Oman under the auspices of HE the Undersecretary, Dr Abdullah Al Sarmi, and in the presence of Kenneth King, Professor Emeritus in the School of Social & Political Studies at the University of Edinburgh, and Dr Hana Ameen, Editor of NORRAG News Arabic. The event was attended by a large audience consisting of policy makers, academics and graduate students.

NORRAG News Arabic was an outcome of cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education and NORRAG's Professor Kenneth King. I met Professor King for the first time at the twelfth UK-FIET International Conference on Education and Development at Oxford University in September 2013. NORRAG was responsible for one of the sub-themes at the Oxford Conference in a series of sessions titled 'The Future of Development Assistance'.

NORRAG has tracked education post-2015 activities and published working papers by Kenneth King and Robert Palmer that articulate the concern about whether the preoccupation with Post-2015 is genuinely worldwide, or more of a Northern NGO or think-tank obsession than something debated and discussed in developing countries.

During the 2013 UKFIET Conference Professor King raised the issue of the role of the Arab world with respect to the Post-2015 agenda. This was the first step toward working with NORRAG policy makers and consultants in researching the Post-2015 agenda. Later, the Minister of Higher Education in Sultanate of Oman, Dr Rawya Albusaidi, decided to fund the publication of NORRAG News Arabic as an initiative to encourage scholars, researchers, academics and consultants from the Arab world to participate in the International Network for Policy and Practice in Education.

Today there are more than fifty Omani members registered with NORRAG News Arabic, and three senior Omanis contributed to the first issue of NORRAG News Arabic (NN49).

The launch marks an important moment in international education when the debate about the next Development Goals and Education for All Goals is reaching a climax. Indeed, Oman's Ministry of Education provided the venue for the Global Education for All Meeting in 12-14 May 2014. This was another milestone furthering the agreement on education and training in the Post-2015 development agenda.

The inaugural Arabic issue is highly relevant to the current debate because the focus is entirely on *Education & Development in Post-2015 Development Landscapes*. This issue of NORRAG News on Teachers should also be relevant to the Global Education for All Meeting in May 2014 in Oman.

The goal is to reach as many researchers, academics and consultants from the Arab world as possible and encourage them to take part in NORRAG activities and cooperate with members of NORRAG from other parts of the world in sharing current information on key issues that shape education worldwide.

NORRAG News in Chinese – October 2014

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I am looking forward to the coming Chinese version of *NORRAG News* (NN) in October 2014. It will provide an important and easy-to-access platform for the potentially large number of Chinese readers of NORRAG News in Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and other areas to learn about the articles from the English version of NN. Among these readers, there would be many scholars and government officials. This platform may help the improvement of practical policies in these areas. It will also help NN attract more Chinese contributors to participate in the review of policies and cooperation of international education and training, and to accelerate further educational exchange and cooperation around the world.

Learning, training and development: A NORRAG special issue of *International Development Policy* 2014

International Development Policy Team, IHEID, Geneva

To what extent can the tension between education as a fundamental human right or as a strategic tool in support of economic growth be reconciled? How does commodity-dependence influence education policy and practice? What is the role of vocational training vis-à-vis university education in developing countries? Are MOOCS and Chinese cooperation a game changer for higher education in Africa? And how does student migration sit vis-à-vis the globalisation of knowledge? These and other questions lie at the heart of 'Learning, Training and Development', a collection of essays exploring 50 years of international discourse surrounding education and development. Drawing on examples from Africa, Asia and Latin America, the articles examine issues hitherto largely neglected, but of increasing relevance to researchers and policymakers. Scholars and practitioners examine shifts in global education policy and practice and review lessons learned and future prospects in the Post-2015 context as new actors and technologies contribute to reconfiguring the education sector.

This special issue of *International Development Policy* builds on research carried out by NORRAG. It reflects some of NORRAG's characteristics: the authors come from multiple constituencies and are involved in North-South research partnerships. Additional contributors have been brought in from outside the Network to address specific issues such as the likely impact of massive online open-access courses in Africa or knowledge and migration. Draft chapters were presented and discussed at an international workshop in Geneva in September 2013. This was followed by intense exchanges between the authors and external reviewers, including an anonymous peer review of the special issue as a whole.

International Development Policy (DevPol) is a critical source of analysis of development policy and international cooperation trends and is aimed at scholars, policy-makers, development professionals, and journalists. It offers a diverse range of academic views from both industrialised countries and emerging economies. DevPol is edited by The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, an institution of research and higher education dedicated to advancing world affairs. Located in Geneva at the heart of an international centre of multilateral governance, The Graduate Institute benefits from a rich legacy linked not only to the founding of the international system and the League of Nations in the 1920s, but also to the emergence of the developing world in the 1960s. For more information, please visit: www.devpol.org

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Gérard Escher, Dimitrios Noukakis, and Patrick Aebischer

NORRAG's Latest Survey – a First Overview

Robert Palmer, Independent Consultant and Editor of NORRAG NEWSBite

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Over a two month period to mid-May 2014, NORRAG conducted an online survey of individuals who are linked to NORRAG in order to assess their opinion of how NORRAG was doing. Many thanks to the 350 individuals who responded to this survey! About 55% of respondents were from the Global South. The bulk of responses came from individuals affiliated to the university sector (39%). Bilateral and multilateral agencies accounted for 10%, government departments 11%, consultants 16% and NGOs 15%.

The report of the survey is still being written up, but below is just a quick comment on one of the questions which asked you about your views on NORRAG's new set of objectives[1]. Overall there were a lot of positive reactions to what were repeatedly referred to as very ambitious proposed objectives, and there were a lot of comments which NORRAG should address. For example, a number of you asked: how will these very ambitious objectives be translated into concrete activities and how will these be measured and monitored? Others of you were not comfortable with some of the language, 'knowledge broker', 'incubator' or 'North-South and South-South-North'.

The survey results about new approaches, about relevance of content and other matters will all help to shape the future of NORRAG.

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1 These are:

- To stimulate and disseminate timely, concise, critical analysis and act as an incubator for new ideas;

- To serve as a knowledge broker at the interface between research and policy;

- To promote North-South and South-South-North cooperation and institutional partnerships.

Dedicated to Education for All: The Lifework of Ingemar Gustafsson

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Ingemar Gustafsson, a dear colleague of many readers of NORRAG News, passed away in 2012, aged just sixty-nine years. His death has been a great loss to all of us who worked with Ingemar and therefore a group of us decided that his lifework, promoting and supporting education for all, should not go unremembered.

Ingemar wrote many papers, memos and articles on different aspects of education and development, starting in the 1980s, and continuing after his retirement. As Head of Sida's Education Division, Ingemar was particularly focused on the Education for All movement, and on vocational and skills education. Later, as Head of Sida's Methods Division, Ingemar worked more broadly with questions of how to effectively support developing countries through international development cooperation programmes. Both aspects of his work, i.e. education for development, and methods of development cooperation, are reflected in the collected work, published by the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University, with the title Dedicated to Education for All: the Lifework of Ingemar Gustafsson.

The book is divided into six parts, and the articles within each part are presented chronologically. The areas covered are: Education for All, Education for Rural Transformation and Production, Historical Perspectives on Swedish Aid to Education, Capacity Development in Development Cooperation, The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), and Knowledge Societies.

As we worked through the archive of Ingemar's papers, it became evident that he had chronicled through several decades some of the major themes of education and development, and not only from a Swedish/Sida viewpoint. His humanism, curiosity, dedication to the task in hand, and his sympathetic observations of the challenges we faced in the development arena, shine through the collected writings. It was not always easy to decide which papers to include, which to leave in their folders, but the choice was informed by our knowledge, through many years of collaboration and friendship, of what mattered to Ingemar. He was a natural educator, and some of the papers were written specifically to educate people on the nature of development cooperation, on education and development, and how this had been approached not only by Sida but also by the wider development community.

The papers included in this collection range from early 1980s' considerations of education and development, to macro-questions of what we mean by knowledge development. I will highlight just a few of the topics covered in this book. Ingemar's own doctoral research in the 1980s was centered on education with production, with the wider question of the role of education in the transformation of rural areas. This was a topic he returned to on retirement, working with Lavinia Gasperini of the FAO on education for rural transformation and production: their joint paper included as Chapter Five. In between times, and especially in the context of Sida Education Division, Ingemar was promoting support to Education for All, and more specifically the nascent organization Donors to African Education, which in 1997 became the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Ingemar chronicled the evolution of ADEA in a paper written for a University of Oslo seminar series on education in Africa, in 1998, included as Chapter Twelve. A more personal note is a memo written at the request of ADEA in 2008: ADEA's 20 Years, A Personal Reflection, (Chapter Thirteen) which begins with the words "Oh, gosh, Twenty years and five hundred words!". In the final paper in the volume, on Knowledge and Knowledge Societies, written for Sida in 2009, Ingemar brings back together many of the themes of his earlier papers, in particular capacity development and what education means, for whom, with what content and in what context, both in local society and in a rapidly globalizing world, questions which Ingemar reflected on so well in his life's work and writings.

Christine McNab, co-editor with Agneta Lind, Berit Rylander and Mikiko Cars, of Dedicated to Education for All: The Lifework of Ingemar Gustafsson, Stockholm, 2013, Institute of International Education (IIE), Stockholm University. The PDF version is available from the IIE, www.interped.su.se